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Everywhere and Nowhere:

The City as Recorded Text in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken*

Master's Thesis in English Literature
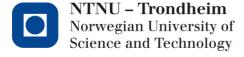
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INTRODUCTION

Joyce Carol Oates asks "If the city is a text, how shall we read it?" (qtd. in Irvine: 201). The answer, of course, is that, much like a text, there is no one way to read a city. Just as a city changes and develops over time as new technologies are invented, new ways of transportation are put into place, new people arrive in the city, and culture and social norms change, how we read a text depends on in which context it is read. As time changes, new things are added and old things disappear, although never completely. History can be seen — and read — in the architecture, in the patterns the streets make, in bridges, in Tube stops, and in literature and images of the past. The city is a palimpsest where the past is overwritten by new events, but nothing is truly erased forever.

The history of the literature concerning the city of London is a long one. *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, for instance, begins with a chapter on London in medieval literature and image and concludes in the twenty-first century. My timespan will be much narrower, focused on two contemporary novels from 1996 (*Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman) and 2010 (*Kraken* by China Miéville), although I will reference novels written before and after as appropriate. I will show varied examples of how the authors describe the fantastic or unreal city in different ways, by the way they use the same history and map of the city to tell their stories in order to tell distinctly London-inspired stories. Due to their nature as alternate visions of present-day London, these are stories that could not have been set anywhere else in the world. Because they are genre stories, with what can superficially be claimed to be similar plots — a hapless male Chosen One is thrust into an unknown, magical world; he then has to find a plot device (a key for Richard in *Neverwhere*, and a museum specimen for Billy in *Kraken*), and ultimately stop the end of the world — it is important to take a detailed look at the different ways Gaiman and Miéville use

the history and setting of London to form the background of their respective magical communities. *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* are both contemporary novels, and excepting the magical elements, can be assumed to take place in a London with a history similar to ours — the non-fictional London.

In the urban fantasy novels by Gaiman and Miéville, the protagonists, through interaction with the urban landscape, prove the known maps of the city to be false or incomplete. The subjective experience of London, as a large and messy place that no one person can know everything about, comes to light in the dangerous and transformative experiences the protagonists go through. Gaiman does this by subtle subversions to the monomyth formula while using various fairy tale conventions. He does not break with the conventions completely — it is more like he colours inside the lines with bright colours and sometimes the colours float outside the lines. Miéville, however, mixes elements from several different genres, such as the detective novel, the quest story, the Weird and the Gothic novel, and fits them together like pieces of a cracked mirror which he then fits back into the frame. Gaiman's work lacks the pissed off frenzy found in Miéville's. They are both playful authors, but in different ways: Gaiman personifies buildings and places by giving them human shapes; Miéville takes concepts and words and recombines them to form something else, knocking the world a little askew every time he does so.

In the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, Lawrence Manly points to the words of John Buchan to illustrate how the literature of London and the experience of the city are intimately entwined: "Every street corner," Buchan says, is "peopled by ghosts from literature and history" (Manly: 1). Later Manly writes that "the urban environment in which (and in response to which) so much of English literature has been written has itself been constructed in many respects by its representations in literature

— by the ideas, images, and styles created by writers who have experienced or inhabited it" (Ibid: 2). It is impossible to escape the literary past of the city when it is evident in the very streets and buildings. Everywhere in London are signs of the influence its authors have had on the city: a statue of Peter Pan in Hyde Park; a museum dedicated to Sherlock Holmes on Baker Street; Bloomsbury is still an area with universities, museums and libraries. There are countless other examples of visible marks literature has left on London. But what is less visible, but nevertheless equally pervasive, is the mark London itself has left on literature.

In Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, it is London Below that is the most memorable character. London Below is the London that exists in the tunnels and forgotten spaces beneath London proper, populated by outcasts, the homeless and magical beings. Gaiman takes an idle commuter What If? and elaborates on it, weaving together fantasy with London's history and mythology. We all know that there is no Angel at Islington station, there is no Earl at Earl's Court and so forth, but in another world not quite like ours, there could be. It is a terribly tempting What If? for the city dweller. The city might not have the woods for elves and goblins; everything might be known, mapped, and explored, but who knows what lies beneath the city? This combination of historical familiarity and fictions is used by Gaiman to create an urban fairy tale which still resonates with its readers nearly twenty years later. In 2013, BBC Radio 4 aired a radio play adaptation of the book featuring several popular contemporary actors. Even before in 2007, DC Comics under the Vertigo imprint published a comic-book adaptation written by Mike Carey.

Gaiman's *Neverwhere* has been described by fellow urban fantasy writer Charles de Lint as both "serious and humorous," where London Below "becomes only more fascinating the longer we visit" ("Neverwhere"). Neil Gaiman has continued to make his career by mixing mythology and fairy tales into contemporary settings. *Neverwhere* has been a

significant contribution to the rich mythology of London, as China Miéville acknowledges in "Reveling in Genre: An interview with China Miéville" while discussing his first book, *King Rat* (1998): "There is a whole tradition of 'underground London' books", Miéville says, "of which Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* is probably the most well-known and successful" (Gordon: 361). In Miéville's opinion this tradition is "partly because it's such an old city, and it's been constructed on top of earlier layers" and also because "the idea of things lurking around below the surface is such a potent image". While *Kraken* is less concerned with the London below than Mièville's other books set in London, *King Rat* and the children's fantasy *Un Lun Dun* (2007), the idea of a city constructed on top of earlier layers and things lurking beneath the surface is still present in the book's descriptions of architecture and the streets of London. In addition to these three books Miéville has written short stories and essays also using London as a setting, although he is perhaps best known for his Bas-Lag trilogy, which is set in a wholly imaginative world. In "Speculative Fiction and International Law: The Marxism of China Miéville" Carl Freedman describes Miéville as "the most entertaining, interesting, and intellectually gifted writer of Anglophone speculative fiction to have yet emerged in his generation" (25). The London that is revealed in Miéville's books is a place of decay, intrusive modernity, and litter, as well as a place where, not unexpectedly, as Freedman also points out, considering the author's Marxist background, power differentials between citizens are keenly felt; whether they are rats as in *King Rat*; citizens being menaced by smog in *Un Lun Dun*; or familiars striking for better pay in *Kraken*. To Miéville, London is a potential dystopia. He writes in the 2012 essay "London's Overthrow", published in *The New York Times,* at a time when London is "buffeted by economic catastrophe, vastly reconfigured by a sporting jamboree of militarised corporate banality, jostling with social unrest, still reeling from riots" that "Apocalypse is less a cliché than a truism. This place is pre-something" (*London's Overthrow*: 14). This view of the city as one awaiting disaster is one that is

apparent in *Kraken*. As one of the characters says, they live "in the epoch of competing ends" (*Kraken*: 49). This can also be seen as a wry reference to the last decade or so where hardly a year has gone by without some form of ancient culture's apocalypse being heralded. While dystopias are not unknown to fantasy, the genre Miéville is most associated with is the New Weird. Sherryl Vint, in her introduction to *Extrapolation*'s special issue on China Miéville, describes the term as one "which has recently been used to describe a mode of fantastic literature that exceeds" what she refers to as "the tired tropes and themes often associated with genre fantasy and endless sequels", by blending "science fiction, Surrealism, fantasy, magical realism, and Lovecraftian horror" in a way "that is attentive to both its pulp and its high culture influences and roots" (Vint: 197). Miéville's books might be beloved by literati and academics, but his writing style gleefully embraces the pulp of tentacular monsters, reinvented mythological creatures and living architecture. He animates inanimate objects, and he fuses people and technology in ways that are disturbing either because of the resultant combination's apparent malapropisms or because of the way it turns human beings into objects. In this he follows in the tradition of Lovecraft's fiction: "rather than werewolves, vampires, or ghosts, Lovecraft's monsters are agglomerations of bubbles, barrels, cones, and corpses, patchworked from cephalopods, insects, crustaceans, and other fauna notable precisely for their absence from the traditional Western monstrous" ("Weird Fiction": 512). Once he adds humanity into these agglomerations, there is undeniably also an echo of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in his writing. The connection lies in the manipulation of the human body combined with a science that is less science than it is magic.

The main interest in this study lies in the connections made by characters in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* across places and time, often signifying character growth in their evolution from outsiders to insiders. As the two protagonists learn more about their

respective magical Londons, they each form a deeper bond with the people who inhabit this London, becoming a part of this hidden community. The separation between normal and fantastic is important, because of the processes the protagonists undergo: consisting of defamiliarizing, re-familiarizing, re-learning and finally a re-integration into a community.

Cities are made up of subjective experiences. How does this affect the choices of the characters in the novels? The protagonists in both are ordinary people who are thrust into a magical world in which their past experiences with the city they live in are largely irrelevant. They need to relearn the city they believed they knew. Identifying and analysing the various connections made in the fantastic city both between people, thus creating a community, and through the experience of spatial-temporality in the text is important to discover how these connections are made. How do these connections function in the text? Many of these connections are made through forcible intrusions into magical worlds where survival depends on finding people to trust and rely upon.

This thesis will look at the differences in how the books use the same history and place to broaden our impression of what London can be. The experience of places and spaces, and how the magical element alters the two protagonists' perception of places is the main focus of this thesis. But other approaches, such as exploring the theme of homelessness in *Neverwhere*, or how the written word forms belief in *Kraken*, or a closer look at how the female characters in both books are depicted than this thesis does, would certainly be interesting seen in the light of the various descriptions of the city as text.

In addition, this thesis starts from the assumption that fantasy and popular literature are valid topics of study, but that there is room for analyses which do not attempt to find new ways to explain the genre, but rather look at how the choice of genre interacts with history, real world settings, and contemporary issues. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy* features

articles covering a broad span of subgenres within the fantasy genre, from high fantasy to supernatural romances, suggesting that the genre has well and truly arrived, in all its many facets.

What is explored is how cities and the people living in them affect each other and create meaning. Several definitions of space are used to look at the complexities of describing a fantastical place connected through an ordinary place, including Michel Foucault's heterotopia where places are a sanctioned world of its own, Farah Mendlesohn's views of the fantastic genres where how magical worlds are connected to the real world is essential, and Hakim Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zone which are as the name suggests temporary. All of these concepts are used to explore how a space can be more than one thing at once. For instance, it can be both a site of rebellion and a site of regulated commerciality, as is the case in *Neverwhere*, where the shopping centre Harrods is both the place where rich people do their shopping, and a place where the London Below citizens' floating market is held.

ILLUSIONS OF CONTROL

The first subchapter deals with the desire for order in a chaotic world through looking at various maps designed for the London Underground and how the presentation of what is essentially the same system differs according to the intended use of the map in question. In the second subchapter, the wish for order appears through following or breaking fantasy genre conventions. This chapter looks at the myth and fairy tale structures explained by Joseph Campbell and Vladimir Propp, before segueing into a wider discussion about fantasy worlds in regards to the "real" world. The third subchapter expands on this relationship by bringing in the concepts of heterotopia and Temporary Autonomous Zone, and the fourth subchapter discusses how the different ways of making one's way through London -- whether by train, by walking, or by parkour -- is a part of forming the subjective experience of the city and thus a part of creating the subject. The tension between order and disorder in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* becomes apparent when these various theories are used to shine a light on the underlying structures of the books and on the ways in which they follow the rules and how they break them.

GEOGRAPHY AND MAPS

The tension between order and chaos begins with the desire to map out the environment. Where streets and landscapes appear chaotic in real life, on maps they are presented as logically ordered lines fitting into a system of ordered lines. Maps are stories we tell where the information that is available, and what is left out, and how this information is presented can give us clues to the intended use of the map. In fantasy epics maps are often provided in the beginning of the book, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy, as it is implied that a mapped place is a place that exists in some form of space. The use of maps here is to give a sense of logic and reality to a fantastical narrative. The map is often of a

landscape or of a country, but it can also be of a city. Maps are one of the simplest ways of describing a city. A map is not just a map, however. Depending on what its intended use is different features of the city can be emphasised or removed completely. Maps are therefore useful fictions, rather than accurate depictions of reality. It follows that in what way, and for what purpose, London has been portrayed varies greatly. The London below ground also has a long history behind its depiction in maps. Claire Dobbin in the lavishly illustrated *London Underground Maps* makes this clear as she presents the development of the various Tube maps from the London Underground's beginning until 2012. Dobbin points out that the first maps to include the London Underground were "unwieldy documents presenting a mass of street-level detail, far beyond the specific requirements of an Underground passenger," but "after the opening of London's first deep-level, electric Tube lines from 1890 […] maps became more passenger focused" (Dobbin: 13-14). Dobbin makes a special mention of Macdonald Gill and Harry Beck, dedicating a chapter each to them, and ends the book by showing off Stephen Walters's map, *London Subterranea*, commissioned for the London Transport Museum's exhibition, *Mind the Map: Inspiring Art, Design and Cartograpy* (2012). In her article "The Map that Saved the London Underground" Emma Jane Kirby explains how a map commissioned to entertain bored and angry commuters waiting for late trains in 1914, was both entertaining and informative. In the map drawn by Macdonald Gill on commission from the London Underground, London is presented as a "preserved London in a fairytale 1914 where anything unpleasant could simply be laughed off or indeed missed out. But among the puns and japes, he gives just a couple of subtle hints at underlying social problems such as the massive and growing gap between the rich and poor" (Kirby). It is now a hundred years later, but commuters are still waiting for late trains and the gap between the rich and poor remains an issue. So some things remain relevant long past their date of creation.

