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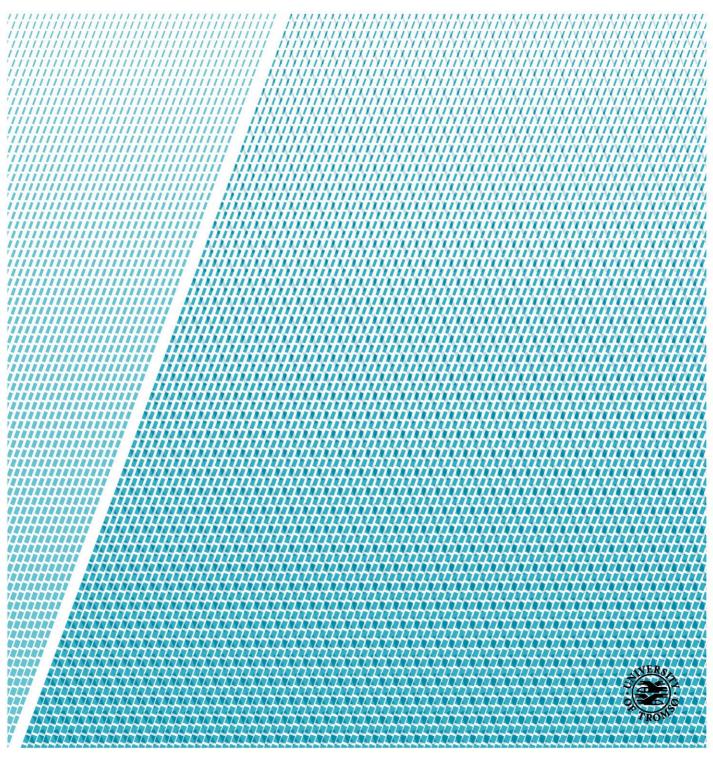
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Border Theory: A New Point of Access into Literature

A border-theoretical reading of China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun*, *The City and the City* and *Embassytown*

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Abstract

"Border Theory: A New Point of Access into Literature" seeks to explore the use of a border-theoretical approach to literature. Border theories by Johan Schimanski, Stephen Wolfe, David Newman, Homi Bhabha, and a set of different border planes – the symbolic, epistemological, topographic, temporal and textual border plane – provide the scholarly framework for this thesis. Border theory studies the notion of hybridity, diversity and doubling, discusses the border and the change between the visible and invisibility, reviews binary oppositions and goes on to explore how borders can move beyond binaries and create a new space – a third space. The thesis uses three novels by China Miéville to examine border theory: *Un Lun Dun* (2007), *The City and the City* (2009) and *Embassytown* (2011). Miéville is a science fiction writer that introduces the genre of weird fiction. The main idea is that border theory, as its own theoretical point of access into the field of literary studies, can contribute with a new aspect of literary analysis, and that China Miéville's contemporary weird fiction invites and benefits from a border-theoretical analysis. Border theory creates a new access-point into the theoretical analysis of novels, and further explores and shows how borders are represented in literature. *Un Lun Dun* presents the reader with a city and its abcity where the border between the two is not easy to see and understand. In addition, the abcity UnLondon is filled with strange spaces and extraordinary characters that give no shortage of borders to explore. *The City and the City* is a detective story that crosses the border between two sister cities – Besźel and Ul Qoma – with an invisible law enforcement agency operating within the invisible border between the two cities. *Embassytown* uses language as a barrier and a border between species. Set in the far future, the novel describes and explores complex relations and divisions of space, time and people – and the complications surrounding the inability to communicate. These novels have been chosen because of their borders-inquisitive qualities, and together they can each be read as a piece of the puzzle to a more complex understanding of borders and border crossings – both in literature and in real life. "Border Theory: A New Point of Access into Literature – A border-theoretical reading of China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*" is a thesis with a theoretical approach to contemporary literature – exploring the literary field of border theory.

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1 Introduction

"Borderless world" is a concept that is used in today's world of globalisation and cooperation. David Newman writes in "Lines that continue to separate us" that "[t]he border is transformed from a barrier, through which the other side is invisible, to a place where reconciliation, cooperation and coexistence take place" (31). Newman's claim suggests that humans construct borders and boundaries on various scales to create a world in which one can belong to. To belong can be an experience of existing within a shared physical space, a group of friends, within a family, or within each individual. Often, borders are associated with divisions in geographical space between different countries and nationalities. However, borders are more than just a line, a fence or national borders. Borders can be perceived as either visible or invisible, but borders can both be separating and bringing people, nations, groups, and societies together. Borders also exist within the world of fiction. Some borders mirror the world and the time in which a piece of literature was written, and others creating an alternate reality where the rules, boundaries and borders in real life does not apply or does not exist at all.

Borders in fiction introduces an interesting topic of research because, border studies can show the reader how to develop and pursue a new approach to literature, and further how the reader can pursue this approach through the use of border theory. China Miéville is an English writer of fantasy and fiction, and he is the author of several works of literature that have been published one after the other since his debut as an author in 1998 with his first novel, *King Rat*. Born in 1972, Miéville is a fairly young writer, but over the last 20 years he has published a great line of literary works in different literary genres – ranging from novels, novellas and short stories, to children's books and comic books. Miéville creates worlds or scenarios that are viewed as fantastical and supernatural, and his work is often placed within the genre of science fiction. In addition to being categorised as science fiction, Miéville's work has often been described as *weird* fiction, and when reading his work, one can understand why. H. P. Lovecraft was one of the early weird tales writers, and he described the genre as containing more than just the supernatural, mystery and secrets.

> The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a
> sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of
> breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present;
> and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness

becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a
malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which
are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of
unplumbed space. (Lovecraft 3)

China Miéville's writing fits perfectly into H. P. Lovecraft's description of what a weird tale is. Weird fiction is a genre in literature that mixes together horror, fantasy and science fiction, and Miéville uses this genre to create worlds and fictional realities that the reader most likely has not begun to imagine. Miéville's weird fiction presents numerous borders within his literature, and his novels have elements of urban surrealism in the use of cities and spaces that are easily relatable to the reader. The fictional space that he creates includes both concrete and symbolic borders, and well as several other border planes – as will be discussed below – that can be found in Miéville's literature and further be read as a way for literature to cross the border from fiction to reality. In this regard, these borders can be read by the reader, and further assigned over into real life. Miéville's use of what is known to introduce a new reality within his fiction is one of the key elements that makes his literature work well within the genre of border studies. This connection creates a border between the known and the unknown, and further allows for the use of elements that is often beyond the imagination of the reader.

This thesis explores how borders are represented and how they function in literature through three of Miéville's novels. The first novel, *Un Lun Dun,* was published in 2007 – a novel that takes on London's abcity, UnLondon, and through the use of border elements and different levels of spaces, the novel is intriguing and mysterious in a weird way. *The City and the City* published in 2009 – a novel with a border between two cities where there physically is no border, thus challenging basic human senses. And finally, *Embassytown* published in 2011 – a novel where language and the ability, or rather inability, to communicate are central. China Miéville's writing and ability to describe complex relations and divisions of space, time and people can be used to describe, analyse and understand the borders that we live with and create in today's society. These novels have been chosen because of their borders inquisitive qualities, and together they can each be read as a piece of the puzzle to a more complex understanding of borders and border crossings – both in literature and in real life.

1.1 Conceptual idea of border theory

Border theoretical thinking and a border theoretical reading of literature introduce concepts that previously have belonged to other fields of study. For example, studies of territorial and geographical borders where "many geographers are unable to grasp the idea that a border can be a non-territorial construct" (Newman 45), or sociologists and psychologists that explores the abstract borders that separates and connects people and further explores "the very essence of difference" (Newman 45). These fields of study have existed long before the study of border theory within literature and fiction. Within border theory, concepts like liminality, visibility and invisibility, hybridity and third space has been used to describe concepts belonging to other theoretical approaches to society, culture and geo-territorial studies. Within border theory in literature these concepts can be used to describe elements and variations of borders in fiction. As Mireille Rosello and Stephen Wolfe write in the introduction to *Border Aesthetics* that the "point of entry [into borders in literature] is based in the disciplines currently recognized as the humanities and social sciences", and they further specify that they "treat borders as methodologies […] and objects of study" (1). The study of border theory and borders in fiction thus functions on top of, and in addition to, what previously exist of theoretical fields that discusses and theoretically explores elements surrounding borders and border-crossings in both a territorial and an abstract aspect.

Within the studies of borders in literature there are different border planes that each conceptualizes the different corner-stones within border theory. The idea is to create a baseline for a border theoretical analysis of literature that attempts to bring a wide spread of theoretical approaches closer together. The use of border planes is one way into border theory that can help explain the different borders in literature.

> A border poetics reading attempts to connect borders on two basic levels: the level of the borders represented in the text and the level of the text itself as a bordered representation. These two levels are further multiplied to five planes on which borders often seem to coalesce in texts: topographic, symbolic, temporal, epistemological and textual planes. (Border Poetics, 2018a)

The *topographic* border observes a border on the topographic border plane, and thus represents some kind of space or place. This space can be between different nations and other geographical divisions, but it can also be inside or outside your home or the body as a border. The topographic border can be seen as a symbolic border if it represents some kind of symbolic space – thus the symbolic representation of the space is of importance. A symbolic

space creates and presents space rather than being placed in a specific geographic location, for example money on your bank account or a shared space between friends or lovers. The *symbolic* border operates "on the plane of the mental or metaphorical landscape" (Border Poetics, 2018d). Symbolic borders represent the borders that cannot be seen, for example metaphors, thoughts and ideas. Some of these symbolic borders are presented as binary oppositions, such as rich or poor, male or female, black or white, good or evil. The *temporal* border observes the border plane of time, thus separating different periods in time within literature. The temporal border plane is a border that expresses different life events, such as birth, marriage, imprisonment, or it can bring forward oppositions for example between married and unmarried, child and adult, before and after. The *epistemological* border operates on the border plane of knowledge – the border between the known and the unknown. In literature, the epistemological border is a border that is often used because of its ability to create mystery and keep the reader captured in the text. The epistemological border is also a symbolic border because of the way the border plane operates on the border between the known and the unknown, which is a binary opposition concerning the mental and metaphorical landscape of knowledge. The *textual* border functions as the border plane of the text itself. The textual border plane "typically divide between different linguistic, stylistic, discursive, narratological, thematic, or compositional areas of the text, or between the text and its outside, or between different typographical divided sections of the text (chapters, paragraphs, lines, sentences, etc.)" (Border Poetics, 2018e). The textual border is thus a border plane that works within the text itself, how the text is written and how it is divided up into parts.