The opposite of Gill's map would be Harry Beck's "journey planner" designed in 1932 to assist travelers on the Tube in planning their journey. This map is a simplified representation of the various Tube lines, which nevertheless is easily understood by travellers. It is a functional map, not an entertaining one. Harry Beck's Tube map gives the impression of a London consisting of separate Tube station islands connected by the underground trains, apparently outside of time. This is an impression that is echoed in the structure of *Neverwhere*, whereas in Gill's *Wonderground* map the city is a complex playground of people working, playing and arguing amidst parks, streets and buildings, featuring a mix of events and people from various time periods. Due to the London underground being the inspiration for many of *Neverwhere*'s places and characters, the feel of the islands connected by tunnels also exists in the novel. One of Janet Vertesi's interview subjects says that "I think of London as […] lots of little centres stuck together […] it's something I think about the way the city fits together." Vertesi notes that this "was not an uncommon way to talk about London, as a collection of disparate and distinct localities." To Vertesi this is a natural result of how London has developed into a larger and lagers city throughout history: "this image is an artifact of the city's popular history, a story of a growing metropolis that subsumed or cobbled together a number of small villages. The city does not have a single 'downtown', and different neighborhoods cultivate particular personalities, attract particular clientele and types of residents, and maintain their own festivals or markets." The pervasive image of the Tube Map firms this impression in the minds of the people: "it is a view of the city that is supported and maintained by the Tube Map, with echoes of the subway experience in general: localities become 'stops' on the map; spaces to surface from the warp of the underground and encounter the above-ground locality" (Vertesi: 16). Gill's map is also a visual demonstration of anachronisms and the influence the past has on the present. Kirby writes: "I want to tell everyone that it's all because of a

comical map drawn in 1914, a map designed to cheer up angry commuters like us when the trains were late. It's because of that 1914 map and its commercial success that there's still *Art on the Underground* and that Frank Pick went on to commission so many other artists to design posters for the Tube. It's partly because of that map that Tube posters have become a respected art medium" (Kirby).

Stephen Walters's map is in many ways a merging of both Macdonald Gill's *Wonderground* map and Harry Beck's journey planner. Walters, whose map series are the artworks on the covers of the urban fantasy series *Rivers of London* by Ben Aaronovitch, which is also set in London, explains the inspiration behind his maps by pointing out that "London is one of the great living palimpsests of our time", and he intended the map which seem to be a modernisation of Gill's maps of London to be "a spoof of the historical ones of old", where the information he chose to use were what he thought of as "historically important, interesting, relevant and amusing" (Walters) which it absolutely is. Walters goes on to describe "these fantastical additions and epithets" as "purposefully innocent and acidic, trivial and serious. The Map is as much about the personality of its viewer than [sic] it is about of my own. In other words it acts as a mirror" (Walters). This subjective view of the city is one that is essential to understanding the views of London that appear in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken*, where the individual experiences shape how the protagonists see the city and themselves.

Maps do not necessarily refer only to places and spaces. Donna Haraway argues in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Social Feminism in the 1980s" that "bodies are maps of power and identity" (Haraway: 600). Bodily alterations in *Kraken* are related both to power — symbolic and brute force — and to identity or lack thereof. How the characters present themselves to the world through their clothing or body modifications is

intimately tied to their identities. The most vivid examples in *Kraken* are of subcultures, such as Marge's Gothic presentation, or the various ways the cults present themselves as parts of a group through their clothing, their bodies or ornamentation.

The city is, and always has been, a place of heterogeneity: "The metropolis is a place of desire, fear and revulsion, of cultural production and economic devastation, organized into political and commercial hierarchies, into sacred and secular, public and private, 'safe' and risky. It is a site of sensation, of a mingling of bodies and populations; it possesses havens from the crowd and facilitates abandoning the self within it" (Bingaman et al: 8). There is a persistent tendency in fiction to approach only the outer edges of these dualities (sacred/secular, public/private, etc), instead of examining the place where these things balance or compromise. Of course that is how you get the sharpest contrasts, but essential to these dualities are the boundaries, the lines between one or the other, be they physical or not. Boundaries are where these dualities meet and in some cases merge.

In "Unreal City to City of Referents: Urban Space in Contemporary London Novels" Urszula Terentowicz-Fotgya argues that "we do not get to know places through a progression and accumulation of detail, rather through careful selection of representative or synecdochical elements" (Terentowicz-Fotgya: 321). This is how an outsider first gets an impression of a city, through what John Urry calls the "tourist gaze" (Wilson, "Against Utopia": 256). This way of seeing is illustrated in *Neverwhere* through Richard Mayhew's initial perception of London, which is peppered with iconic imagery such as black cabs and famous buildings (*Neverwhere*: 9-10). The action in *Neverwhere* also never really moves from the centre of the city, but remains within this circle of inner London. What Elizabeth Wilson writes about her initial view of the city echoes this valuation of the famous over what is seen to be less important. "At the time," Wilson writes, "I believed that the 'necessary'

parts of London — the old, central district of Soho and the Law Courts, the sophisticated shopping streets in Knightsbridge, and the gracious parks and romantic residential districts such as Hampstead and Maida Vale — represented its essence. The contingent parts — suburbs, industrial estates, rubbish tips, railway sidings, dead ends, unused bits of land — were not the 'real' London" (Wilson, "Against Utopia": 256). As she came to know the city better, she came to understand that this was a false dichotomy. All of it is London, and all of it is necessary, not just the pretty, photogenic places. Hakim Bey points out that since "the map is an abstraction", "the map is not accurate; the map cannot be accurate" which opens up for the presence of the unmapped spaces or spaces that resist control, spaces that can be temporary autonomous zones (Bey). Temporary Autonomous Zones are pockets of anarchy that resist the attempt to control them. The map is a skeleton; it does not do much on its own. Palimpsests of history, social connections, dirt and memory are added to the lines of the map and together they create the city.

DEFAMILIARIZATION

London has all these layers of history, and every reader has some mental image of what London is like, much like Richard and Billy believe they know what London is like. The books then take the protagonists and the reader on a journey to explore different sides of the city, the unknown or unnoticed spaces, and in this process London is experienced as a new unfamiliar city.

In the introduction to *The Classic Fairy Tales* Maria Tatar writes that "the staying power of these stories, their widespread and enduring popularity, suggests that they must be addressing issues that serves a significant social function—whether critical, conservative, compensatory, or therapeutic" (Tatar: xi). Tatar writes about fairy tales, but something similar can perhaps be seen in frequently adapted tales, such as *Neverwhere* which exists as a

tv-show, a book, a comicbook and a radioplay, as well as in various works of fanfiction and fanart. Gaiman's world works, because he uses tropes and storytelling structures well-known from fairy tales and mythology, but places them in an environment more recognizable to the contemporary urban reader than the rural landscapes of traditional high fantasy. The use of fairy tale conventions is perhaps the book's greatest weakness in that the characters are a bit one note and the plot is predictable. On the other hand, Richard might be a bit anonymous but characters such as the Marquis de Carabas[1], Hunter, and the Angel Islington are vividly described.

Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale* defines function as "an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action" (Propp: 383). Propp formulates four functions for the fairy tale: "1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale. 2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited. 3. The sequence of functions is always identical. 4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure." (Propp: 384-385). Jack Zipes in *The Irresistible Fairy* Tale points out that while Propp is best understood "within the framework of Russian history" his work is still useful to academics working outside that sphere. To Propp there are "two sequences that form the functions and plots of the wonder tales: the initiation of a young man or woman that takes the form of a quest; and the visit to the land of the dead and regeneration" (Zipes: 66). These sequences are echoed by Joseph Campbell as he describes the journey the hero makes from beginning to end in his work *Hero With A Thousand Faces,* which promotes the idea of the monomyth. Campbell is criticised for

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[1] The Marquis de Carabas is a character from Charles Perrault's "Puss in Boots". Or rather, he is a lie made up by the puss in boots.

rewriting stories to fit his idea, and excluding stories that do not fit the patterns he describes, but *Hero with a Thousand Faces* is still an influential work.

The protagonists are shallow and one dimensional in the same way that tourist attractions are shallow and one dimensional. The people they are when the reader first meets them are not all that they are. Billy and Richard have different ways of coasting on life, of staying below the radar, of not being special. This is a writerly way of making the characters a blank slate the reader can project upon, or a reader stand-in who asks all the obvious questions nobody else in the story would ask, while their environment becomes more quirky, colourful and alive; they are like empty buildings, waiting to be filled.

"Defamiliarization" is a term borrowed from Russian formalists where the goal is to have "literature 'make strange' the world of everyday perception" and renew "the reader's lost capacity for fresh sensation" "by disrupting the modes of ordinary discourse" (Abrams: 108). The term was further developed by Bertholt Brecht in the theatre to the feeling of alienation, whereby the audience is deliberately set outside of the drama. Brecht's aim was "to evoke a critical distance and attitude in the spectators, in order to arouse them to take action against, rather than simple accept, the state of society and behavior represented on the stage" (Abrams: 5). This wish to create a thoughtful audience can be seen in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* as well; *Neverwhere* shines a light on the homeless, while *Kraken* is points to the pre-apocalyptic state of London society. Magdalena Maczynska argues that "fantasy gives the satirist the power of defamiliarization as well as epistemological and ontological elasticity. The satirical and the fantastic modes share an oppositional and deeply ambiguous stance toward dominant cultural discourses" (Maczynska: 62). Both fantasy and satire allow for (and at best encourages) a subversive look at the world around us, and gives the reader the possibility to briefly step outside their cultural context and see society in a new way.

Farah Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) argues for four distinct modes of fantasy: "The four categories are the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusion and the liminal. In the portal-quest, the protagonist enters a new world; in the immersive, the protagonist is part of the fantastic world; in the intrusion, the fantastic breaks into the primary world (which might or might not be our own); and in the liminal, magic might or might not be happening" (James and Mendlesohn: 2*)*. This way of viewing works of fantasy is useful because it allows for a discussion on how the magical world appears in connection to the real world. Mendlesohn points out that although the world that appears in this kind of literature appears to be real — like ours — it is not (Mendlesohn). However, there is a difference between a fantasy world which is hidden underground, and so out of sight, and where the inhabitants of that secret world are functionally invisible to the majority, and one that lives side by side, permeating the "real" world. One relies more on a physical displacement, the other on a mental alteration of a point of view. *Kraken* differs from *Neverwhere* in that there is no other version of London, there is just one version, and if you are very unlucky, your perspective will change and the hidden magic becomes clear. *Kraken*'s London is populated by minor gods and apocalypse cults, and the city itself seems alive in ways it does not in *Neverwhere*. Real-life places such as the Natural History Museum and the British Library, places connected to history, memory and literature, are used as settings in the book. As a result, Miéville fits more in Alexander Irvine's second urban fantasy definition where the urban is emphasised more than the fantastic.

After being initiated into the magical world, neither Richard nor Billy can return to the world they once knew and be satisfied with their old lives. Richard is returned to the London he knows, but the book ends with Richard desperately trying to get back to London

Below, and the Marquis showing up to return him to London Below. Billy remains in his old life, but with a foot in the magical world as well.

Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson claim that "more than half of humanity now live in cities, in globally complex urban patterns." It follows that the "sheer complexity of urban processes, the internal structures and cultures of cities and their interrelations across the globe mean that different ways of understanding cities have never been more relevant" (Bridge and Watson, "Introduction to the Blackwell City Reader": 1). Urban fantasy can be one way of understanding the city through metaphors of alienation and belonging. In "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference" Iris Marion Young points out that "[i]n modern society the primary structures creating alienation and domination are bureaucracy and commodification of all aspect of human activity, including and especially labor." (Young: 231) As the focus of this thesis is on the particular connections made across time between people and places, the theorists relevant to this thesis are those who have attempted to find ways of describing places and spaces as unique entities within a larger structure; such as heterotopia or temporary autonomous zones; ways of creating subjective meaning by moving through the city especially through the concept of flâneur; and the connections made between people as members of the same community.

Neverwhere deals with the topic of homelessness, which is usually seen as a bad thing, but in the homeless also become slightly magical. Hakim Bey points out that "the negative refusal of Home is "homelessness," which most considers a form of victimization, not wishing to be forced into nomadology. But "homelessness" can in a sense be a virtue, an adventure—so it appears, at least, to the huge international movement of the squatters, our modern hobos" ("T.A.Z."). This adventurous look on homelessness is built on choice though.

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Bey explains that the TAZ must be motivated by something other than pure reaction against an oppressive state: "'Fight for the right to party' is in fact not a parody of the radical struggles but a new manifestation of it" ("T.A.Z."). There has to be a reason to act, to drive an uprising, even if it is something as seemingly meaningless as "the right to party", but which is actually an expression of individuality and an interruption into the normal order of things.

Bey sees similarities between various uprisings or counter-culture sites, such as "the importance of aesthetic theory—also what might be called 'pirate economies,' living high off the surplus of social overproduction—even the popularity of colourful military uniforms—and the concept of music as revolutionary social change—and finally their shared air of impermanence, of being ready to move on, shape-shift, re-locate to other universities, mountaintops, ghettos, factories, safe houses, abandoned farms—or even other planes of reality" ("T.A.Z."). Some of these similarities between uprisings and counter-culture sites (aesthetic theory, pirate-economies, impermanence) also show up in both *Kraken* and *Neverwhere* as integral parts of the fantastic world. The aesthetics in both magical worlds are distinctly grubby and made up of cast-offs from London proper, though *Kraken*'s cults lean more high tech than *Neverwhere*'s homeless population.

Later I discuss the appearance and importance of famous buildings and landmarks in the two novels, and the significance of the presence of libraries and museums as buildings of knowledge and stored memory in the novels. Alice Jenkins writes in "Tunnel Visions and Underground Geography in Fantasy" that "like the Gothic novel, fantasy fiction draws on architecture as a major part of its symbolic economy" (Jenkins). Where in Gothic novels there are secret passages and imposing architecture, in urban fantasy there are secret streets and ordinary buildings which contain secret magics. Architectural references are deliberate

and carry meaning beyond their physical presence. St Paul's Cathedral is a link to history, something unchangable in the cityscape. Harrods is a symbol of riches which is later subverted by the floating market. Both abandoned hospitals and abandoned underground stations have a kind of wrongness to them - their intended functions are no longer relevant and decay sets in. Libraries are repositories of knowledge, while museums are time capsules. Museums are heterotopic spaces as defined by Michel Foucault in "Of Other Spaces". In Foucault's fourth principle of the heterotopia, he draws the connection between heterotopias and "slices of time" or "heterochronisms":

> Generally speaking, in a society like ours heterotopia and heterochronism are organized and arranged in a relatively complex fashion. First of all, there are heterotopias of time that accumulates indefinitely, for example the museums, the libraries; museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time never ceases to pile up, heaping up on top of its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even until the end of the seventeenth century, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, the idea 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 or organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move — well, all this belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are characteristic of Western culture in the nineteenth century (Foucault: 20).

While other museums are mentioned in both books, the essential museums are the British Museum in *Neverwhere*, and the Natural History Museum and especially the Darwin Centre in *Kraken*. Museums function along with libraries as heterotopias of time, according to Foucault. Museums are places where time accumulates, but also places which to a degree stand outside of time. This does not mean museums are neutral places, however, as is pointed out in the initial meeting with the British Museum in *Neverwhere*: the British Museum is behind "high black-painted railings", separated from the rest of the neighbourhood, implying that access is subject to certain conditions being met, there are "discreet concealed lights" — the lights are both hidden from view and, literally, illuminated — and the Victorian building

and the huge pillars imply and connect it to history. (cf. William Morris' *News from Nowhere's* British Library) The text also acknowledges that "this was the repository of so many of the world's treasures, looted and found and rescued and donated over hundreds of years" (*Neverwhere*: 176-177). How these treasures are displayed to the public is not random, but the result of various factors such as the curator's vision, the space and funds available, and the politics of the present time. Choices are made all the time on what to include, what to omit, what to remove. Museums tell stories with their objects, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, but there is always a narrative to be found.

MOBILITIES

"To walk is to lack a place," de Certeau argues in "The Practice of Everyday Life". "The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place." (de Certeau: 117) A city is defined by many things — its buildings, its history, its people – but also by how its people move around in the city. How they get from one location to the next. Not only is the city defined by it, its people are as well. The ability to travel a relatively great distance in a short amount of time means that work can be further from the place you sleep, and opens up greater participation in city life in general. In *Urban Geography*, Tim Hall and Heather Barrett point out that "this mobility shapes cities. Their size and form throughout history and across the world are a reflection of the prevalence of different forms of transport" (283). While cars are associated with wealth and independence, and Londoners can have both, how Londoners move around the city does not necessarily have anything to do with how much money they have, but rather what, as a result of the population density, makes for the most efficient journey (Hall and Barrett: 282-288). This was the case when the world's first underground rail was thought of in the 1830s. London was getting over-populated, and there were not enough space for all the people crowding in. Going underground was not the only option at the time, going high above

ground was also briefly considered (akin to the Skytrain), but was dismissed as being impossible to construct at the time. What they could definitely build, however, was tunnels, and they did. When they dug down far beneath the city, they also dug through history. Some of what was discovered was kept; other things were discarded, surviving only in written accounts of the discovery (*London Under*).

Yet what happens when you construct a railway running through underground tunnels is that you lock people into a way of travelling which is devoid of surprise, of individuality. In "Introducing Mobilities" Bridge and Watson point out that to Michel De Certeau "the capacity for unplanned movement can give an expressive character to walking in the city, and like speech acts can make new meaning" (Bridge and Watson: 99). However, railways do not open for this kind of expressive creation of meaning. There is a pattern set up for the traveller to follow; deviating is both frowned upon and impossible without breaking the rules of underground travel. Therefore it does not open for what de Certeau calls "everyday spatial practices" to "work against the quotidian discipline of the rationalist model" (Bridge and Watson: 99). The subtle resistance to a regulated life that walking allows simply by walking down a new path or a different street, is impossible in the railway system or the underground. Resistance has to be either overt or non-existent.

Nevertheless, the underground is not without its charms and fascinations. There are buskers, there are advertisements, and there is poetry. The different stations have been claimed to have their own personalities. When so many people are pressed into one small space together such as an underground carriage or an elevator, personal space can easily be violated. It would not work without the quiet acknowledgement that "we are all in this together, so you had better behave." It is a sort of temporary truce, a temporary tolerance of strangers in your personal space, which only works because so many want it to work. While

at the beginning of the history of the London tube there were separate carriages for the rich, this is no longer the case. If you want to take the tube, you do it alongside the rich, the poor, the famous, the ordinary, students, tourists and office workers. There is no hierarchy of classes.

"In one sense," Bridge and Watson writes, "cities are about concrete things, about built environments, about bricks and mortar, houses and roads, or about economies and industries and spatial formations that are relatively fixed and slow to shift. But in another sense cities are about mobilities, about movement, connections and networks, which in most cases also have material and spatial effects" (Bridge and Watson: 97). As an example of this, they use Charles Dickens, who is known for his love of walking the city of London, and the vivid descriptions of London in his books.

To learn more about the city means becoming closer to the people in it as well as to the city itself. Familiarity is important in this: "Heard about them hoodies and asbos rucking in East London?" She shook her head. "Brothers of Vulpus went at it with a bunch of druids" (*Kraken*: 50). All the regular inhabitant of London would see would be two gangs of criminals getting into a fight in East London. To the insider, however, it looks different, but familiarity with this world is needed before the knowledge takes on any meaning.

How cities are thought about and portrayed in fiction is continuously in development, following the concerns and worries of the day. In writing "The Metropolis and Mental Life" sociologist Georg Simmel was highly skeptical to the rise of urbanity, feeling that it led to a "blasé outlook", because the complexities of metropolitan life required a filtering of impressions in order to manage daily life, as well as a cold calculation brought on by outside influences "intimately connected with [the metropolitan life's] capitalistic and intellectualistic character" which also "colour the content of life and are conducive to the

exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign human traits and impulses which originally seek to determine the form of life from within instead of receiving it from the outside in a general, schematically precise form. Even though those lives which are autonomous and characterised by these vital impulses are not entirely impossible in the city, they are, none the less, opposed to it in abstracto" (Simmel: 105). Simmel believes that the urban life is automated and less connected to the natural instincts of humanity. This distance from the natural instincts of humanity creates automatons, rather than autonomous human beings fully in touch with the world around them.

Michel de Certeau, however, presents the opportunities the city offers to create personal meaning: "de Certeau's work is illustrative of a literature on public spaces of the city as the city of everyday practices that have the capacity for resistance by building on the heterogeneity of the city. In this sense the city is mobile and fluid, and its spaces are brought into being by the very movements and activities taking place within them." (Bridge and Watson: 100) Because the city is so large it can contain multitudes which open up for different kind of resistance to authority than is possible in the country.

Instead of filtering out impressions in order to deal with city living, the flâneur does the opposite as he (or she) goes looking for new impressions of the city and city life. Walter Benjamin still invokes the automaton image when describing how the flâneur walks in "The Arcades Project": "The figure of the flâneur advances over the street of stone, with its double ground, as though driven by a clockwork mechanism," but "for the flâneur, a transformation takes place with respect to the street: it leads him through a vanished time. He strolls down the street; for him, every street is precipitous" (123). On the edge of something, an experience. The flâneur is always looking for a new experience of the city, and new ways of explaining what the city life is like.

Anna Friedberg claims in "The Mobilized and Virtual Gaze in Modernity. Flâneur/Flâneuse": that "the trope of flânerie delineates a mode of visual practice coincident with — but antithetical to — the panoptic gaze" (396). The panoptic gaze "required a degree of spectator immobility" (Ibid.: 403), where the watcher can see everything, but they cannot move from the centre. The flâneur, on the other hand, can move through the city but will only ever have subjective impressions of the city. Both, however, are observers rather than participants in the city life.

Elizabeth Wilson suggests that the character of the flâneur "might be seen as a mythological or allegorical figure" representing what she thinks is the "most characteristic response" to what was the new modern city living, which is "ambivalence" (Wilson: 61). The reactions to living in the city, and what this does to how humans interact, are rarely solely positive or negative. Walter Benjamin writes that "for the flâneur, a transformation takes place with respect to the street: it leads him through a vanished time. He strolls down the street; for him, every street is precipitous" (Benjamin: 123). The flâneur is on the edge of discovering something new; of adventure; of finding something new to fill the senses. The flâneur takes in what experiences he can get through his senses, but he is still limited by following the streets. The *traceur*, however, the practitioner of parkour, has no such limits and as he moves over, under, or across obstacles in the city, he can also add the feel of the city to the senses he uses to become a part of the city landscape.

By using *Neverwhere* as an example I look at regulated ways of moving through London. The underground is egalitarian, and as a result the possibility of true subjective experiences on the underground is smaller. The experience is meant to be the same for everybody. I think it's awesome, for the record. An underground train cart can be a cross-section of the city: school girls and business women, tourists, artists, shop workers, they are

all there. In the *Kraken* chapter, I look at different ways of seeing and moving through the city, such as flânerie and parkour, which are highly subjective experiences of the city where the individual's senses are much more involved in creating an experience of the city.

SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS: NEVERWHERE BY NEIL GAIMAN

Neverwhere is a story about an ordinary man slipping into an extraordinary world. In his article "The Double-edged Nature of Neil Gaiman's Ironical Perspectives and Liminal fantasies" where Sandor Klapcsik looks at the way Gaiman uses irony in his short stories, Klapcsik uses a footnote to point out that in *Neverwhere*, "the invisibility of the supernatural domains coincides with 'social spaces in our actual world with which the majority of readers are unfamiliar' (Ekman 72). The subterranean, fantastic place represent[s] [a] deliberately overlooked social sphere" (Klapcsik: 206-207). In *Neverwhere* London Below is populated by homeless people and outcasts from London Above society; people who are usually invisible to people in the "real" London. The reader first meets this world through Lady Door, who is running for her life and end up on the street in London Above. She is rescued by Richard, and through this act of kindness Richard is thrown into a world he has no prior experience of.

Richard's goal then becomes to leave London Below and become a part of the nice, safe, dull London Above again, but he cannot do this without Lady Door first achieving her goal of finding out why her entire family was murdered. Richard is bland and inoffensive to the point where he starts collecting troll dolls solely to give himself a personality quirk. He has a fiance he seems to have ended up with more or less by accident, a work mate he goes drinking with, and various relatives who live far away. He is forgetful, and he is kind. He also tends to take the path of least resistance. It is all a very ordinary life. It is also, as Richard comes to discover, a very bleak life, a shallow life without any passion, or surprises. There are moments where he acts rather than simply reacting or being carried along with the plot, but they are bright, shining moments, not his general modus operandi. It makes him both a frustrating and an understandable protagonist.

On the surface the story is simple and tidy and easily understood, with story elements recognizable by anyone who has ever read a fairy tale. But Gaiman goes on to explore the simple framework as containment for disorder through such elements as the floating market and through various examples of spatio-temporal instability where the past and present is mingled. The journey Richard sets out on is a transformative experience. The journey follows the conventions mentioned in London Below, and develops Richard's character, by connecting character development to the environment he is in. Richard is transformed by his experiences to the point that he can no longer be satisfied with his life in London Above, and in the end returns to London Below. For Richard his development into a hero depends on his experiences in London Below, and on the connections he makes with the people there. At first he is baffled and overwhelmed by London Below. Every other character in the book takes London Below for granted, whereas everything is unknown to him, which does make him a good character to introduce the weirdness of London Below to the reader.

FAIRY TALE ELEMENTS IN LONDON BELOW

The structure of *Neverwhere* is, using Farah Mendlesohn's terminology, that of a portal-quest story. The classic portal fantasy is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis where children enter the other world through the back of a wardrobe. The portal-quest takes place in a world on the other side of the real world, but is nevertheless linked to it. This link to the real world makes it different from quest fantasies such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* where the events occur solely in a fantastical setting. Mendlesohn points out that *Neverwhere* "creat[es] dissonance quite deliberately by overlaying the fantasy world on the familiar diagram of the London Underground system." The effect of this is that "we are never fully in the other world" (Mendlesohn: 38). This dissonance is important when it comes to understanding that while Gaiman follows several fairy tale and myth conventions, such as the

naming of characters by their function in the plot, the recurring number three, the hero's journey, and the heartless man, he is not ultimately restrained by these conventions. The structures do not control the narrative, but they are present in the story.

In the beginning of *Neverwhere* Richard Mayhew sets out for London. He is new and unfamiliar with the city. To make sense of his impressions of the city he turns to the reassuring Tube map, as so many others new to London, and indeed to those who live there, do:

> When he had first arrived, he had found London huge, odd, fundamentally incomprehensible, with only the Tube map, that elegant multicoloured topographical display of Underground railway lines and stations, giving it any semblance of order. Gradually he realised that the Tube map was a handy fiction that made life easier, but bore no resemblance to the reality of the shape of the city above. (*Neverwhere*: 9-10)

Knowing how to move around in London relies both upon knowledge of tube stops, and on wider knowledge of the city. It is not enough to know that the Tube map is not geographically accurate unless you have enough experience walking the streets to be able to figure out the differences between the city landscape and the map of the city the Tube presents to able to use these differences in any useful way. It is not a skill Richard is ever shown to have, but Anaesthesia, the girl helping him, does:

> "Come on," she said. "I know a shortcut. We can nip through London Above for a bit." […] Richard looked around, puzzled. They were standing on the Embankment, that miles-long walkway that the Victorians built along the north shore of the Thames, covering the drainage system, and the newly created District Line of the Underground, and replacing the stinking mudflats that had festered along the banks of the Thames for the previous five hundred years. It was still night — or perhaps it was night once more. He was unsure how long they had been walking through the underplaces and the dark. (*Neverwhere*: 85)

Anaesthesia can move effortlessly between the two worlds, to Richard's amazement. It may be because Anaesthesia is also from London Above, but ended up in London Below as a child. She is taken by the Night's Bridge on the way to the Floating Market, but her presence

lingers. One of the beads from her necklace helps Richard remain sane in his ordeal for the key.

The first Western academic to really look at fairy tale structures was Vladimir Propp who looked at Russian fairy tales and found commonalities. Using only a structuralist analysis of *Neverwhere* is not enough, but as this thesis deals with the tension between order and chaos, it is useful to get a grasp on what the ordering elements are. The literary map consists of the structure of genre conventions. Among these conventions, Propp points to the "two-fold quality of the tale" where on the one hand it has "amazing multiformity, picturesqueness, and color," and on the other, a "uniformity" and a "repetition" (Propp: 383). Recognizing the skeleton of the story as being linked other similar stories does not denigrate the story itself. Rather it gives a structure to build upon.

In *Neverwhere* names follow the fairy tale convention of having name and function in the plot be closely linked. Name and identity are closely linked. In her article on the duality of identity in superhero comics as applied to the city itself Julia Round points out that this is a trait often also seen in super hero genre: "as the character Hunter says, "My name is my story. I hunt. I am the Hunter." (Carey, 2006b:20.1) The Lady Door and her family are "openers" who can create a door anywhere. The Marquis de Carabas takes his name from "a lie in a fairy tale" (Carey, 2006c:12.2), referencing his deceptive nature" (Round: 28). Round's article is on the comic book adaptation of *Neverwhere* which makes the connection to superheroes easier, but there are similarities between the structures of fairy tales and superhero comics. There is an economic simplicity in having the character's name be their function in the plot. Hunter, Lady Door and the Marquis de Carabas are all a part of Richard's quest in various ways which will be discussed further down.

Richard Mayhew himself follows his namesake, Henry Mayhew, into the underworld of the poor and the homeless. Henry Mayhew was the author of the survey into London's poor called *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in 1851. Mayhew is an observer of poor people, and a journalist reporting what he has discovered. Unlike Richard Henry Mayhew never becomes a part of the people he observes. Of other characters the girl Anaesthesia and the old man Old Bailey are important to this thesis. According to the NHS website Anaesthesia means "loss of sensation", but as a name it resembles Anastasia, which was the name of the Romanov girl rumoured to have escaped the execution of the Romanov family in Russia. Old Bailey is the personification of the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales, and is the only character in the book who is a part of London Below, but spends his time largely on the roof tops of London Above.

Entry to London Below is regulated, but Richard makes the choice to help Door when he finds her injured on the street, and through that he gains access. By helping Door he follows the common fairy tale trope where the kind stranger helps the old crone who is secretly a witch (cf. Askeladden, Revenka). Richard is not very inquisitive, but he is kind, and he talks to people. This is ultimately what saves him. You could say that kindness and curiosity are also two traits that will serve you well in city life in general. If not kindness, then at least a respect for fellow citizens, and if not curiosity, then a willingness to learn, to interpret new information.

In *Neverwhere* the main villain is the Angel Islington, who has been exiled on earth since the sinking of Atlantis, and the Black Friars keep guard over the key that will let him back into heaven, and out of his prison. Another object of power is the statue which will lead the owner through a dangerous labyrinth, taking the place of Ariadne's thread from the legend of the Minotaur, while the third is the spear needed to kill the great beast of London.

Three is a number that frequently appears in fairy tales, and it is present in this book in the three ordeals the characters have to go through the get the key, the three objects of power, and also the fact that our heroes are frequently in trios: Door, Hunter and Richard, and Richard, Hunter and de Carabas. While crossing the Night's Bridge, the trio consists of Richard, Anaesthesia and Hunter. These trios allow for different sides of Richard's character to emerge.

A magical element that is featured in both *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* is that of the man who keeps his heart outside of his body and thus cannot be killed. In the classic Norwegian folk tale "The Giant with no heart in his body" the giant's heart is hidden: "Far, far away in a lake lies an island; on that island stands a church; in that church is a well; in that well swims a duck; in that duck there is an egg, and in that egg there lies my heart" ("The Giant"). In *Neverwhere*, de Carabas keeps his heart in a box he gives to Old Bailey for safe-keeping, while in *Kraken*, the villain Goss keeps his heart in the human simulacrum assumed to be his son, Subby. They are both literally heartless men. This allows them to live longer than ordinary humans would (assuming they are human to begin with), and in de Carabas's case he is shown to return to life after being given back his heart, while Goss dies when Subby is killed. Heartlessness suggests no empathy, standing outside the normal community of human relations, and lacking connections, and psychopathy. Cf. Soul jar. While David Watkin when writing in *The History of Western Architecture* is not very enthusiastic about modern architecture, he notes that even "if rarely providing the pleasure which skilled craftsmanship and ornament can bring, they are nonetheless a striking tribute to man's eternal faith in architecture as the greatest expression of human endeavor" (Watkin: 700). Modern architecture is viewed with suspicion. Both in *Neverwhere* and *Kraken* there is the implication that modern architecture is soulless, as it is not "crafted", just constructed. In

Kraken, "Canary Wharf had been born dying: that was the source of its unpleasant powers" (*Kraken*: 194) and in *Neverwhere* there is Old Bailey in regards to Centre Point:

> Old Bailey did not care very much for Centre Point itself, but, as he'd often tell the bird, the view from the top was without compare, and, furthermore, the top of Centre Point was one of the few places in the West End of London where you did not have to look at Centre Point itself (*Neverwhere*: 269).

This view of Centre Point might be connected to Old Bailey's memories of the City:

> Old Bailey remembered when people had actually lived here in the City, not just worked; when they had lived and lusted and laughed, built ramshackle houses one leaning against the next, each house filled with noisy people. Why, the noise and the mess and the stinks and the songs from the alley across the way (then known, at least colloquially, as Shitten Alley) had been legendary in their time, but no one lived in the City now. It was cold and cheerless place of offices, of people who worked in the day and went home to somewhere else at night. It was not a place for living any more. He even missed the stinks (*Neverwhere*: 166).

This view of the city resembles what Simmel says about a city of automatons. The City has become a place where autonomous humanity is no longer expressed. It has become a place where people work, but not live. The City lacks colour; there is no lust, or laugher, or stink. These are all things that are connected to people living together. Old Bailey is nostalgic for the past which seems to him to have been more alive.

In William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), the view of the past is rather different. Here one of the characters is talking about the British Museum:

> "It is rather an ugly old building, isn't it? Many people have wanted to pull it down and rebuild it: and perhaps if work does really get scarce we may yet do so. But, as my great grandfather will tell you, it would not be quite a straightforward job; for there are wonderful collections in there of all kinds of antiquities, besides an enormous library with many exceedingly beautiful books in it, and many most useful ones as genuine records, texts of ancient works and the like; and the worry and anxiety, and even risk, there would be in moving all this has saved the buildings themselves. Besides, as we said before, it is not a bad thing to have some record of what our forefathers thought a handsome building. For there is plenty of labour and material in it." (Morris 1890)

Many other buildings are described as being used for different things in this imaginary future. Their intended functions are no longer relevant, and they are regarded as ugly and irrelevant, even if the content of the buildings is still valuable. In this future what we would consider grand old buildings, are considered ugly and inconvenient. Richard and Door visit the British Museum in order to find the Angelus, which they know is something featuring an angel, but they don't know what. The collection of angels being displayed is described as "indiscriminate" and "vulgar". There is no selection except "features angels", no exclusion otherwise, adding to the confusion, and the collection is overwhelming in its size. It is a chaotic collection of items. The Angelus turns out to be a painting which is also a gateway. By using Door's talent as a door-opener, they can pass through the painting and end up somewhere else.