The different border planes contribute to the text and the literary genre in their own specific way, and when reading a text with these in mind the borders within each text become easy to locate. This is true with almost every theoretical approach, but the use of borders and border planes in literature is thought-provoking because of the way they contribute to the text as a whole. Imagine a crime novel without the binary opposition of good and evil, or a bildungsroman without the temporal border of child vs adult and becoming of age, or a poem without the textual border plane that uses lines and stanzas to enhance meaning. When studying border poetics and analysing novels trough a border poetic reading, the importance of border theory becomes further evident. This master thesis focuses on the border studies in order to point out how the different borders in the text contribute to the text as a whole. The intention thus becomes to explore and show how the reader can develop and pursue a new approach to literature, and how the reader can pursue this approach through border theory.

1.2 The novels through border theory

Johan Schimanski & Stephen Wolfe introduce, in the collection *Border Poetics De-limited, the border-crossing narrative*, and question what regulates the border crossing in each narrative. They argue that a border both separates and joins two sides and its differences. Each depends on the other, and at the same time they are separate – linkage as separation (17). There is an ambivalence about the border, where the border can be "both a wall and a bridge" (17). This ambivalence provides a way of answering questions like: "Does the protagonist manage to overcome the border? Is the border an opponent or a helper? Is the border and the symbolic difference it projects affected by the crossing? Does the border cross the border-crosser? Is the border-crosser a *border subject*?" (18). This way of questioning borders in narratives is one way into the field of border studies, and a possibility for the individual reader to explore literature in a new way.

In the novel *Un Lun Dun* the reader meets best friends Zanna and Deeba. They live in Kilburn, north in London, and they are just like any other teenagers. That is until strange things begin to happen, and the two girls end up in the abcity UnLondon. Miéville has created a parallel city to London that can be hard to imagine. In addition to understanding the border between London and UnLondon, the reader has to get acquainted with multiple borders within UnLondon itself – a transportable bridge, windows into other worlds and spaces, and possessed characters. Borders are everywhere – from the doorstep of your house to the personal space surrounding you – and borders are increasingly present in *Un Lun Dun*.

Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* works on a topographical border in the separation of space between London and UnLondon, and within UnLondon itself. The novel further has a symbolic border separating the good and the evil, and thus creating tension and an exciting element into the novel – especially because of how the border between good and evil is possibly difficult to distinguish and recognise. The epistemological border plane is in addition an important part of this novel because the whole plot depends on knowledge, and further the distinction between what is known and what is unknown. The element of knowledge, or lack thereof, is increasingly interesting because of elements in the novel – such as the Propheseers living on a bridge where knowledge exists or a book that are full of prophecies – however right or wrong either of them might be.

The second novel used in this thesis is Miéville's *The City and the City*. The novel is a crime novel unlike any other, and the combination of the weird fiction genre and crime fiction

makes this story both interesting and entertaining in its search for answers. The story is set in a liminal zone where two cities are joined together, but in such a way that one does not acknowledge the other. Inspector Tyador Borlú is a part of the so-called Extreme Crime Squad in the city-state Besźel, and the story begins with him trying to solve the murder of a young girl in the outline of the cities border to Ul Qoma, a city-state that shares a border with Besźel. The problem is that this girl, Mahalia Geary, was not killed in Besźel, but in Ul Qoma. In *The City and the City*, Besźel and Ul Qoma cannot see, hear or smell each other. Between the two city-states is a border space that belongs to neither and crossing into and beyond this border space is illegal. When Borlú stands in Besźel, he is unable to see, hear, smell or sense anything at all that belongs to Ul Qoma. This is the case for all the citizens of Besźel, and of course vice versa for the citizens of Ul Qoma. The solving of the murder becomes increasingly difficult the more he understands the extent of the murder-mystery.

There is no difference between the city and the city, but the separation of two city-states is constructed in such a way that makes the space in the novel ambiguous and hard to imagine. Linguistically there cannot be more than just one city, and the constructed separation between the two is difficult to visualise. The textual border plane in this novel thus plays an important role in contributing to the novel as a whole. Miéville uses such self-identical language to create a border that is linguistically unnoticeable, but also in the division of parts and chapters in the novel. The division of topographical border space is thus in the centre of the novel, and without it the novel would be just another fictional crime novel in the midst of so many others.

The epistemological border plane in *The City and the City* is both complicated and challenging. The novel is based on the notion of seeing and unseeing, and the laws that depict what is legal and what is not. The border plane of knowledge becomes increasingly complicated when one has to unsee the opposite city-state, and thus literally has to exclude the buildings, people and sounds that you know to be there and to be true. Although it is difficult, crossing the border from one city-state to the other is quite normal, and when moving from Besźel to Ul Qoma you have to unsee, unhear and unsmell everything that you leave behind in the other city. Ultimately, the citizens of each city leave behind a piece of their own knowledge when crossing the border – the known becomes unknown, and the previously unknown becomes available to the citizens and their senses.

The third and final novel in this is Miéville's *Embassytown*. The novel is set in the far future where humans have been forced to colonise a distant planet. This science fiction novel describes a planet inhabited by aliens, the original inhabitants, living side-by-side with the

human colonisers, and most of the plot takes place in a colony called Embassytown. Living on this alien planet without the ability to speak the unique language of the alien residents, named the Ariekei, only a few privileged have the ability to communicate through language. The novel's main character, a human colonist named Avice Benner Cho, cannot speak the Ariekei tongue. She is, however, at the same time some sort of living simile created for the Ariekei language so that they can speak through her even though she herself is unable to. The name of the Ariekei tongue, Language, requires that one speaks two words simultaneously, and every word that is spoken by the Ariekei must exist and must be true. Most of Embassytown's citizens are unable to speak in such a way as for the Ariekei, also called the Hosts, to understand what they are saying. Ambassadors have thus been bred solely for this purpose, and with two mouths and one mind they are able to communicate between the human colonists and the Hosts. One Ambassador consists of a pair of humans, and together they speak simultaneously to the Ariekei in Language. The Hosts cannot not understand any other form of communication, so this is necessary for the two species to co-exist.

The different border planes in this novel makes it both easier and increasingly difficult to understand the text. In contrast to both *Un Lun Dun* and *The City and the City*, *Embassytown* is set in an alternative universe, on a planet and a colony that do not exist at all in the world that we live in and know. Topographical border planes are important in all three novels, but more so in *Embassytown* because Miéville has created a space that takes place far outside of our own earth. Further, the epistemological border between the reader and the novel thus becomes grander, this due to the border between what the reader previously knows about the space within the novel and the place created for the plot to unfold within. For example, the reader would have to read through a great deal of the novel to be able to understand all of the names, words and references. The epistemological border within the novel itself is relevant when seeing how not all have access to knowledge because of the lack of language skills and the lack of a lingua franca. The human colonists thus have to live within a space that speaks only one language – Language that is not accessible to most of them. They are able to communicate with each other but are dependent on Ambassadors to keep communication open between the humans and the Ariekei, resulting in slow and restricted communication.

Border theory is a way of interpreting literature that opens up relevant and important themes within each novel. In this manner, border theory can contribute to an alternate reading and analysis of novels that through decades have been read by thousands of individual readers and critics. This is why reading literature with the use of border theory and border studies are

a crucial direction within literary theory. China Miéville's three novels all have borders operating on several different border planes – topographical borders, epistemological borders and symbolic borders that have been shortly introduced here in the introduction, but also on the textual level both within each novel and on the level of the novels compared to each other. I will in this thesis use Miéville's *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* to illustrate how the reader can get a new experience of novel reading with the use of border theory. Using border theory to read and analyse literature can give the reader a larger space of interpretation, in addition to giving the author room to creatively give his or her literary work space to create several levels of interpretation through different border planes. Within the three novels chosen for this thesis, *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, that means reading Miéville's novels by applying border theory to unlock elements in each novel that contribute to the text as a whole.

2 Border theory – clarification of theoretical background and key terms

In China Miéville's writing, as in almost any types of writing, borders can be found if the reader knows what to look for. One interesting thing about the way Miéville writes is his approach to literature and how he addresses borders created by and within society today. He further uses his own writing to address and point attention to the different borders that exists in society. Before the analysis of *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, it is necessary to clarify certain key terms within border theory and explain how these are used in the process of analysing the three novels.

Reading literature can in itself be perceived as an act of crossing borders. The reader does not only cross the border between reality and fiction, but also work between various ways of interpreting the text. As Schimanski & Wolfe write in their chapter "Waiting" in *Border Aesthetics*, reading is an act of waiting – "A border causes a standstill, a distance and difference in time and space" (Houtum & Wolfe 129). Reading creates an in-between space, a third space, between the beginning and the ending of each particular reading sequence. Further, within the act of reading literature, several different borders contribute to the novel as a whole.