THE FLOATING MARKET

The Floating Market furthers the theme of interruptions in the normal order of things. Where access to London Above festivals is gained through ticketed gates or wristband passes, access to the Floating Market comes from asking somebody who already knows where the next Floating Market is, and taking the correct, frequently dangerous, route. When asked, Door says that "I don't think we can lie about the Floating Market." Michel Foucault says about heterotopias that "one can only enter with a certain permission and after having performed a certain number of gestures" (Foucault: 21). This is the way to gain access to London Below itself, to the Floating Market, and often to other zones in London Below. Richard's first meeting with the market is a lively and memorable passage, which helps the reader understand how the citizens of London Below interact with each other, and how alike and different it is from London Above. In the article "Tunnel Visions and Underground Geography in Fantasy" Alice Jenkins calls the Floating Market, "a kind of carnivalesque

shared degradation" (Jenkins). The first Floating Market Richard experiences in the book is set in Harrods and changes the store from an expensive store during daytime to a marketplace for rubbish during the night time, and Richard at first considers it almost sacrilegious. In "The many mirrors of Foucault and their architectural reflections" Christine M. Boyer points out that "heterotopias, as spacial constructs or figures of thought, are differentiations inserted into the city or discourse that appear out of place, abnormal or illusory. They contest the normal order of things" (Boyer: 58). London Below itself contests the normal order of things; Rats are treated with respect, rubbish and broken things are for sale, and minding the gap is extremely important, because there is an actual monster living there.

London has a history of multiculturalism and polysemy; it has always been a place of where many voices can be heard, and many different people from many different places will come together to trade, from the market place to the Royal Exchange. Joseph Addison writes the following in *The Spectator* in 1711:

> There is no place in the town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange. It gives me a secret satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my vanity, as I am an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of country-men and foreigners consulting together upon the private business of mankind, and making this metropolis a kind of emporium for the whole earth... Sometimes I am justled among a body of Armenians; sometimes I am lost in a crowd of Jews; and sometimes make one in a group of Dutchmen. I am a Dane, a Swede or French-man at different times, or rather fancy my self like the old philosopher, who, upon being asked what country-man he was, replied, that he was a citizen of the world. (qtd. in Ward-Jackson: xxi)

The Royal Exchange is of course a socially sanctioned space, but it is nevertheless an example of the heterogeneity of the city market. The floating market is similar to open markets, rather than the Royal Exchange, but is is stranger and eerier. The floating market can be said to employ the same tactic as the Temporary Autonomous Zone; what Bey calls "a tactic of disappearance" ("T.A.Z."). The way the market vanishes, leaving no trace behind, is vividly described in *Neverwhere*:

They walked back through the store the way that Richard had come. The bell was now tolling deeply and continually. When they came upon it, he saw that it was a huge brass bell, suspended on a wooden frame, with a rope hanging from the clapper. It was being tolled by a large black man, wearing the black robes of a Dominican monk, and it had been set up next to Harrods' gourmet jellybean stand.

Impressive as the market had been to watch, Richard wound it even more impressive to see the speed at which it was being dismantled, broken down and put away. All evidence that it had ever been there was vanishing: stalls were being taken apart, loaded on to people's backs, hauled off into the streets. Richard noticed Old Bailey, his arms filled with his crude signs and with bird cages, stumbling out of the store. The old man waved happily at Richard, and vanished off into the night.

The crowds thinned, the market vanished, and the ground floor of Harrods looked as usual, as sedate, as proper, and as clean, as any time he had walked around it in Jessica's wake on a Saturday afternoon. It was as if the market had never existed (*Neverwhere*: 124).

The floating market can therefore also be described as a Temporary Autonomous Zone. It is impermanent and short lived. The floating market is in a different place every time, occupying and using places from London Above, before it is all take down and moved, leaving no trace behind. Besides Harrods, the other Floating Markets mentioned in the book take place in Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and the *HMS Belfast*, all London Above tourist landmarks set in around the same area of the city. The ones at Big Ben and Westminster Abbey are only briefly mentioned, but the one at *HMS Belfast* is also an important scene in the book, because it sets the stage for two important plot twists: The resurrection of the Marquis de Carabas, and Door's duplicity with the fake key. It is a place where things might change in a moment. There is an air of festivity to market scenes in *Neverwhere*, despite – or because of – the goods on sale. While Richard describes the Floating Market as "pure madness" and "loud, and brash, and insane", he also adds that "it was, in many ways, quite wonderful" (*Neverwhere*:109). This is the first moment since Richard entered London Below that is not filled with horror and confusion. The Floating Market is wonderfully strange, but it is also recognizably a market: There is music, food and items for sale. Were it not set in

Harrods, it probably would not be as odd. As it is, the juxtaposition between the setting and the content makes the reader and Richard more aware of the coldness and the rules of London Above and the wildness and surprising warmth of London Below. The role of the Floating Market in the London Below society could perhaps be an insurrection, in that it challenges the sense of propriety and rules of the London Above, but it is a subtle challenge, not a forceful one. But it is certainly recognisable as a festival — if one that is organized by mysterious means and word of mouth, rather than being scheduled down to the minute as most festivals in my experience are. Although by necessity it follows certain rules. There is a market peace, there is a specific time for the set up and removal of the market, and there is nothing left of it once it is gone.

The market is also interesting, because it is one of the very few moments in the book that shows London Below as a community rather than tentatively linked enclaves of families or clans who have extremely limited interaction with each other. Jenkins describes it as the best this community has managed to put in place. Lady Door's father speaks about wanting to pull the different fractions of London Below tighter together: "He worried about the Underside. He wanted to unite London Below, to unite the baronies and fiefdoms — perhaps even to forge some kind of bond with London Above" (*Neverwhere*: 326), and in the end this is what Lady Door decides to take up as her cause. James D. Faubion points out that "the heterotopia is an asulon, a sanctuary, an asylum. If its entry and exit must always be policed, this is because dwelling within, even passing through any sanctuary, any asylum, puts the self at risk" (Faubion: 32). After spending time in London Below, Richard can no longer fit in within London Above. His old sense of self has been replaced by one that no longer accepts the regulated monotony of the society of London Above. But the book implies that normally, a person such as Richard would not have gained access to London Below: he has a job, a

girlfriend; he has a place in London Above. The ones that fall through the cracks are the homeless people, the buskers, the runaway children who have no other options.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

Something similar to Gill's *Wonderground* map can be experienced in Neil Gaiman's novel *Neverwhere,* where the contemporary characters meet characters out of time, or places out of time, without leaving their own present time. These places and characters out of time are displaced relics of the past, interrupting modernity with their presence. The future happens gradually, rather than by the flip of a switch, as people get used to things changing, but to these displaced places and characters, it is as though nothing has changed. It is jarring to walk into an underground train and suddenly be standing in an old fashioned court room, as Richard does at one point (*Neverwhere*: 149-157). Still, time passes even in this magical world, as Richard notes when he contemplates the sight of the Earl of Earl's Court: "Richard found himself imagining the Earl sixty, eighty, five hundred years ago: a mighty warrior, a cunning strategist, a great lover of women, a fine friend, a terrifying foe. There was still the wreckage of that man in there somewhere. That was what made him so terrible, and so sad" (*Neverwhere*: 161). It is not much of a stretch to see the echoes of the British Empire in the old Earl; once great, but now faded. Kirby writes about Macdonald Gill's *Wonderground* map that London in 1914, "with its population of seven million, was the capital of the largest empire the world had ever seen. Gill reminds commuters of its grandeur with a sign pointing off the eastern edge of the map boasting: "This is the way to Victoria Park, Wanstead Flats, Harwich, Russia and other villages"" (Kirby). There is not much left of the empire now, but the history remains and informs the present. Other reminders of London's past pops up

throughout the book, either through locations or through people. One such location is the British Museum station. The station has been preserved, frozen in time:

> The advertisements on the walls were for refreshing and health-giving malted drinks, for two-shilling day excursions by train to the seaside, for kippered herrings, moustache wax and bootblack. They were smoke-blackened relics of the late twenties or the early thirties. Richard stared at them in disbelief. It seemed completely abandoned: a forgotten place. "It is British Museum station," admitted Richard. "But... but there never was a British Museum station. This is all wrong."
>
> "It was closed down in about 1933, and sealed off," said Door.
>
> "How bizarre," said Richard. It was like walking through history. He could hear trains echoing through tunnels nearby, felt the push of air as they passed. "Are there many stations like this?"
>
> "About fifty," said Hunter. "They aren't all accessible, though. Not even to us."
>
> (*Neverwhere*: 169)

While walking through the abandoned British Museum station, Richard thinks that "It was like walking through history" (*Neverwhere*: 169). The presence of these abandoned stations challenge the accuracy of the known map of the underground, Beck's journey planner. But it is not a complete break with reality, as the British Museum station was a station that actually did exist in the real London as well.[2] The tourist guide *Under London* writes that the British Museum station "can be seen in the flash of an eye" as the train passes it (*Under London*: 33). After its closing in 1933 it was used as "a military administrative office and emergency command post up to the 1960s" (Ibid.). There is not much left of the station now, however, as the building that housed it has been demolished, and the platform has been removed. The signs of the station having existed at all can only be seen by those who already know it is there, much like London Below itself. After having read *Neverwhere*, taking the Tube is a

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[2] Pictures of abandoned underground stations can be seen on several sites online, including AbandonedStations.org.uk.

more interesting experience for the reader, as various Tube stops come alive and become more interesting than they used to be.

Neverwhere features a great deal of walking – it is a quest story, after all – but the walking takes place through tunnels and set paths, meaning that it does not quite uphold the spirit of walking. Richard does not learn more about his environment than that there are different kinds walls. Even when Richard and Door are not technically walking through tunnels, it feels as though they are. According to Joseph Campbell, the hero, Richard in this case, sets out on a journey at the beginning of the story, which will through various trials and tribulations transform him into a hero. To Campbell this is the structure of all myths, and as inescapable as the tunnels Richard walks through. During this journey, the hero adapts to his new environment: "Richard had crossed Blackfriars Bridge in the City of London many times, and he had often passed through Blackfriars station, but he was learning by now not to assume anything. "Place or people?" he asked" (*Neverwhere*: 203). The question is a sign of Richard's increasing integration into the community of London Below. Learning that his preconceptions of how the world works no longer is relevant, and when to ask questions, makes him a more efficient member of the community.

In the end the hero's journey narrative is subverted by Richard's return to London Below:

> There was a door-shaped hole in the wall, where he had scratched his outline. There was a man standing in the doorway, with his arms folded theatrically. He stood there until he was certain that Richard had seen him. And then he yawned hugely, covering his mouth with a dark hand.
>
> The Marquis de Carabas raised an eyebrow. 'Well?' he said, irritably. 'Are you coming?'
>
> Richard stared at him for a heartbeat.

> Then Richard nodded, without trusting himself to speak, and stood up. And they walked away together through the hole in the wall, back into the darkness, leaving nothing behind them; not even the doorway.
>
> (*Neverwhere*: 372)

Richard leaves London Above behind, following the trickster into London Below. He leaves the safety and rules of London Above for the much more unpredictable London Below. Richard's journey through the world of London Below is shown as a tranformative experience, following the conventions as described by Propp and Campbell. The development of Richard's character is seen by connecting character development to environment. He has become the hero of London Below, the new Hunter.

WHAT LIES BENEATH: KRAKEN BY CHINA MIÈVILLE

The magical world in *Kraken* is different from the one in *Neverwhere*, in that it is more chaotic, and not as separate from the real world. Billy is early on described as being someone who can slip out of one identity and into another. Billy is, as his friend Leon points, out "passing" for normal: "You can sneak out of the nerd ghetto and hide the [starfleet] badge and bring back food and clothes and word of the outside world" (*Kraken*: 6). Billy is "a little shy of thirty" but he "look[s] younger: he ha[s] freckles, and not enough stubble to justify "Bill"." His "black hair [is] tousled in half heartedly fashionable style", and what he wears is "a not-too-hopeless top" and "cheap jeans" (*Kraken*: 4). Basically, he could be any young man in his late twenties in London. Much like Richard, his world circles around the centre of London: the Darwin Centre, pubs by the Thames and home. But unlike Richard, Billy does have connections in the ordinary London, and as Billy's magical London is less a separate entity than is the case in *Neverwhere*, Billy chooses in the end to become a part of both worlds. He likens the magical world to having a secret. It is something that makes him special, while also bonding him to other people "in the know". These people "in the know" include the cult police — the FSRC — and Leon's girlfriend Marge. Leon is killed off early on, but Marge follows a similar character trajectory as Billy, with the difference that she chooses to involve herself in the magical world, and Billy is forced into it at first, as the titular kraken goes missing from its tank at the Darwin Centre while Billy is conducting a tour, and everybody suspects he has got something to do with it. But for both of them the murder of Leon is the catalyst for their increasing need to discover what the rules of the magical London are and how this world works.

In *Kraken*, the role of the cult police seems to be to stir the pot and then step back, while watching the different cults attack each other. And then be left with the cleanup. The members of the FSRC are genre staples: the experienced boss, Baron, the brash but skilled newbie, Kath Collingswood, and the genius outsider who consults on cases, Vardy. But in Miéville's hands, the boss turns out to be useless, the brash newbie is a woman who decides to go for a promotion at the end, and the genius outsider is the major villain in the book.

When at the end Billy makes the choice to be teleported to the Darwin Centre to stop Vardy, he recognizes this as a form of suicide. He does it anyway because he has to. It is an extreme situation that is usually not a part of everyday life. At the same time skills Billy has learned as part of this everyday life turns out to be crucial in the magical world. For instance Billy's experience in researching allows him to absorb the information from the Krakenists library quickly, and while he is skeptical, he is also curious, which is a valuable quality in this situation, in that it allows him to adapt to the magical world and figure out how it works.

Memory — tangible in museums and libraries; and intangible in your mind — is explicitly involved in the creation of self in *Kraken*. However manipulating the body in various ways through enhancements and transformations is also a part of self-definition. This is connected to the idea of the city as a living organism, and finally Billy becoming a part of the magical city through learning to see and use the city by employing all his senses. Once he has done this he is, as mentioned, a part of both the magical and the real London (and his former self is destroyed, leaving only memories).

A HIDDEN WORLD

The magic in *Kraken* is of a chaotic nature, and is expressed as part of the city. It is unpredictable, but there are rules that cannot be broken. Belief is an important focus point for magic because of how the magic works. ""I represent bugger-all!"" Billy insists, but Baron,

who has the insider insight into how this version of London works, says that ""in this world where you now are, everything represents something"" (*Kraken*: 53). It takes Billy some time to realise how accurate this is, and when he does, he is not entirely pleased by it. The magic of London works through metaphor and simile, through symbols, where being "a bit like something else" is what gives a thing power (*Kraken*: 244). To Billy, "these revelations into a paradigm of recusant science, so the goddamn universe itself was up for grabs, were part of the most awesome shift in vision [he] had ever had. But the awe had been greatest when he had not understood at all. The more they were clarified, the more the kitsch of the norms disappointed him" (*Kraken*: 247). The fantastic of the world is more fantastic before the rules are properly understood, which is, to me, an unexpected point of view from a scientist. Scientists should be interested in finding out how the world works and what the building blocks are. Knowing what causes a rainbow, for instance, does not make the rainbow itself less beautiful. But part of being a scientist is understanding that sometimes coincidences happen and events that might appear to be connected are in fact just random events. Apparently there is a thing were humans are predisposed to see connections, even where there are none, and the magic in *Kraken* is basically all about drawing connections between disparate things. Vardy understands this better than Billy does: ""He knows religion is bollocks," Collingswood said. "He just wishes he didn't. That's why he understands the nutters. That's why he hunts them. He misses pure faith. He's jealous."" (*Kraken*: 51). Faith is for idiots, which is an interesting sentiment in a book where faith also visibly makes an impact on the world and makes things such as bodily transformations and apocalypses happen.

In *Neverwhere* the apocalypse is almost incidental, and only a threat for about 20 pages or so at the very end. In *Kraken*, it is there from the start, as all the apocalypse

predictions come crashing together at once, culminating in a Krakenist apocalypse (although, as one of the characters say, "it's the wrong apocalypse"). In *Neverwhere*, Richard has premonition nightmares about killing an enormous boar (known as the legendary beast of London), in *Kraken* everybody has nightmares about there not being a future, and the psychics cannot see anything when they try to look into the future. Naturally, this makes people somewhat anxious. In *Kraken* this is called Endsickness:

> Any moment called now is always full of possibles. At times of excess might-bes, London sensitives occasionally had to lie down in the dark. Some were prone to nausea brought on by a surfeit of apocalypse. Endsick, they called it, and at moments of planetary conjuncture, calendrical bad luck or mooncalf births, its sufferers would moan and puke, struck down by the side effects of revelations in which they had no faith (*Kraken*: 116).

Faith in a specific religion both is and is not required. The psychic do not need to believe, but it is implied that without believers, there would be no apocalypse.

The on-coming apocalypse seeps into the air and mood of the city, and for most of the book the characters seem helpless to stop it, as whatever they do only seems to bring the apocalypse closer in a devastating prediction-logic: "You saw what would happen if it was stolen. So you stole it to stop it being stolen. But by stealing it you stole it. And set it off" (*Kraken*: 257). The Londonmancers can see that the theft of the Architeuthis dux specimen from the Natural History Museum is somehow related to the world ending in fire. But it is a sleight of hand, a focus on the wrong thing in the right place. The kraken is a dangerous symbol, yes, but not what will cause the burning of history: "Something had hijacked the squid finality [sic]. This was and was not the intended end" (*Kraken*: 127). The danger comes instead from the specimens from Darwin's Beagle journey, kept in the same space as the *Kraken*, and which Vardy sees when the FSRC are called in to investigate the *Kraken*'s disappearance. To Vardy these specimens are the reason he can no longer believe in the text of the bible. The specimens are symbols of evolution and therefore a threat to the idea that

everything was created by a god. In *Kraken* the two major threats of an apocalyptic ending both come from two men who want to reshape the world in their image: Grisamentum, the deathly ill criminarch who turned himself into living ink, because he refuses to die, Vardy, the cult profiler, because he misses the security of blind faith. Control, or a simple hierarchy where who is in power is obvious and unquestioned, is paramount to both men. Apocalypse in *Kraken* can be interpreted as a catalyst for change. The apocalypse can usher in a world of rigid authoritarian control such as Grisamentum and Vardy both wish for, though they have different motivations, or it can be the cause of complete destruction where there is nothing left, or it can fragment completely, usher in complete chaos. In the end it is a different kind of control that wins the day.

Billy's experience of London goes from familiar, to unfamiliar, to, by the end, a new sort of familiar. This coincides with his learning curve when it comes to the weirder, more occult side of London: blissful ignorance, complete confusion, somewhat in the know. Much like a university student, really, and this rather goes with Miéville's theme of academics in the book. Billy is a scientist, his friend Leon (who is quickly killed off in order to motivate Billy and Marge) is doing a literature phd, Varny is a professor, and the pyromancer is a teacher. I'd also say that there are similarities drawn between academics, scifi nerds (or maybe obsessive fans would be a better description) and the apocalypse cultists.

THE LAYERS OF MEMORY

In "The Library of Babel" Jorge Luis Borges makes the connection between the universe and the library, and he writes that "the library exists ab aeterno" (Borges). It is from forever; it has always existed and it will continue to do so, even after humanity is gone: "I suspect that the human species — the unique species is about to be extinguished, but the Library will endure: illuminated, solitary, infinite, perfectly motionless, equipped with

precious volumes, useless, incorruptible, secret" (Borges). This library contains everything ever written, and "it suffices that a book be possible for it to exist" (Borges). There is a sacred feeling to the descriptions of the library with its hexagonal galleries and its infinite state. The title itself links it to the tower of Babel from the bible, where one language became many (Genesis 11:1-9). The word babel is here interpreted as a Hebrew word meaning "to confuse". The library of the Kraken cultists is perhaps less grand, but it is still a sacred place, though it is underground and hidden, instead of contained in a display of grand architecture. The sacred atmosphere of libraries can be experienced in the film *Wings of Desire* (1987) by Wim Wenders which features an extended scene within a library where guiding angels gather to watch over the visitors and readers. The library's architecture works with the content (books, knowledge) and the silence to give shape to a secular church. Libraries did not begin as public libraries with access for all, however, as Umberto Eco points out in his contemplation on the purpose of libraries "De Bibliotheca":

> I began to wonder about the purpose of a library. Perhaps at first, in the times of Ashurbanipal or Polycrates, the purpose was to create a collection, in order to avoid leaving books or scrolls lying around. Subsequently I believe that the purpose was to hoard: those scrolls were valuable. Then, in the Benedictine period, it was to transcribe: the library seen almost as a transit zone. The book arrived, was transcribed, and the original or the copy left again. I believe that in some epoch, perhaps already between Augustus and Constantine, the purpose of a library was also to have people read. (Eco: 8)

After mentioning various purposes libraries might have been intended to serve through the ages (collecting, hoarding, transcribing, and finally reading), Eco ends by concluding that "subsequently I believe that libraries came into being whose purpose was not to encourage reading, but to hide, to conceal books" (Eco: 8). The Krakenist library is only accessible by the members of the *Kraken* cult, and many of the works included are first editions and only copies of works. Eco talks about the "libraries that served in part to conceal books, but also served to enable them to be found again." (Eco: 8) Scott Maisano looks at act of reading

underwater and submerging books in water in "Reading Underwater; or, Fantasies of Fluency from Shakespeare to Miéville and Emshwiller", and makes a case for books under water as a metaphor for the way the reader is immersed or not in the fantastic worlds. Billy himself "saturate[s] himself in deepwater theology and poetics" while in the Krakenists library (*Kraken*: 115), and as he does so his understanding of the magical world he is now a part of increases.

Eco ends up by describing his ideal library as "a bit like a second-hand bookseller's stall, a place where you might make a lucky find, and this function can only be fulfilled through free access to the aisles lined with shelves." (Eco: 11) If you can only find what you already know, there is no possibility of making unexpected discoveries, or making new connections between things. The creation of new knowledge becomes limited to following an already trodden path.

Michel Foucault lists museums and libraries as depositories of time/space/place/history, heterotopias and chronotopias, places where all of this meld together. John Tagg points out in "Evidence, truth and order: a means of surveillance" that "for Foucault, power produces knowledge. Power and knowledge directly imply one another. The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information. Diffused and entrenched, the exercise of power is perpetually creating knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Tagg: 262-263). The connection between knowledge and power is made explicit in *Kraken* by the presence of the striking familiars in an amusing Marxist subplot: "Readers approached the library, saw the little groups of animals, laughed and continued or, those who looked as if they understood something, hesitated and left. The presence of the circling creatures barred them" (*Kraken*: 140). This is also an example of the magical world being

present in the real world, but unless one is initiated into the magical or somehow in tune with the magical, people are unable to perceive it for what it is. That is, familiars on strike, rather than pets behaving oddly. The familiars as the proletariat, the magic users as the bourgeoisie suppressors. The library being a stage for both knowledge and access to knowledge, while the familiars are organised labour.

Kraken treats both the Natural History Museum and the various libraries (the British Library, Varney's library, the Krakenists's library) as repositories of knowledge where the connections made between the works is what creates a truth and a coherent story. The works do not exist in any important way as individual works. It is their intertextual connections that are important. The way Varny, the cult researcher, approaches his work is described by Billy as "reconstitive intelligence, berserker meme-splicing, seeing in nothings first patterns, then correspondence, then causality and dissident sense." He wonders what to call it, and Varny replies, "paranoia" or "religion" (*Kraken*: 43) thus equaling a mental disorder with belief. Varny finds "a single compelling story smuggled in bits into countless books" (*Kraken*: 111).

The Darwin Centre features biological specimens curated by the scientists employed there. Billy curated the *Kraken* of the book, and he can therefore state that the *Kraken* is no longer what it was, it no longer belongs to the sea or itself. Instead it's "a specimen and it's in the books. […] We've written it up" (*Kraken*: 461). As a specimen it has a classification, it has a place, and Billy can claim it for his own. It is a fight to persuade the universe that this is how it is and how it will be, and Billy's ability to believe in this classification as reality, and an identity marker of its own separate from the life the *Kraken* used to have, is essential in this fight.

Billy in his role as a curator and (what is called in the book) as the christ of the Darwin Centre's mnemophylax's memory, is awarded certain powers of forming reality. In

Kraken, the magic appears to be largely a question of persuading the universe that things are the way the practitioner says it is, and believing it as hard as you can. As a result, the choices the characters make during the story, and how convincing they are, makes a huge difference to the world around them. Billy is very good at persuasion.