> […] literature works mostly with textual and written media and works of literature are framed with beginnings and endings; they feature textual thresholds and shifts between sections, styles and narrative modes, and they present a sensible and interpretative border to the person who is reading them. (Schimanski & Wolfe "A Conclusion" 164)

Not only does each particular piece of literature create a border between reading or not reading, between unfamiliarity and knowledge, but it also creates a border within itself. There is a threshold between the different sections of the novel, styles used and narrative modes, all of which are presented and used in various ways to contribute to meaning, understanding, and knowledge.

2.1 Border Poetics and Border Aesthetics

Johan Schimanski & Stephen Wolfe have edited the book *Border Poetics De-limited*, a collection that explores the field of border theory. The back-cover states that the essays in this collection "deal with significant political, national, cultural or aesthetic frontiers, in literature, film and art". The idea is to bring traditional border studies in literature and culture closer

together, reminding the reader of "the globality of border experience". There will never be one way to a universal theory that is obvious and entirely true, because "[…] different writers [and readers] will approach the border from different perspectives" (Schimanski & Wolfe 11). The globality of the border experience and the several different approaches to borders is what makes border theory so intricate. Borders in literature are always presented and available for the writer to write and the reader to read, but they still need to be processed and analysed – although a theoretical reading of literature requires a special interest in the particular theoretical field. There is a need to address these borders, to make them visible, and to create space for a relevant portal into the critical study of literature. The need for borders poetics and border aesthetics within the theoretical field of literature comes from how border theory can add to an already extensive field of literary theory. Knowledge of border theory can help future readers and writers to process and analyse both future novels and those that already exist from a new perspective.

2.1.1   In/visibility

The difference between, or the border between, the visible and the invisible plays a vital part in all three of China Miéville's novels, even though the in/visible is portrayed differently in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*. Chiara Brambilla and Holger Pötzsch have in *Border Aesthetics* discussed the concept of the visible versus the invisible. The chapter, "In/visibility", discusses the border, the visible, the invisible, audio-visuality and the relationship between them. The creation of a border "establishes the [internal and the external], thus framing the visible and the invisible" (Brambilla and Pötzsch 151). However, the notion of in/visibility is not as concrete as just the difference between what can be seen and what cannot. Visibility can be understood as different forms of recognition, control or even ignorance, and both visibility and invisibility can both occur as a conscious choice or as something unconscious. In politics, as a lot of the chapter "In/visibility" focuses on, the difference between visibility and invisibility can mean a difference in power relations, and whoever controls the in/visible controls the people. An excellent example of this is for example China or North Korea where the nation's people do not have access to all information about their own country or the world outside. Censoring of information means to make the visible, and what should be visible, invisible to certain people. Perhaps the immense issue here is that censorship can happen without the conscious realisation of it happening at all, and thus adding to the epistemological aspect of access, or lack of access, to knowledge.

The in/visible in fiction can be portrayed in various ways, from the simple to the complex, and can create tensions and borders within a novel. A notion of in/visibility can be the distinction between an epistemological border between what is known and what is unknown, both to the characters within the novel and to the reader – for example, the very specific and weird border between Besźel and Ul Qoma in Miéville's *The City and the City*. The point is that "[i]n/visibility may refer figuratively to other senses than the visible or to the *sensible* in general, and also to *epistemological borderings* such as the inarticulate, the incomprehensible, the unknown, the unrecognizable, the irrelevant, the *monstrous* or the *indeterminate*" (Schimanski and Wolfe "A Conclusion" 151). Within these lines of in/visibility China Miéville's three novels operate and creates borders specifically connected to the senses and the epistemological border of knowledge.

Brambilla and Pötzsch argue for the presence of *the Other* in their chapter "In/visibility" and exemplifies the Other with "[t]he illegal migrant, the refugee [and] the stateless" and how these "are all deprived of appearance in the public sphere" (73). In connection with the epistemological border of knowledge, the Other can be understood as the difference between knowing and not knowing, and in extension the difference between the included and the excluded. The included would be the one with visibility and the ability to see, and the excluded would be the one that does not. The Other is present in all of Miéville's three novels. The other city in *The City and the City*, Propheseers in *Un Lun Dun*, or the Ariekei in *Embassytown* all give examples of how the Other plays a vital part of each narrative, and further exemplifies the establishment of the epistemological border plane within literature.

2.1.2   Border zones and medial borders

One key element that needs to be introduced into the theory of borders in fiction is the theoretical discussion of the border itself. "Borders cannot limit themselves to absolute lines" (Border Poetics, 2018f). The liminal space that represents a threshold, a border, between two sides has its own way of opening up a new space of interpretation and meaning. The transition from one space to another is in itself a space of its own. To limit one's mind to think only in binary oppositions is to exclude a vital part of what the border represents, and it is necessary to acknowledge that there exists something in between. It is necessary to acknowledge liminality and liminal zones in order to add to the theoretical understanding of borders. In this in-between space the possibilities are many, and perhaps in the not knowing and in the search for answers, for a way to fit it, the border space itself comes to life. "Border zones are places

of negotiation and hybrid interpretation, [and] they can also become contact zones between the real and the imaginary" (Border Poetics, 2018f). It is not only one side or the other – Besźel or Ul Qoma, London or UnLondon, or between the understanding of different languages. The idea is that the novels can show how literature can move beyond binary borders and open up for multiple border zones that can be complex and interesting to explore. To open up for multiple borders and borders zones can be enriching in how the liminal space, and the understanding of liminality, can give the reader a broader understanding of each individual work of literary fiction. Further, to think beyond binary oppositions give the mind the opportunity to see what lies in the in-between and not be decreased to just two sides.

Literature, and borders, are so much more than just one side or the other with a fence or a wall in between. David Newman writes that "[t]he border is transformed from a barrier, through which the other side is invisible, to a place where reconciliation, cooperation and coexistence take place" (31). He builds on the idea that the border is not just a border that separates one place from the other, but that the border in itself is a space that should be given other characteristics than just to separate two sides. Border zones and liminal spaces open up for multiple borders that are even more complex than "ordinary" binary borders, and both borders and liminality can create a new space for a deeper understanding of literature.

2.2 Liminality, hybridity and Third Space

Liminal space and liminality is a part of border theory in how it describes the border relations and the *inbetween* when discussing the border and what lies on each side of each specific border. Liminality is "[d]erived from Latin *limen* meaning "threshold", liminal refers to a transitory, in-between state or space, which is characterized by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, potential for subversion and change" (Border Poetics 2018c). As Rosello and Wolfe write in the introduction to *Border Aesthetics*, "[l]iminal space should […] be considered as a location of contact, the negotiation of cultural values and of relational identity" (11). Liminality is thus not what separates two or multiple entities but also involves and includes the *border-crossing*, the *inbetween* and the creation of a *third space*.

Homi Bhabha introduces in his *The Location of Culture* an "in-between space", namely the theory of a Third Space.

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols

of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be
appropriated, translated, historicized and read anew. (55)

Although Bhabha, a postcolonial theorist, introduces this space within sociocultural thinking,
his string of thought is relevant in border theory in the way it opens up for a third, or several,
interpretations of the same novel and the borders that each novel consists of.

Homi Bhabha's Third Space theory on cultural hybridity can in short be explained as a
third space where people, cultural and social structures can fit where there is no room for the
first or second space. The first space is the home, the identity each person has, that follows
each individual person into the second space. The second space is a place where people
impose their own space into a new space. Both the first and second space is not necessarily a
physical place located on a map but can be categorised as values and structures that created
social and cultural identity. The third space is created when there is a conflict in the
articulation of identity of the first space into the second space. Without moving too far into
the definition of identity, the thought is that identity is created through expression of identity
from the first space. Without the ability to articulate that identity in the second space, the third
space is created to make room for the identity from the first space to be allowed to be
expressed.

Homi Bhabha terms in *The Location of Culture* his ideas of hybridity and Third Space
an "alien territory" (56).

It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are
constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we
begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or
'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical
instances that demonstrate their hybridity (55).

The third space is a liminal space and seems to be an *inbetween* space that makes it possible
to explore identity, cultures, national histories and people in a new way that allows for an
understanding of society and culture, not only in relations to each other, but also within itself.

Homi Bhabha explained his theory on hybridity and Third Space in an interview with
Jonathan Rutherford:

[F]or me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original
moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third
space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the
histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new

political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received

wisdom (Rutherford 211)

His explanation of the Third Space and what it represents is moving closer to Mireille Rosello and Stephen Wolfe's definition on *liminality*. In the introduction to *Border Aesthetics*, Rosello and Wolfe introduce liminality and liminal zones as an important part of borders and border aesthetics because it opens up for the border to "not only separate but also connect divided entities and identities" (11). Rosello and Wolfe further draws the connection to Homi Bhabha and his third space theory, and that this space can both separate and connect individual sides at the same time. In the interview on Third Space, Homi Bhabha stated that "liminality opens up the possibility of articulating [different], even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities" (210-211). Liminality opens up for a cultural change, a notion of hybridity, that enables and allows for other positions to emerge from the from the third space. Third space and liminality are important in border theory because of how they open up for the border itself, the border zone, to be of importance. Liminality is a threshold that enables change and new positions, and in literature the threshold often marks just that. It is not only a separation of two entities, but also a connector, a device of change that in literature allows for multiple interpretations of the same liminal space.

Sovereignty is imperative in relations to liminality because sovereignty tries to "determine our position in relationship to the border (are we inside or outside?), and to determine the position of the border itself" (Görling and Schimanski, 112). Sovereignty meaningful because sometimes there is no room for the in-between, and the choice between either side needs to be made. That does not necessarily mean that the border itself is impossible to cross, but simply that there sometimes needs to be either or, for example one cannot physically be both inside and outside at the same time. However, liminality and liminal zones allows for this third space of existence. In *The City and the City*, for example, this third space is Breach that can be in both Besźel and Ul Qoma at the same time. Liminality enables a third possibility to binary oppositions and is thus essential both in cultural and political discussions as well as within literature.