In the world of *Kraken*, the museums of London are defended by Mnemophylaxes which are the angels of memory (*Kraken*: 163). The name is a combination of "mnemo" and "phylaxes": "memory" and "guards". They are the guardians of humanity's (or at least London's) collective memory. They are "some archons of history, not memories, but metamemories, the bodyguards of remembrance." They are not quite alive, not quite sentient, but close. Much like London's antibodies is made up of street-stuff, these angels are made up of the contents of their museums, leading to descriptions that vary from amusing to frankly terrifying:

> In the Museum of Childhood were three toys that came remorselessly for intruders — a hoop, a top, a broken video-game console — with stuttering creeping as if in stop-motion. With the wingbeat noise of cloth, the Victoria and Albert was patrolled by something like a chic predatory face of crumpled linen. In Tooting Bec, the London Sewing Machine Museum was kept safe by a dreadful angel made of tangles and bobbins and jouncing needles. And in the Natural History Museum, the stored-up pickled lineage of the evolved was watched by something described as of, but not reducible to, glass and liquid. (*Kraken*: 178)

When objects become part of a collection, and removed from their original function—toys are meant to be played with, clothing is meant to be worn—they become something else. In *Neverwhere* Door's outfit is described as the being like if someone's thrown together various outfits from the Victoria and Albert, mixing up styles throughout history. It is an amusing image which also plays upon the idea of the homeless wearing what they can find, but it is not eerie in the way the description of the "wingbeat noise of cloth" and the "chic predatory face of crumpled linen" is. The latter resembles more an idea of a ghostly presence,

something threatening. Door might not be wearing clothing in the intended combination, but she is wearing clothing which is clothing's intended purpose, whereas in *Kraken* the "chic predatory face of crumpled linen" is an object gained a sort of semi-sentience. The mnemophylaxes are frightening, but at the same time, they are also pathetic in their distance from their original intended functions. But mostly they are very fucking cool.

Once an object enters a museum collection, it becomes a part of it. The object is classified according to the current standards, and displayed according to somebody's idea of where it fits in the museum. Douglas Crimp refers to it as acquiring autonomy in his article "The museum's old, the library's new subject" about the inclusion of photography in the museums: "Just as paintings and sculptures acquired a newfound autonomy, relieved of their earlier functions, when they were wrested from the churches and palaces of Europe and consigned to museums in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, so now photography acquires its autonomy as it too enters the museum" (Crimp: 218). While Crimp's focus is on photography, the point of gaining autonomy is one that can be used for other objects or pieces of art as well. Wolfgang Ernst writes in "Archi(ve)textures of Museology" that "the museum is indeed based on fragmented, dismembered, isolated, defigured, and disjointed objects." (Ernst: 34) Removing these toys or paintings or specimens from their original context does not mean that they remain devoid of context, only that they are recontextualized in their new context as part of a museum display or collection. Ernst points out that "museographical dramaturgy is about the art of displaying missing links and about creating a sense of distance; only when space is left can the imagination of the viewer step in, and objects communicate with one another" (Ernst: 33). To Ernst too much previous contextual evidence present in the museum setting means that the object never steps out of

this context to become something else, to become a part of the museum collection which inspires the viewer to make imaginary leaps of connection between disparate things.

THE LIVING CITY

In postmodern films and urban novels, Terentowicz-Fotyga asserts, "the city is often portrayed as volatile, unstable, and indeterminate" ("Unreal City to City of Referents: Urban Space in Contemporary London Novels": 306). It is impossible to fully grasp all aspects of the city, both because of its massive size and heterogeneity, and because of its constant changeability. As a result there can only be a subjective impression of the city. Since subjective images are, well, subjective, they are changeable upon receiving and accepting new information, forgetting places, and the flow of people moving in and away from the city. The city in Kraken is presented as a living organism. The image of London "grinding against itself like an unset broken bone" in *Kraken* is an unpleasantly biological image, suggesting that the city is wounded somehow, that nobody has fixed whatever it is, and also implied is its movement (*Kraken*: 239). It is "grinding". It is not only biological though as gears are also grinding, and the mechanical and the biological is intertwined in the book.

In other sections of the novel, the metaphors are mental or psychological, rather than organic, and when "the city felt like it was hesitating. Like a bowling ball on a hilltop, fat with potential energy" it is imbued with very human feeling of hesitation (*Kraken*: 138), at the same time the image of the bowling ball "fat with potential energy" predicts a devastating event, like the city itself is getting ready to knock some metaphorical pins over.

The city is not only metaphorically alive (full as it is of people and history and myth), but is also an entity in itself. This is expressed in the novel through the actions of the Londonmancers, who in their symbiotic relationship with the city move the concept of the city as alive from metaphor to fact. The name of the Londonmancers arrives from the same

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logic that gives us necromancers, death magicians. Necromancers animate the biological dead, but the Londonmancers are magicians who use London itself as their source of magic. At one point one of them opens up a street and pulls out the bloody guts of London to read them: "Fitch was an old man in protective gear. He started the cutter. With a groan of metal and cement, he drew a line across the pavement. Behind the blade welled up blood" (*Kraken*: 186). Blood is a fluid connected to life, and the living, and is a thing that connects all living creatures.

But bodies are also grotesque:

> Guts oozed from the hole. Intestinal coils, purple and bloodied, boiled up wetly in a meat mass. Billy had thought the entrails of the city would be its torn-up underearth, roots, the pipes he was not supposed to see. He had thought Fitch would bring up a corner of wires, worms and plumbing to interpret. The literalism of this knack shocked him. (*Kraken*: 186).

This is a move only a fantastical novel could make. The metaphorically alive city can be found in other kinds of literature as well, but to truly make a city an alive entity, you need the element of the fantastic. In this, the author can show how the city is an organism dependent on several different things to exist, much like humans are dependent on air, water and so on to live. The city needs the pipes Billy thought he'd see; it needs the sewers; it needs the people; it needs all the various ways of communicating there is in the city, from roads to telephones to ordinary mail in order to be alive.

In another example, verbal messages are sent through a mailbox, and are later expressed as morse code by way of street lights. Furthering the idea that the city is a body, these messages can be seen as the city's neural impulses. The Londonmancers are the "voices of the city" and the "oldest oracles in the M25" (*Kraken*: 108). However, the way this works is not without a certain logic. Sending messages through mailboxes make sense, and even if spoken messages sent through the mail do not, the reader is familiar with the concept,

reminding us of voicemail or similar ways of leaving verbal messages to people. That the messages are translated through light signals in morse code is more unexpected, but again, not beyond the realm of message-logic. Two old ways of communication are combined through technology and magical connection with the city, in that magic is used to transmit it, and Marge uses the internet in order to decode it.

The city is further embodied by the existence of its antibodies, which are described as "clattering shapes" that are "composite things, made of city. Paper, brick, slate, tar, road sign and smell. One's motion was almost arthropod, one more bird, but neither was like anything. Legs of scaffold tubes or girder, wood splinter arms; one had a dorsal fin of broken glass in cement, *cheval-de-frise*" (*Kraken*: 385). These city-shaped things are reminiscent of the Lovecraftian monsters Miéville refers to as "agglomerations of bubbles, barrels, cones, and corpses" ("Weird Fiction": 512). These creatures are visible extensions of the city, called forth by the Londonmancers in its defense.

The grotesque is a well-established element of horror fiction, but it is not the sole territory of horror. As a concept it also belongs with the laughter. Michel Bakhtin explains "that peculiar aesthetic concept" characteristic of "folk culture" which he calls "grotesque realism": "The material bodily principle in grotesque realism is offered in its all-popular festive and utopian aspect. The cosmic, social, and bodily elements are given here as an indivisible whole. And this whole is gay and gracious" (Bakhtin: 687). Bodily functions and exaggerated aspects of the human body are both a natural element of "folk culture" and a source of laughter. But laugher can be an expression of many things, including fear, revulsion and mockery.

The decaying body is also a sight that can cause revulsion and fear, but all bodies must eventually succumb to death and be destroyed as a part of life. The city has a different life-cycle, but like the body, it also suffers from decay.

STREETWISE

Ruins is the title of a recent anthology edited by Brian Dillon dedicated to a variety of texts musing upon the state of ruins and decay in the contemporary world. In his introduction "A Short History of Decay" Dillon points out that "at the close of the last decade, economic ruin led to a rash of images of architectural and urban-planning disaster — housing development that would never be inhabited, office blocks that could not be completed — and a renewed awareness of the long decline of major industrial sites and cities of the last century" (Dillon: 10). There is something pathetic about unfinished, abandoned buildings, and buildings that never got to fulfill their purpose; buildings who are born dying. The very image promotes both fascination and anxiety in the viewer. Fascination because of the lost opportunities for some kind of life, and an anxiety because it is a stark reminder of the "long decline" of industry, which Dillon connects with the "lingering disaster" of "planetary ruination through climate change" (Dillon: 10). Ruins of buildings and abandoned places are a staple of the post-apocalypse fiction in literature and movies. In a way abandoned places are also cracks in the normal system of the city — they are no longer what they were, which means they can become something else. Decay and ruin equals broken, filthy, dirty, jagged and imperfect.

Miéville's London is pretty grubby altogether. An area of the city are described as "a stretch of low skyline and neglected brickwork" (*Kraken*: 124) where "they went past newsagents, past bins spilling from their rims, dogshit by the trees, a row of shops" (*Kraken*:

125). Or the characters are walking "in a street full of dirty and deserted buildings, where corrugated iron was almost as common a facade as brick" (*Kraken*: 205). This is not the tourist image of London, but rather the parts of the city tourists never go to, and which is never advertised, or pictured on postcards. Bingaman et al make the point that "fantasies of danger normalize neglect and decay" (Bingaman et al: 7), that is, if there is the impression of a place as dangerous, the look of the area can enhance that impression, making it unquestioned. But urban decay is also an aesthetic style that works with the New Weird genre conventions, in so far as there are any.

After she discovers her particular knack or type of magic Collingswood teaches herself magic in a abandoned hospital: "She picked her way, more than once, through a weed-littered old carpark and bust windows into a small long-deserted hospital near her house. In the quiet of what had once been a maternity ward she dutifully acted out the idiotic actions the texts described" (*Kraken*: 64). The abandoned hospitals gives a picture of science and knowledge that is no longer needed. There is something disturbing about abandoned hospitals, places of pain and healing left to rot, its mission forgotten.

Where Neil Gaiman points to the unexpected colours of London Above, China Miéville points to the opposite, in that he has his characters move away from the colour: "The station was just off the high street, much larger than he expected. It was one of those very ugly London buildings in mustard bricks that, instead of weathering grandly like their red Victorian ancestors, never age, but just get dirtier and dirtier" (*Kraken*: 19). There is nothing of the glossy fairy tale in Miéville's London, instead there is street level realism. Miéville shows the reader the imperfect flawed city, and then juxtaposes it with urban magic — miracles far from heavenly angels, and more real because of it. Magic does not leave science

completely behind however but rather links the two subjects together, suggesting that science *is* magic.

Moving through this city of magic and science proves complicated. There are many instances of characters making their way through the city in *Kraken*. At the beginning, Billy's movements are between known places, such as his home, his work, the pubs and cafés where he meets his friends; but as the mystery unfolds, he is forced further and further away from what he knows, which means he pays more attention to his surroundings. He becomes an outsider looking in, a *flâneur* mentally recording his impressions of this new environment, not with wide-eyed wonder, but with an eye towards figuring out what his senses are telling him, and how his experiences can possibly be true. Both Billy and Marge go through a process of defamiliarization as they end up in places and streets in London they've never been before, making the city they live in look unfamiliar, foreign, strange, while they themselves become outsiders trying to interpret this new city. While on the run from the Tattoo's men, Billy ends up in a "quadrant of London he recognised no more than if it were Tripoli" (*Kraken*: 73). Marge is on a quest for answers which involves travelling to places where "London felt like a city to which Marge had never been. She had thought the docklands all cleared out, bleached with money. Not this alley in gobbing distance of the Isle of Dogs, though. These felt like moments from some best-forgotten time burped back up, an urban faux pas, squalor as aftertaste" (*Kraken*: 248). Sewer imagery in this section goes with the general idea of London as a decaying city.

Elizabeth Wilson quotes George Augustus Sala as an example of the London flâneur: "The things I have seen from the top of an omnibus! . . . Unroofing London in a ride . . . varied life, troubled life, busy, restless, chameleon life . . . Little do you reck that an

[observer] is above you taking notes, and, faith, that he'll print them!" (Wilson: 64). There is a similar passage in *Kraken* as Billy is on the bus home:

> They were on the top deck, above the most garish of central London's neon, by low treetops and first-floor windows, the tops of street signs. The light zones were reversed from their oceanic order, rising, not pitching, into the dark. The street on which lamps shone and that was glared by shopwindow fluorescence was the shallowest and lightest place: the sky was the abyss, pointed by stars like bioluminescence. In the bus's upper deck they were at the edges of deep, the fringe of the dysphotic zone, where empty offices murked up out of sight. Billy looked up as if down into a deep-sea trench (*Kraken*: 26).