2.3 Why border theory?

There are many points of access into literature from within the theory of border studies. Understanding literature through border studies can open up a whole new world within each piece of literature, and further broaden each reader's horizon. The different border planes

allow for a theoretical definition of each border found within *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, and often these are borders that readers have read and understood in one way or another. However, by introducing a theoretical definition within border theory to the same element of the novels as readers and critics have done in the past, this master thesis seeks to open up for a broader understanding of key elements in each novel. There is no "correct" way of reading and interpreting a novel, but border theory allows for a deeper understanding of the curious border elements in China Miéville's novels.

A novel can challenge its audience and make them question ideas, constructions and boundaries that are both physical and psychological. Liminality, hybridity, Third Space, border planes and border zones are all elements present in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, and in this master thesis I will explore and argue how a reader can use border theory to understand and analyse the fictional world of China Miéville. Miéville's writing is often imaginative and uncanny, and his balance of fantastic and absurd elements, settings and characters combined with universal truths is one of the keys to how his novels contribute to border theory thinking. His created, fictional worlds alone devote to border theory – mirroring cities and binary oppositions –, and combined with specific fictional elements – Breach, Pons Absconditus, similes – his novels portray aspects of borders in fiction that contribute to border theory and a border theoretical reading of literature. As Miéville writes towards the end of *The City and the City*: "Ul Qoma's government announced a new campaign, Vigilant Neighbours, neighbourliness referring both to the people next door (what were they doing?) and to the connected city (see how important borders are?)" (367). The author himself stress how important borders are within *The City and the City*, and further in *Un Lun Dun* and *Embassytown*.

2.4 Positioning of my thesis

This master thesis is not the first to address the writing of China Miéville and will probably not be the last, but this thesis is the first to explore Miéville's *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* through border theory. It is therefore necessary to give insight into how this thesis is different from other writer's reviews and articles of the novels.

China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* has often been reviewed as a novel that encourages critical thinking. Joe Sutliff Sanders explores in his article on "The Critical Reader in Children's Metafiction" the subjectivity in literature, and especially why it is preferable that children read leftist literature because of how it encourages critical thinking and a belief in

social justice. Jessica Tiffin discusses cultural hybridity in *Un Lun Dun* and gives interesting insight into the doubling and mirroring used in the novel. Especially, she points out the similarities between London and UnLondon, and the teenage heroine that is not actually the heroine in the story, but the sidekick. Tiffin points out that Miéville is politically aware and draws a connection between Miéville and Homi Bhabha, acknowledging their cultural awareness of hybridity in contemporary culture (40). This master thesis will also use Bhabha's notion of hybridity to analyse borders in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, but this connection will be drawn from a border theoretical point of view instead of a socio-cultural one.

China Miéville's *The City and the City* has received multiple reviews that address the notion of visibility, and how Miéville has used the terms "*un*seeing" and "*un*visible" when writing about visibility in his novel. Peter Marks has discussed visibility and invisibility in *The City and the City* in relations to surveillance in his article on "Monitoring the Unvisible", and his article addresses visual awareness through the use of Miéville's novel. The article "suggests how *The City and the City* might productively add to our understanding of what we see, how we are trained to see, and what we might unsee, examining the intriguing implications of that expanded visual awareness" (Marks 222). The article is surveillance-oriented and focuses on how Miéville's idea of visibility and invisibility is written and how this idea affects identity and the identity of place. Niall Martin asks in his article "Unacknowledged cities" about the relationship between the known and the unknown, the acknowledged and the unacknowledged, an about modernity in China Miéville's *The City and the City* – suggesting that Miéville's novel is not just a novel operating with two cities topographically on top of each other, but of doppelgangers in more ways than one. Beyond that, Martin argues for how *The City and the City* can remind "us of the social production of space: that the cities we live in are shaped as much by perceptions of gender, race, age, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, cultural affiliations and religious belief as by their material dimensions" (714). Peter Cowley and Barbara Hanna argue in a similar way that Martin does in their article "Breach of Contact" where they discuss how one can read Miéville's *The City and the City* as a novel that takes on cultural hybridity and "the management of cultural difference" (2). As in *Un Lun Dun*, a connection has been made between cultural hybridity and Miéville's novels. This master thesis will draw similar connections to hybridity but go further into Homi Bhabha's *third space*-theory and look at how the borders create space in the novel.

China Miéville's *Embassytown* takes on language and further how language can both separate and bring people together. In "Forked Tongues", Joseph Weakland argues for the use of language as a theme within science fiction novels, and points to Miéville's *Embassytown* as an example as a work of fiction that "works to disrupt our common understanding of language" (94). Weakland goes on to claim that "Miéville asks his reader to reconsider how we differentiate humans from other entities on the basis of language, and what we believe the language of other species means" (94). If one believes in aliens and other unknown species is a discussion for another time, but it does raise a valid question about how language creates distance and borders. Will Nediger also discusses the use of language as a theme in *Embassytown*, and in his article on "Whorfianism in Colonial Encounters" he argues for how the novel describes language as "a kind of Whorfianism" where the idea is "that language determines though, [and] that it is impossible to think in ways that are not permitted by one's language" (21). The idea of Whorfianism in *Embassytown* is intriguing, and although this thesis also will discuss the importance of language and the relationship between language and thought, the thesis will do so by the use of border theory. Further the thesis will draw attention to these borders that can be found in *Embassytown* and discuss how they influence the novel as a whole, both within itself and in connection to *Un Lun Dun* and *The City and the City*.

This master thesis is thus not the first to discuss the writing of China Miéville, and as the thesis will show in its discussion of *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, the borders found in each novel is not necessarily borders that have not been discussed previously by other authors and critics. The distinction between previous works and reviews and this master thesis is however how these borders are discussed and analysed, and how this thesis uses a border theoretical approach to each of the novels, and further discuss how these borders affect the novels.

3 Un Lun Dun

China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* operates on several different border planes, and combined they contribute to both the plot and to reading of the novel through border theory. First of all, the division of space in the novel is the baseline of the whole novel. By separating London and the sub-city of London, *Un*London, into two different spaces, the topographical border plane represents some kind of space that is divided into two mirroring cities. London is known and real in the world outside of the novel, but Miéville has created an abcity of the English capital that can exist without the London's citizens knowledge of the shadow city, and the border between the two cities is in itself both unique and interesting.

> Abcities have existed at least as long as the cities […]. Each dreams the other.
> There are ways to get between the two and a few people do, though very few
> know the truth. This is where the most energetic of London's discards come,
> and in exchange London takes a few of our ideas – clothes, the waterwheel,
> the undernet. (Miéville *Un Lun Dun* 109).

Not only are the two cities connected in ways of exchanging ideas and material, but the border itself is seen as a connector rather than a separator. One can say that London get the better half of the bargain by giving what is already trash and worthless to UnLondon, but the citizens of UnLondon thrive with what is given to them. They call their technology "MOIL"-technology, which stands for "Mildly Obsolete In London" (63). Once something is thrown away in London, it is doomed obsolete, and a lot of it seeps through into UnLondon where it can be reused as new moil technology. Ultimately, the two cities are co-dependent on each other. The interdependence between the two cities function well within the theory on liminality in how it does not only separate but also connect two divided entities. Liminality opens up for the interpretation of the border between London and UnLondon to not just be what separates the city and its abcity, but how the border also can be a connector of interdependence. London provides its abcity with obsolete items to be reused as new technology, and UnLondon helps London with the removal of great masses of garbage and gasses.

The specimen quote above demonstrates the third space that is created between London and UnLondon. In his description of abcities, Miéville describes how it is possible to "get between the two", alluding to the interpretation that there is something more between the city and its abcity than just the border. This inbetween space represents more than just the binary opposition of two cities, and further implies for the existence of a third space in the

inbetween. "To get between the two" can refer to the possibility of moving between the city and the abcity, but it also leads to a greater understanding of production of space in *Un Lun Dun*. The distinction of space is not in either London or UnLondon, but also within each character and further within elements, things and places in UnLondon.

Several elements in Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* is written as its own space within the abcity of UnLondon – a forest house, the windows in Webminster Abbey, Pons Absconditus, the UnGun. The UnGun, the only weapon to defeat the Smog, is located within the Black Window in Webminster Abbey – the UnLondon version of Westminster Abbey, covered in spiderwebs. "The window doesn't just kill you,' the book said. 'It takes you right out of the world. No body left, no clothes, no trace. Swallows up whatever comes close. It's the perfect predator" (337). The Black Window is not the only window in Webminster Abbey, and in their search for it and the UnGun, Deeba and her friends get a good look on the windows that can remove people from UnLondon completely. Like a black whole, crossing the border into one of the windows would swallow explorers and those who dare go near them. "Deeba saw one window emerge from another, then eat its own regurgitator. It was endless" (369). Walking into the unknown territory of Webminster Abbey, Deeba crosses both a topographic and an epistemological border or boundary. They have no way of knowing what lies within each window or if they ever could get out from it if emerged. Getting out of one window might mean getting trapped in another. The windows themselves thus become a border between knowing and not knowing – much like Pons Absconditus that will be discussed below – in addition to how the windows represents some kind of space that can be everything from unfamiliar rooms, water or just plain water (369). The liminal space between the outside and the inside of each window comes with ambiguity and fear of the border-crossing between what is ultimately two different worlds.

3.1 The representation of good and evil

The doubling of the same city allows for a natural separation of opposites in *Un Lun Dun*. The plot unfolds upon the symbolic border of binary oppositions. Most of all there is the border between the good and the evil – the smog, the cannibalistic giraffes and stink-junkies on the evil side, and Zanna, Deeba, Hemi, the Book of prophecies and the Propheseers on the good side. This mental and metaphorical landscape can be used to categorise the characters into binary oppositions that gives the reader a tool to use while reading the novel. The binary opposition between good and evil is relatable and easy to understand, and further can close

the gap between the novel and the reader – making the novel increasingly readable. The separation of London and its abcity UnLondon is in itself a separation of two binaries, and like a reversed mirror the separation of the two cities show how they are different rather than how they are similar. This doubling of cities creates perhaps the most sizable binary opposition in the novel – showing how the mirroring city, the abcity, of London can be so different from its mothering city.

The plot in *Un Lun Dun* enfolds itself around the binary opposition between good and evil, and contains elements of mystery, ambiguity and surprise to create further tension between the two cities and between characters in the novel. The Smog is presented as a living, radioactive cloud that can think for itself. The cloud, that grows stronger by absorbing chemicals, gases and fumes from factories and garbage, is in the novel the evil that threatens both London and UnLondon. Miéville has used the real life Great Smog of 1952 that lead to pollution of chemical gasses in London to create a believable history to the development of the Smog. In the novel, since its last attack, the Smog has grown stronger and smarter. Since its last attack in London it was forced to leave and travel to UnLondon because of the Clean Air Act of 1956, and in the last 50 years it has grown bigger, stronger and smarter. It consumes chemicals and gases as well as books and knowledge, and it grows more and more powerful with every passing day. The Propheseers explained the history to Zanna and Deeba. "For five days, half a century, it assaulted London. It killed *four thousand people*. Its worst single attack. And still most of you didn't even know you were at war!" (110). In the novel, Miéville use elements that exists in real life London and in the history of the city, and in doing so creates enough ambiguity of actual events to introduce the third space into his writing. The Smog can give a plausible explanation to actual events in the English history and, as with lies, narratives constructed around a part of the truth are often exceedingly more accessible to the reader.

The character Zanna is originally the opposite side of the binary opposition between good and evil. The Smog as the ultimate evil villain in the narrative, and with Zanna as the heroine, the Shwazzy, that is destined to save the city from evil. She seems to be the main character in the beginning of *Un Lun Dun*, and her character is titled as the Shwazzy, "the chosen one". Instead, in a turn of events, Deeba must step up to the plate and take over the role as UnLondon's savour and help defeat the Smog, becoming the UnShwazzy. Miéville did not have to use two different protagonists to make the novel work as a fantasy novel with a heroine that saves the world from evil, but in doing so he has created a border between the predictable and unpredictable representation of good in the novel. The binary opposition

between good and evil, right and wrong, is not that binary at all. In *Un Lun Dun*, the heroine in the story is the one not destined to save the city, and in using a second protagonist instead of Zanna, the chosen one, as the ultimate heroine of the story, Miéville has created a space of interpretation that goes on to explore prophecies and destiny even further. Deeba sees no other solution than to fulfill Zanna's destiny when Zanna loses her memory and is unable to fulfill the prophecy. In doing so, Deeba opens up for a space between what is ultimately good and ultimately evil – a third space that can be created for those that believe it possible. Deeba is then written as the antihero of the novel. She is the sidekick that needed to create space for herself to be able to achieve the task destined for someone else. The third space is represented in both Deeba and the Smog. Deeba creates her own space to be able to fulfill the burden of saving UnLondon from the Smog, and the Smog creates its own space in the search for ultimate power of UnLondon. The creation of the antihero makes the novel stand out from others that perhaps are more predictable. Further, the use of an antihero also takes the novel closer to borders and border theory in the creation of the third space that is necessary for Deeba to create for herself to be able to move forward in her journey. The character of Deeba breaks free from the binaries that she otherwise would be caught in, and she creates her own destiny through believing in herself to fulfill the destiny of someone else.

Throughout *Un Lun Dun*, the understanding of the binary opposites of good and evil is put to the test. Characters initially thought to be good turn out to be double-agents operating for the opposite side. This brake in binary oppositions is confusing in the way that it creates ambiguity between who to trust and who not to trust. The symbolic border plane and binaries do exist in the representation of good and evil. However, Miéville's novels go beyond these restrictive binaries, and move closer to Bhabha's introduction of a Third Space. The presence of the third space in the novel creates mystery and allows for an ambiguous interpretation of what could have been simple binary elements in the novel.

The Smog represents the evil side of the binary opposition between good and evil and is the ultimate antagonist in the novel. However, the character of the Smog creates a space of ambiguity in the novel in the way that it operates in the shadows and blind spots in the narrative. Deeba and those with her that seek to defeat evil cannot fully understand their opposition when there is an ambiguity to what the opposite side of the binary is. Newman writes that "[t]he border is transformed from a barrier, through which the other side is invisible, to a place where reconciliation, cooperation and coexistence take place" (31). The latter description of the border is of particular of importance because it clearly states that good and evil cannot fully exist in just binary oppositions, but also in a space of coexistence with

each other. In between two sides, across the border and in the inbetween space, there can exist two or multiple ideas of what reality should look like. In *Un Lun Dun* this inbetween is enclosed around the perception of what UnLondon should look like, and specifically who will possess the power.

3.2 The bridge from somewhere to somewhere else

Un Lun Dun operates on several different border planes, but of them all, the epistemological border plane might be the hardest one to fully recognise. While working on the plane of knowledge, the epistemological border plane in the novel is both represented in the difference between what is known and what is unknown to different characters, citizens and different spaces in the novel, but the epistemological border plane itself is also represented as a literal bridge of knowledge in UnLondon. When Zanna and Deeba first ventured to UnLondon, they were taken to see the Propheseers, and to get to them they needed access to the bridge that they were on. The problem is that the bridge, Pons Absconditus, is not just any bridge and accessing it can be really difficult. In chapter 19 in the novel, Zanna and Deeba get their first look on what is a bridge, but a bridge unlike any other.

> Rising from the night streets of UnLondon was the arc of the Pons
> Absconditus. It was a suspension bridge with supporting up-down iron curves
> like two dorsal ridges. It should be spanning a river. It was not. Instead it rose
> out of backstreets from nowhere in particular, went over the roofs, and came
> down several streets away in a different nowhere in particular. (97)

The name of the bridge, Pons Absconditus, is in itself quite clever. *Pons* is the name of a part of the human brain that connects one part to another. Without it, the brain would not be able to communicate with each location, thus leaving the brain without the ability to function normally (Healthline). This definition also applies to the definition of the bridge itself. A bridge connects two sides, and thus serves as a connector like pons does in the human brain. The definition of *Absconditus* is, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "hidden God: God who in his remoteness seems to ignore human suffering" ("absconditus"). The Latin Dictionary defines the word as the adjectives "hidden, secret and concealed" and the verbs "hide, conceal and secrete". When reading the novel and exploring what the bridge represents, this definition of its name makes a clear statement about Miéville's intention when both creating the bridge as the "home" of the Propheseers, and as the bridge representing the epistemological border plane of knowledge. The bridge is both a connector and a place where

knowledge exists. The bridge is unreachable to many, and in extension, knowledge is not accessible to all. So even though the Pons Absconditus means both connector and hidden God, it is still hidden, concealed and secret to those not invited on to the bridge.

In chapter 19, "The Evasive Bridge", Zanna and Deeba seeks access to the bridge to find and talk to the Propheseers, but the bridge is described as "shy", "evasive" and "like a rainbow", moving and changing location to protect itself from unwelcome visitors. The bridge was not built in a specific location in particular but appears somewhere were people know they can find it. "It's like any bridge: it's to connect somewhere to somewhere else" (98). The bridge serves as a connector in the way a bridge is supposed to, but the way it changes location and how it is to many unreachable makes it both a connector and a separator in UnLondon. Not everyone has access to the bridge, and thus, not everyone has access to the knowledge that exists on it in the form of Propheseers and the Book of Prophecies. "This bridge is rarely just where you want it to be. Only once you're actually on it. And only Propheseers and our guests know how to get there. It's all a question of remembering what a bridge does – gets from somewhere to somewhere else" (106). The bridge itself can move around and access places in UnLondon in addition to being a bridge between UnLondon and London, which is how Deeba returns to London after finishing her quest. Meaning, Pons Absconditus represents a powerful border in the novel.

"Borders cannot limit themselves to absolute lines" (Border Poetics 2018f), and the evasive bridge Pons Absconditus is an excellent example of how a border can be represented by an element that, in the novel, is both considered a border in itself, but that is also rewritten and given other characteristics that allow the bridge to reach outside of its own limitations as a border. The bridge is no longer just a border between one place and another, but is given human characteristics, like shyness, and is allowed to be a space in itself, a third space. Although the border between London and UnLondon might be seen as the most important one in the novel because it separates the city of London to its abcity, it can be argued that the ultimate border representation in the novel is Pons Absconditus. The bridge itself can function as a binary opposition between one place and another, but the bridge is also a space of its own. The bridge operates on the topographical border plane and on the epistemological border plane at the same time, and the epistemological plane brings forward the symbolic border of the binary opposition between knowing and not knowing. As Newman writes, "[t]hrough narrative, we perceive the borders that surround us, which we have to cross on a daily basis and/or are prevented from crossing because we don't "belong" on the other side" (41). This shows how the different border planes work together and intertwine with each other in the

way that the border planes themselves is not just one or the other, but that even border planes work outside of the strict restriction of binary oppositions. It further amplifies the connectedness between the different border planes in how an element in literature, like Pons Absconditus, can function as both a separator and a connector – a connector in its basic function as a bridge and a separator in how so many don't "belong" on the other side or on the bridge itself.