The recurring image of the night sky as the deep ocean is jarring in the way it flips usual navigational references around. At the same time, it is an image that works on several levels: it emphasizes the weirdness of the world Billy now inhabits, it makes the vastness of space equivalent to the vastness of the ocean, and it blurs the borders between land and ocean. It could also be seen as a reference to the way the *Kraken* is now land-bound, while also moving through the city on the back of a lorry — swimming through the city, in a way. In this reversal or boundary blurring of up and down, we also find what Bakhtin refers to as "the peculiar logic of the "inside out" (*à l'envers*), of the "turn-about," of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings" (Bakhtin: 687). These shifts and turn-abouts continue in the descriptions of how Billy makes his way through the city on foot. Marge is also important here, as she opens the door on a female perspective of the city at street level. Once, or perhaps as, Billy learns to accept his place in this magical London, the role as outsider, the one with the distance to see things, is taken up by Marge. The mistake Miéville does here is in apparently neglecting to follow through on the implications of a woman in the city. Walking through city streets is still not the same experience for women as it is for men. As pointed out by Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift in *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, flânerie is a gendered experience.

To the first flâneurs, their contemporary public women were the prostitutes. Though Wilson points out that "there were flâneuses in the sense that there were women journalists and writers." Wilson gives, among others, the example of George Sand who was "famous, among other things, for wearing male dress on occasion in order to roam the streets in freedom", something Wilson sees as "a clear indication of the limitations on that freedom" (Wilson: 70). Things have obviously changed much since this time. Still, the descriptions of Marge as she walks through the city at night is perhaps a description of a more masculine than feminine mindset: "She just drifted, she just went. Trying to ride out the night, which felt to her like a last night" (*Kraken*: 392) and "the streetlights shone at her through the haze of branches, woody halos. She walked through her nearest cheerful row of kebaberies, small groceries and chemists" (*Kraken*: 354) and "the smaller streets were as lit as the main ones, but they were furtive. A landscape of degenerating knackery, violence and eschatological terror" (*Kraken* 391-392). Earlier Marge acquires an iPod that, while playing, will keep her safe from being influenced by magic. While the iPod might be protecting her from the magical threats, it does not make a difference when it comes to other threats to a lone woman walking the streets of a city in the dark.

While none of the characters in the book are precisely what I'd call flâneurs, (flâneur implies to me less running for one's life than is the case in *Kraken*) there are sections in the book that are clearly anticipate Miéville's essay *London's Overthrow*, if not obviously in writing, then in subject matter. In the essay, Miéville follows the tradition of flâneurs of both describing the city he walks through and pointing at what he sees as contemporary social issues, such as the London riots and the forth coming Summer Olympics and the problems these cause for the normal inhabitants of London.

In *London's Overthrow* Miéville also describes the experience of seeing some young men practicing parkour: "they set off. In ragged line. They accelerate, vaulting, along walls, bouncing one by one from brick detail to concrete outcrop up onto low roofs, over and under flaking painted barriers, watched by pigeons." Miéville calls parkour "psychogeography of the limbs, filtered through Kung-Fu movies." He writes that "no number of ads, music videos, station idents featuring roof-bounding like this can make it boring, can alter the fact that watching the parkouristes lurch in way architects never intended along the buildings' innards is quite beautiful. There's salvage. A tough ruin ballet" (*London's Overthrow*: 60). A way of knowing the city through the body (plus it looks cool which is not unimportant in this case). In his article in *The New Yorker* on parkour Alex Wilkinson writes that "parkour goes over walls, not around them; it takes the stair rails, not the stairs" (Wilkinson). A *traceur,* a practitioner of parkour, thinks about the city landscape in a different way. Architecture and structures become obstacles. As far as walls and roofs remain boundaries, they are boundaries to be crossed or challenged rather than accepted. Parkour is an undeniably physical interaction with the urban landscape. Once Billy is fully initiated into the magical London, he starts to use it more as a parkour practitioner might: "Billy and Dane treated fences as something other than barriers, walls as stairways, roofs as uneven floors" (*Kraken*: 356). By this time in the story, Billy has embraced his role as prophet of *something* (whether of the Krakenist church or of the Mnemophylax protecting the Darwin Centre) or at least embraced the fact that nobody else is going to act, so he might as well, and is therefore more tightly connected to London than he used to be. He has the will and the skill to use ways of moving around London that he would have been unable to act upon before.

Billy's character development can be traced through the ways he moves through the city, through buses, the Tube, cars, walking, and finally parkour, until who he used to be is no longer there.

CONCLUSION

Cities and humans are made of spaces and memories that can be read as texts. Just as your personal subjective experiences are the basis from which your perception of the city you walk through is formed, a city can look very different to different people. James Donald points out in "Inner London" that "although the material city embodies a set of possible, preferred, or even normative scenarios, people negotiate these coercive stories in inventive, recalcitrant, and certainly less than wholly predictable ways. They ascribe their own arbitrary and inventive meanings to places: 'I had a girlfriend who lived there' — 'That used to be the best butcher's in London' — 'That's where they filmed Peeping Tom'" (Donald: 265). Without these "arbitrary and inventive meanings", the way a person connects to the city is more distanced. Once those connections are in place, people feel closer to the city, a part of the environment. This connection is highly personal, as Neil Gaiman and China Miéville demonstrate in their respective reimaginings of London.

These reimaginings show that the standard maps of London are simplifications of the actual city landscape; an entire magical world exists beneath and between the clean lines of Beck's journey planner, or the standard tourist map of London. The messiness of the city comes to light through interruptions into the regulated "normal" realities of the protagonists, making it explicit that what looks clean, tidy and objective fact on the surface is not necessarily clean, tidy or objective, but instead a cover for a chaotic mess of connections which appear invisible because they are not looked for. In *Neverwhere* the disruption by the magical world into the "real" world is limited and momentary, while in *Kraken* the magical world is a part of the city. After reading these stories of interruptions, readers might see the world in a different way as well. Like the protagonists their view of the world has been

changed. Ordinary places such as the underground and the Darwin Centre take on new layers of meaning, thus widening the perspective of what the city can contain of wonders.

A balance between tidy and messy is better than pure order or pure disorder as both extremes tend to end up as dystopias. Heterotopic spaces are places where time accumulates; Temporary Autonomous Zones are created to be dissolved. The fantasy aspect allows for a reordering of space and time that is impossible in more "realistic" fiction. Body and technology can be linked in an intimate fashion — city and body become one; time erodes architecture and the human body, but time also creates layers of memories. London's history makes it a particularly rich city for these kinds of urban fantasies, but London is not the only setting for urban fantasies. Created cities are common, opening up a different discussion on the interpretation of history and time onto space (some kind of synthesis of contemporary space going on here), it would be interesting to see how city palimpsests are revealed in different cities, such as Seattle or Chicago or Singapore, cities with radically different histories, older or younger than London, with different populations and legends to draw upon to colour the world, and different maps to smash apart like mirrors and rearrange into something new.

Temporal transition takes place in the text, in *Neverwhere* through physical movement, and in *Kraken* through recalled past and predictions of the future. Time as a linear experience is a necessity for the creation of a sense of self. Drawing connections to what you has experienced before, relying on past experiences and being able to predict what will happen in similar situations in the future, is an important, and often subconscious, mental experience. Time, however, is frequently not as straightforwardly linear. The past and the present intertwine to form a whole, and the expectations for the future influence your perception of the present as well. To be unable to make these connections is upsetting, even

more so when you cannot trust your memories, because what you remember may not be true. This is complicated because views of the world are based on memory; events are interpreted according to past experiences, as are your experiences of new and old places.

The focus of time displacement is different in the two novels. Although both feature visions of the future, the focus in *Neverwhere* is through physical movement of places and people who are somehow unmoored from time, while in *Kraken* places and buildings are being burned out of time, making them never-having-existed, and thus making your memories of where you have been unreliable. Visions of the future form important parts of the plot in both *Neverwhere* and *Kraken*. In *Neverwhere* it is in the shape of the protagonist's recurring nightmares of being attacked by a beast. Richard does not realise what this nightmare means until he is confronted with the legendary beast of underground London. In *Kraken* the visions come through the endsickness of the psychics as they face the apocalypse headed their way. Both the nightmares and the visions have been warnings of future events.

In *Neverwhere*, places and people from the past still exist in the present. In one section, the characters walk "over cobbles, and through mud, and through dung of various kinds, and over rotting wooden boards. They walked through daylight and night, through gaslit streets, and sodium-lit streets, and streets lit with burning rushes and links." They are essentially walking through the history of London's streets, through the "alleys and roads and corridors and sewers that had fallen through the cracks over the millennia, and entered the world of the lost and the forgotten" (*Neverwhere*: 308). It is mentioned several times in the book that people and things are not the only elements that can fall through the cracks in reality. The House of Arc family dwelling is an example of how disparate times and places can still somehow be connected, like a website is connected to other webpages through links, what Jenkins calls "hypertextual geography". Door's family's house is a nexus point which

connects places in different spaces and times. These displaced places lend texture to London Below, make it seem as though it has been here as long as London has existed, which adds authority and legitimacy to the narrative, and also a sense of history. These places also very obviously connect the present with the past. They are also a disorienting factor for Richard, making his outsider status obvious, and intensifying his role as flâneur and observer.

The physical movement in *Kraken* comes through a folding of space and teleportation. In one example a small package grows impossibly larger: "The cloth gave. The package opened. It bloomed. With a gasp of air it concertinaed, expanding, outflicking and filling out, and what reached from its end was a hand." (*Kraken*: 58) In *Kraken*'s London much is hidden within other things, out of sight but present; the threat is both inanimate and biological. In this folding of space, layers are folded on top of each other, before again being pulled out and regaining its former shape. Nothing is actually lost in this; it just appears as though it is. The teleportation is different as it is explicit in the book that people and items that are teleported are ripped apart and destroyed, only to be replaced by an identical copy.

In *Neverwhere*, Richard has doubts whether his experiences are real and he has trouble trusting his own memories. Has he really been in London Below, or has he been wandering around London as a homeless man? As his friend Gary points out: "You must admit, it sounds more likely than your magical London underneath, where the people who fall through the cracks go. I've passed the people who fall through the cracks, Richard: they sleep in shop doorways all down the Strand. They don't go to a special London. They freeze to death in the winter" (*Neverwhere*: 368). The fantastic experience Richard has been through challenges the narrative of homelessness that Gary points out. At the same time, in the real world, Gary is correct. Richard can leave London Above behind in favour of the magical

London, choosing his invisibility, but this is not a choice people get to make in the real world.

Neverwhere and *Kraken* are fantasies following genre conventions but through their use of London as setting the authors show the possibilities of reinvention, recreation and heterogeneity that are hiding under these conventions. Characters going through transformations from ordinary to extraordinary are common elements in fantasy fiction. This transformation includes a rejection of the protagonists's previous identities in favour of the new identity as hero or a special person with special powers. In the monomyth or in the "here-and-back-again" stories the protagonists thus transformed return to their original world, but this is not the case in these books.

The transformations of both Billy and Richard are linked to their individual experiences of the city landscape. Magical subcultures are such tempting prospects for the protagonists despite the inherent danger to body and self outside the area of regulated normal life because these magical spaces open up for new interpretations of the city landscape, and allows the protagonists to assume new roles far beyond those they inhabit in the "normal" world. The danger comes from being outside of a predictable, routine world of "normal" experiences, and being challenged by different worldviews. Through the protagonists's increased knowledge of the time and space particular to their respective magical Londons the picture of a subjective reading of urban space emerges. Their reading of the city changes, their mental maps are altered, and ultimately they themselves are altered. Richard has changed from an anonymous man who more or less stumbled his way aimlessly through life to a man who is a hero in London Below, and who yearns to become a part of something bigger than he is, such as the community in London Below. Billy, on the other hand, has had his body destroyed and reformed, so he has literally died and been reborn into the magical

London. They have both become a part of something magical and discovered an entirely new perspective of the city. To them, London is now a city of miracles and marvels.

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