3.3 Border elements in Un Lun Dun

Un Lun Dun is full of considerable borders like from the use of an abcity to the use of the antihero, Deeba the UnShwazzy, the border between the city and the abcity, windows in Webminster Abbey or Pons Absconditus. The novel is also full of mirroring characters, places and elements that further deepens the understanding of how UnLondon is an abcity. Strange creatures, places and spaces are introduced throughout *Un Lun Dun*, all of which contribute to how this novel is ideal for a border theoretical analysis. Elements like the Unbrella or rebella, the UnGun, and Hemi and other ghosts that can walk through walls and possess stolen bodies are just a few examples of borders presented, and in addition to contributing to the complexity of the novel it also creates a sense of the Other and a third space. These characters and elements seem to not fit into the status quo the rest of UnLondon. The environment, norms and the culture are new and unfamiliar to the reader, and in such a way does all of these elements and characters represent their own space, and together they create UnLondon on a higher border-level. The multiple levels of borders in various sizes is one of the things that makes the reading and analysis of *Un Lun Dun* through border theory so relevant and enriching.

4 The City and the City

China Miéville's *The City and the City* portrays interesting and complex borders where they physically do not exist. A topographic border demarcates the two cities, Besźel and Ul Qoma, because they share the same geographical space. Their relation to each other is complicated because of each city's inability to see, hear, smell or sense the other. In addition, they have separate politics, police, economy and separate ways of existing. In this sense, the novel moves away from the traditional topographic border that purely represents some kind of place or space and moves on to divide and complicate the city-space that both Besźel and Ul Qoma share. Within the novel, visibility and invisibility plays a vital role in the plot of the narrative and constrict the characters and the plot and creates boundaries and frames that the novel has to exist within. The creation of the border in *The City and the City* "establishes the [internal and the external], thus framing the visible and the invisible" (Schimanski and Wolfe "A Conclusion" 151). The creation also moves further creating a border that separates and connects to sister cities without the use of a typical border space.

4.1 The border-space

The City and the City, written as a detective story, works around this shared geographical space between two cities. It could have been written like any other detective story within crime fiction, or for example been separated by national borders, state borders, a bridge, or even different social and economic classes. However, Miéville has chosen to add a complex but vital element in between everything Inspector Tyador Borlú has to work around to solve the murder mystery in front of him. The in-between border space that links together Besźel and Ul Qoma, but also separates them, is what makes this novel so complex and interesting to look at through a border poetic reading.

The border-space between Besźel and Ul Qoma is a border figure in *The City and the City*. The border is not physically there, it cannot be touched or seen, and it is not a high wall that literally separates the two cities. It is a figure in the way it is using taught knowledge of what can and cannot be sensed, so it is not only a topographical border-space but also one on the epistemological plane within border theory. By limiting the amount of information one person can have about the space surrounding him or her, the invisible border between Besźel and Ul Qoma serves as a border even more limiting than a fence or a high wall in the way it excludes all human senses. A fence would only limit one person to the touch and actual presence of the other side. A wall would limit a person in the same way as a fence would, but

it also eliminates sight and possibly reduces, but not entirely exclude, hearing and smell. This is quite reasonable, and the limitations these latter types of borders create is known and understood in themselves. The border between the city and the city however, operates as an invisible space that separates the citizens of each city.

4.1.1 Breach

Newman states that "[b]orders constitute institutions that enable legitimation, signification and domination, creating a system of order through which control can be exercised" (32). In the novel, Breach is that institution which controls the border space that separates Besźel from Ul Qoma. Breach is in the novel first introduced as a verb, "You know that area: is there any chance we're looking at breach?" (Miéville 16). To breach means, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an "infraction or violation of a law, obligation, tie, or standard" ("breach"). The verb is used to describe the violation of the law that says a person cannot cross the invisible border between Besźel and Ul Qoma. Violating this law is called breaching. However, breach is also used as a noun in the novel. Breach, with a capital B, is introduced as some sort of policing law enforcement or organisation set to inspect the border zone between the cities. If a person is caught breaching, he or she belongs to Breach. Inspector Borlú gives an example of both the verb breaching and Breach in the novel, telling the story of a man who had killed his wife in Besźel, ran from the police and by accident "emerged into Ul Qoma" (74). He thus crossed the invisible border between the cities while trying to escape the Besźel police, and in doing so breached. "In his frantic liminality neither we nor our Ul Qoman colleagues would touch him, though we and they knew where he went, hiding in Ul Qoman lodgings. Breach took him and he was gone" (74). If caught breaching, people belong to Breach. They are just taken away, never to be seen again, and this element of not knowing exactly what happens if the citizens are caught breaching can in itself be a powerful tool in maintaining order and control over the border. The mystery surrounding Breach is as big a mystery to Tyador Borlú as it is to the reader. The shared conundrum between the epistemological border of knowledge creates a shared third space that allows for both Borlú and the reader to move between what has previously been set as the frames surrounding each city and, in extension, the whole novel.

  The amount of control that Breach has over both Besźel and Ul Qoma is quite strange. As Newman states, "Borders are normally perceived as institutional mechanisms aimed at protecting what is inside, by excluding whatever originates from the outside" (34). Breach is that institutional mechanism in the novel, the only one, and it is strange to have this type of

border control that serves, protects and operates on both sides of a border separating two cities. Newman further discusses what he calls the "unknown other" and how it is natural to "perceive invisible spaces as places that threaten us" (41). Breach is almost like a third space, belonging to neither Besźel or Ul Qoma, and can in itself be described as a third city. This space that no citizen has access to, a place that no one has seen, and a force that has the power to find and capture anyone that does not follow the law, either intentionally or by accident. The notion of invisibility, both when discussing Breach and the sister-city, brings with it a difference of power relations that leads to fear and an imbalance in control.

One power belonging to Breach is the ability to be everywhere at all times, see and hear everything, and if someone breaches the border, they are there to contain and control the situation within seconds. "The Breach came. Shapes, figures […], moving with authority and power so absolute that within seconds they had controlled, contained, the area of intrusion. The powers were almost impossible, seemed almost impossible, to make out" (Miéville 81). The ability to see everything and be everywhere at all times is a privilege that belongs to Breach alone, and in contrast, neither citizens of either Besźel or Ul Qoma possesses that same ability. The contrast between Breach, Besźel and Ul Qoma is thus separated on the epistemological border plane of knowledge and creates three entities – two that have access to only one half of the city, and Breach that has access to both.

Knowledge can be understood as a form of power. Whatever knowledge one possesses that another does not can be viewed as a difference in power. Breach in Miéville's *The City and the City* can be described in relations to Jeremy Bentham's idea of a prison where knowledge and visibility is essential in relation to power. Bentham's idea of a prison was the inspiration for Michel Foucault's idea to develop his own thought on imprisonment and human power relations, and Foucault's idea can further be seen in relations to Breach in Miéville's The City and the City. Moya K. Mason describes Foucault's idea of the Panopticon in relations to knowledge, visibility and power. The basic idea of the Panopticon is a prison constructed as a circle, and from the guard tower placed in the middle of the circle, the prison guards are able to see inside every cell within the prison. The inmates, however, were unable to see each other and the guards, and thus confined to their own cell. "Constant observation acted as a control mechanism; a consciousness of constant surveillance is internalized" (Mason). In Foucault's thought, "power and knowledge comes from observing others" and the Panopticon can thus serve as a metaphor to explore the idea of Breach and the power/knowledge-relations to Besźel and Ul Qoma (Mason). The fear does not lie in the

crossing of the border itself, but in the thought that Breach is there watching if someone does, without even knowing if that is actually the case.

When looking at separation of cities in the real world throughout history, the distinction between those borders and the border in *The City and the City* is quite interesting. As an example, the Berlin Wall that separated East- and West-Berlin in the 1960-1980s. The wall separated to parts of the same city both physically and ideologically through almost three decades, and although heavily guarded, illegal and possibly life threatening, crossing the wall was not impossible at all. Many died while trying to cross the wall, either by digging under it or climbing over it, but many did successfully get across the wall and lived to tell the tale. In comparison, the invisible border between Besźel and Ul Qoma is impossible to cross without being seen. The power that Breach possesses is so grand that those unfortunate enough to try crossing the border ultimately end up being caught – regardless of if the breaching of the border was intentional or not.

Fortunately for the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma, the power of Breach is restricted to the border zone itself. "The powers of the Breach are almost limitless. Frightening. What does limit Breach is solely that those powers are highly circumstantially specific" (Miéville 83). The limitation of Breach gives the residents of the respective cities the opportunity to control their own space to some extent – meaning that each city controls their own space except from the border zone into the other city. Nevertheless, the possibility of Breach is always present and is in itself limiting. The idea that a member of Breach is always watching and always seeing is a frightening one, but "[t]he insistence that those circumstances be rigorously policed is a necessary precaution for the cities" (Miéville 83). The cities dependence on Breach is what creates Breach's power, because without it "what is Breach?" (84). The panoptical vision that Breach possesses over both Besźel and Ul Qoma is a part of how Breach manage to maintain their position between the city and the city and demonstrates how the notion of in/visibility plays a vital part in *The City and the City*.

4.2 To see and unsee

The City and the City is in itself a novel that can be quite confusing. In having to see and unsee things that are right in front of them, the characters seem to have the ability to turn a blind eye to what should be seen. This idea of people being unable to see certain things works well as a metaphor for the real world and can be seen in relations to for example major issues that exist in the world. People are begging for change in the streets, asking strangers for

money to get a meal, and more often than not these people are perceived as invisible. If it is a conscious choice or not, everyday people walk by beggars basically ignoring, or unseeing, their presence and existence. So, the notion of unseeing is not that far-fetched an idea as one would think.

One of the key elements in *The City and the City*, perhaps even the most important part, is the notion of seeing versus unseeing. The distinction between not being able to see and literally *un*see is quite vital to the understanding of how the notion of visibility creates an even greater border between Besźel and Ul Qoma. Not being able to see is often blocked by something external – for example a high wall or a building – but to unsee what is right in front of you is something entirely different. The internal force, the "choice", to literally unsee what you should be able to physically see is more complicated and even more difficult to comprehend. Children raised in either city is trained from birth to unsee the opposite city, in addition to not being able to hear or smell anything that does not belong to the city that they live in. "The early years of a Besź (and presumably an Ul Qoman) child are intense learnings of cues. We pick up styles of clothing, permissible colours, ways of walking and holding oneself, very fast" (Miéville 80). The important part of unseeing is that it is precisely that – *un*seeing. It is not just the fact that something is invisible, but it is consciously unseen.

As Chiara Brambilla and Holger Pötzsch discuss in their chapter "In/visibility", the creation of a border "establishes the [internal and the external], thus framing the visible and the invisible" (151), and in *The City and the City* the border is highly important to what the citizens can see and not, thus adding to the complexity of in/visibility. Invisibility is in itself an element that limits the human senses, and in literature invisibility is often used to create ambiguity, mystery and as a literary element to create tension and distance. In Miéville's *The City and the City*, in/visibility is used slightly different and not just as a binary opposition between seeing and not seeing. It is tempting to discuss the political intension that can be found in the way these citizens consciously *un*see what is right in front of them, especially in contemporary society where a lot of people live in ignorance to many evils of the world – a conscious choice to ignore beggars on the streets or how millions of people in another part of the world are suffering from poverty, diseases, war and hunger.

4.3   Between the city and the city

The idea of seeing versus unseeing in *The City and the City* is not as far-fetched as one would like to think, but the idea of literally unseeing a whole city is still pretty far out there. To add

to the confusion of visibility, Miéville introduced David Bowden. Bowden, an author within the narrative, has written a book named *Between the City and the City*, and in his book, Bowden introduces the idea of a third city existing between the border of Besźel and Ul Qoma. His main argument for supporting his idea of the third city is based on the fact that neither Besź or Ul Qoman citizens would notice people from this third city because of the strange relationship between them that do not allow for them to see each other. Unseeing opens up a space between the two cities for there to exist another city, which Bowden has named Orciny, living on top of, or inbetween, Besźel and Ul Qoma.

To add to the complexity, not a lot of people know about the book's existence or have even heard of the third city. When Tyador learns about it, he is intrigued by what the third space can mean to him and to both cities surrounding him.

> Orciny's the third city. It's between the other two. It's in the dissensi, disputed zones, places that Besźel thinks are Ul Qoma's and Ul Qoma Besźel's. When the old commune split, it didn't split into two, it split into three. Orciny's the secret city. It runs things. (Miéville 61)

Tyador is trying to solve the murder of a young girl, and he learns that she is obsessed with this idea of a third city – a city that hides in the shadows created in between two cities that has to unsee each other, and thus works further on the epistemological border plane of knowledge. Not only does each citizen have to come to terms with the fact that they will never truly possess the whole truth because one half of the whole city-space will always be on the other side of the border, but now the idea of a new, unreachable place has come forward as another space in the novel that is even more unreachable than both Besźel and Ul Qoma.

4.4 The third space

David Bowden's creation of Orciny creates a new component in the already complex relationship between to city states in *The City and the City*. As if it were not enough that two cities, existing practically on top of each other, has to unsee each other, this new element of unreachable space creates a new element of tension within the novel. Not only does it add to the list of things that the citizens are unable to see, but the lack of knowledge about this third space is what is so special about it in contrast with both Besźel and Ul Qoma. Not only is there a topographic border space that adds a new space between two cities, but it is combined with the epistemological border plane of knowledge in the way that it is utterly unreachable to

either city state. Besźel and Ul Qoma can neither prove nor deny the existence of this third space, of Orciny, because neither city has the capability to see if it really did exist.

The idea of *un*seeing in *The City and the City* has been widely discussed and analysed, but Orciny brings forward a new element of visibility in the way that it is not unseen but rather totally invisible. Orciny thus introduces a new form of visibility in the novel, and perhaps this distinction between visibility and invisibility is more relatable to the reader. Homi Bhabha introduces the third space as a space that is created where there is no room for certain ideas or individuals within the first or second space. The first space referring to the home or identity of each person and the second space referring to the space where people impose their first space, or their identity, without difficulty. Although Orciny is a fictional city which David Bowden has created in his book with the same title, the idea that Orciny introduces in *The City and the City* is that there can exist a place or a space for those that do not fit into this strict categorisation between Besźel or Ul Qoma. The separation of Besźel and Ul Qoma is what makes the existence of Orciny possible. Orciny can exist in dissensi, in the zone that was created between the city and the city, in the space that neither Besźel nor Ul Qoma controls and that neither city can actually see.

Orciny is the ultimate third space. Alongside with Breach, Orciny is unreachable to the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma, creating a border between the two cities, Breach and Orciny. In addition to being unreachable, the border creates a difference in power relations between the three city-spaces and Breach. *The City and the City* does not merely work on the topographical border plane in the separation between two cities, Besźel and Ul Qoma, but the topographical border plane intertwines with the epistemological border plane in the way the border, the in-between space and conscious unseeing created limitations in knowledge.

The third space in *The City and the City* creates ambiguity in both the characters in the novel and in the reader. Homi Bhabha writes in *The Location of* Culture that the third space "makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process" (54). He further claims that the third space is "the *inbetween* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (56). *The City and the City* would have been just another crime fiction novel without the usage of third space, hybridity and borders. The intricate border relations between Besźel and Ul Qoma combined with the role that both Breach and Orciny play in the novel makes *The City and the City* an ample example of the importance of borders in literature. The novel does not simply operate with two sister cities with a complicated , that exist beside one another, but further builds on what exists between the city and the city. The creation of the third space inbetween Besźel and Ul Qoma amplifies to the mystery and ambiguity of the plot

and further exemplifies how borders and borders in fiction not always can be reduced to one side or the other. In *The City and the City*, the border itself, the inbetween space, is a vital part of the plot, the characters and the perception of space. In addition, the novel uses the third space between Besźel and Ul Qoma as a separator of geographical space and of citizens, but also as a connector in the way both cities are dependent on Breach. The third space is ambiguous in both structure and meaning, but without it the two cities probably would not have the same cultural or city structure that they do in the novel.

5 *Embassytown*

The third and final novel is China Miéville's *Embassytown*. The science fiction novel is set in the far future where humans no longer live on the planet Earth but have been forced to vacate to a distant alien planet. Several elements in Miéville's *Embassytown* can create confusion in the reader. In this geo-temporally foreign location the rules of living are based on many new elements that the reader has not encountered previously. The sense of time for example is not measured in years, months or days but instead measured in kilohours. "When I was about 170 kilohours old I left Embassytown. I returned when I was 266Kh, married, with savings, having learnt a few things" (Miéville *Embassytown* 18). Kilohours and the uncanny sense of time present one example of how *Embassytown* can be a difficult novel to get acquainted with in the beginning. The temporal border plane is the border plane that expresses different life events, and the kilohours that accounts for time is different than in the real world. The temporal borders in *Embassytown* are an important part of the plot in how the perception of time frames the events that happen in the novel into the past, the present and the future, and further how Avice Benner Cho's perception and knowledge develops throughout the novel. The close link between the epistemological plane of knowledge and the temporal plane of time draws attention to the development of the narrator in this first-person narrative.

5.1 Language

Avice Benner Cho is the protagonist in China Miéville's *Embassytown* – a girl who is one of the human colonisers in a future world where humans have spread out to different planets in the galaxy. This border-crossing geo-temporal framework sets the theme for language in this science fiction novel and the difference in the ability and inability to communicate. On the planet Arieka, humans have colonised in the midst of the alien city of the Ariekei – *the Hosts* as they are colloquially known. To be able to live side by side, humans were forced to develop their own way of communicating with the Hosts. The communication is difficult for several reasons. First, the Ariekei language, simply called Language, does not function like human language. "Where to us each word *means* something, to the Hosts, each is an opening. A door, through which the thought of that referent, the thought itself that reached for that word, can be seen" (55). This means that any abstract concept spoken to any Host will be impossible. It also means that Hosts are incapable of lying. The Hosts are depending on the humans colonisers to comprehend anything spoken to them that does not have any form of existing embodiment, and Language is thus created through the creation of *similes*. A simile

is performed, designing Language as a story with created embodiment. Avice is given the honour of becoming a simile. She became a part of the Ariekei Language, creating an embodiment of the story she performed, and in doing so she helps Language evolve and grow. Her simile reads, translated into a language that she, and the reader can understand:

> *There was a human girl who in pain ate what was given her in an old room* *built for eating in which eating had not happened for a time.* "It'll be shortened with use," … "Soon they'll be saying you're *a girl ate what was given her.*" (26)

Avice became a part of language after performing the simile, but that does not mean that she is able to communicate with the Hosts herself. The similes can be understood in relations to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's thought on metaphors. In their book, *Metaphors We Live By*, they claim that "metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words. […]. [O]n the contrary, human *thought processes* are largely metaphorical" (5). It is therefore not unlikely to think that the Ariekei depends on humans to create Language because of how metaphorical the human thought process actually is. The Ariekei is also unable to think or speak in metaphors, and thus lacks one of the basic structures of the human language.

The creation of Language exists within both the epistemological border and the symbolic border plane in the novel. Language and the ability to speak or perform Language is highly based on knowledge that is required rather than Language learned. The Language learning process is not like an ordinary process of learning language where input is everywhere but is rather an enforced process of imposed meaning and force words into creation. Once Language actually exists it can be used and reused, but the ability to create sentences out of a library of words in the brain is not a possibility for the Ariekei. The sounds in the Ariekei language has *soul* in them that has to be "there", has to *exist*, for it to create and convey meaning. The meaning has to be true to be Language, and that is "why they make similes" (Miéville *Embassytown* 56). Language is in itself a system of communication, which can explain the naming of the Ariekei Language, but regular languages are complex and can be created by each individual speaker spontaneously, both in spoken and written language. The creation of language thus happens within each individual creator every day, and it is very likely that each person speaks or writes a sentence that has he or she has not created previously. The combination of words is not random to convey meaning, but the creation process is in itself simple and unplanned and this is what makes the creation of language such an impressive condition of communication. The epistemological border plane of knowledge is a condition for language creation, and further the similes function as a liminal space as a

location of contact between Language and language. Similes function as a connector within Language in how they make it possible for Language to be created and evolved, in addition to making communication between humans and the Ariekei a possibility.

Each Host speaks with two mouths simultaneously, and since two mouths belong to the same speaker, human clones are created to simulate this ability to speak with two mouths and one mind. It is not sufficient that two individuals speak simultaneously because the singular intent is not present. Ambassadors are therefore cloned and created. An Ambassador consists of two parts of a pair, and together they become one part of a whole. Ambassadors are psychologically altered to think of themselves as one person, thus creating the illusion that the words uttered in Language originate from one individual and not two, and thus functions as communicators and connectors between Language and language. The human colonisers in *Embassytown* has thus consciously created their own third space to make communication and cooperation with the Ariekei possible. The inbetween space of liminality is represented in the Ambassadors, and they literally function as a threshold that because of human clones is possible to cross back and forth across. This third space that is represented within each Ambassador makes it possible to explore the Ariekei language and their culture which leads to cooperation and understanding. Liminality and the liminal zone opens up for the border between Language and language to "not only separate but also connect divided entities and identities" (Rosello and Wolfe, 11). There is separation between the humans and the Ariekei in how they do not speak the same language and have a hard time creating a lingua franca in the way that they are fundamentally different in how they speak, but the creation of Ambassadors function as a connector where there previously have been none.

The liminal zone that is created with the cloning and usage of Ambassadors open up for a cultural change, and further allows for a new position of communication to emerge from the third space that Ambassadors previously have represented. The change in Language in the creation of the new Ambassador, EzRa, breaks the connection that Ambassadors previously represented. "We were busy listening to them speak, and gauging their abilities. We didn't notice everything change. I don't think any of us at that moment noticed the reactions of the Hosts" (Miéville *Embassytown* 90). The addiction to Language spoken by someone other than themselves, the Ariekei breaks the purpose that Ambassadors previously have been able to convey between two species. It was not a privilege when the Hosts could speak Language, but rather a confinement created by the inability to understand and speak any other form of language.

5.2 The purpose of lying

In *Embassytown*, the humans arrange The Festival of Lies for the Hosts. The festival is arranged once a year, and the Hosts all practice lying and find it funny to do so. Two forms of lying are explained in the novel, slow-lying and quick-lying. The few Ariekei who could lie would choose either one or the other to be able to utter, with difficulty, a conscious lie.

> Having prepared it mentally, however successfully or un-, they would pretend-
> forget it to themselves. Speak each of its constituent words at a certain speed,
> at a beat, separated, apart enough in the mind of a speaker that each was a
> distinct concept, utterable with and as its own meaning; but just sufficiently
> fast and rhythmic that to listeners, they accreted into ponderous but
> comprehensible, and untrue, sentence. (128)

The Ariekei Language is built up of true events and constructed similes that allow for them to speak, and Language is closely linked to thought leading to the inability to utter a sentence they know to be untrue. The lying sentence is uttered with much difficulty, almost spitting out words in a sequence that combined is untrue. Lying is both an epistemological border and a symbolic border in the way it distinguishes between true and untrue. Lying is within the mental and metaphorical landscape of language and thought creation, and the person uttering the lie must be conscious of the untruth for it to be defined as lying. With this in mind, the Ariekei was not privileged with their Language but rather confined by it.

The reason as to why the Ariekei are unable to lie is not actually explained in the novel other than in stating how Language must exist and be true to be spoken. Further, Avice's husband Scile gives a fair assumption in explaining how lying works, or rather not work, for the Ariekei.

> Unbacked by signifieds, the lies of Language were just noises to their own
> liar. Biology's lazy: if mouths speak truth, why should ears discriminate
> between it and its opposite? When what was spoken was, definitionally, what
> was? (129)

To live within ultimate truths seems like an easy way to live. If all spoken is "what is" and that really exists, then the Ariekei automatically exclude any form of untruth and ambiguity about what people say. The ability to lie, that only the humans possess, is intriguing to the Ariekei.

5.3 The limitation of Language

The similes created are meant to create existence to the additions made to Language because of the Ariekei's inability to lie. The Ariekei Language was previously limited to what existed already, but the creation of similes makes it possible for the Language to grow. The limitation of Language also excludes instantaneous communication which is a setback in communication in comparison to the world in which the reader exists in at the time of the publication of the novel. Of course, there is no way to foresee the future and know with certainty what the future would look like, but to imagine it as a place of slow communication comparable with both bottled mail and deep conversations are perhaps harder to vision than the development of even faster communication devices than the smartphone and the Internet. Although a science fiction novel, the setting of *Embassytown*, the Immerverse, is supposed to be a place of great technology. When picturing the future, one often thinks of flying cars, telekinesis, teleportation and telepathy. It is not often people think of the future and see a world in which communications has taken a few steps back from today's progress. In comparison with the world we live in today, *Embassytown* takes the reader back to the future where the epistemological plane of knowledge has taken a turn back to the past where there is no such thing as Internet and online dictionaries that can translate one language into another which just a few keystrokes. Instead, the novel uses translators, Ambassadors, that are a necessity for communication. Ambassadors can thus be compared to translators using sign language to communicate with those without spoken language or the ability to hear.

5.4 The salvation in knowledge

The separation that previously existed between two species – the human colonisers and the Ariekei aliens – created a difference in power relations. Between the two species there is a mutual dependency and it can be difficult to distinguish which are in possession of higher power than the other, because power is not absolute and different situations can constitute difference in power relations. The knowledge of Language creates differences in power relations in *Embassytown*, and the basis of the novel thus function highly on the epistemological border plane. Not every human has access to the understanding of Language and far less access to the ability to speak and convey it. The Ariekei on the other hand is completely confined by it and is completely dependent on the creation of Ambassadors to both communicate and create Language.

China Miéville's *Embassytown* is an interesting reading, and filled with borders and difficult language, the novel itself function as a representation of the deeper directive presented with regards to language and communication. By using the novel itself as an example of how language can slow down communication, Miéville has cleverly illustrated with a border between the novel and the reader how important it is with a lingua franca, and further how both limiting and enriching language can be.

6 Borders across novels

Un Lun Dun, The City and the City and *Embassytown* present, exist upon, cross and imagine new borders. Each novel presents how the structure, the words and the stories engage and extend with border theory. Some of the borders are insignificant – inside and outside of a character's house – and some are substantial – between London and UnLondon –, but however size and importance, borders of various categories exist in some form and variation in each novel. The reader can broaden his or her literary horizon through comparison and contrasting each of Miéville's novels – as with all literary works. To see how a number of novels are similar and different from each other can open up for a broader discussion of each novel with the purpose of giving further insight into each individual work. When reading *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* together, the reader can see the differences and similarities between the borders that can be found in each of the novels. The textual border plane does not only divide between different linguistic, stylistic and thematic borders within each novel or between different typographical divided sections in each text, but the textual border plane also divides between the text and its outside. It is therefore useful to take a step back and explore each novel as a whole and compare some of the central borders found in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*.

6.1 Bridges

Bridges connect two separate parts, in real life and in fiction. Some bridges are physical, for example a bridge making it possible to cross rivers, ocean or canyons. Some bridges are abstract and metaphorical – a bridge connecting two people in friendship or connecting family bonds. Reading a book can be a bridge to knowledge, a translator can be a bridge between languages, and even conversation can be perceived as a bridge between two people. The general concept of a bridge is to serve as a connector. The use of bridges in literature allows the reader to efficiently and effortlessly understand and comprehend the border that is created, and how each bridge directly links together two sides – just as a bridge is supposed to do. The normative understanding of a bridge as a connector, as a border, is why bridges in literature gives easy access to border theory in literature.

Both physical and metaphorical bridges can be found in each of China Miéville's three novels, and he has used bridges that operates on several different border planes at the same time. Bridges offer a specifically interesting border in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, because of how differently the same border is used in each of the novels. In *Un*

Lun Dun, the bridge is an actual, physical bridge, however it is different from the general concept of bridges in its ability to move around UnLondon and function as a bridge between two cities. In *The City and the City*, the bridge is not a bridge at all, but a building or a border-space that allows for legal crossing between Besźel and Ul Qoma. In *Embassytown*, the bridge is not an actual bridge, building or a specific space located within the novel, but a metaphorical bridge between two languages that allows for communication between two species. However different these bridges are portrayed in each of the three novels, it is interesting to see *how* they are all similar and *how* they are different.

6.1.1   Bridges in *Un Lun Dun*

In *Un Lun Dun*, Pons Absconditus is the name of the bridge where the Propheseers are located – a bridge that is both physical and metaphorical at the same time. When described in the novel, Pons Absconditus is shaped like an ordinary bridge, but the bridge also moves around and is unavailable to those not invited onto it. Miéville uses the concept of a bridge that the reader already possesses knowledge of, and he turns it into a bridge of knowledge or a bridge where knowledge exists. In UnLondon, the Propheseers are located on this bridge, and not all have access to the bridge itself, and in extension, the Propheseers and the Book of prophecies. Pons Absconditus represent a topographic border in the way that it represents a specific space in the novel. However, the space that the bridge represents is both somewhere and nowhere at the same time. To those not invited, actually reaching the foot of the bridge seems to be impossible, because of how the bridge moves around and changes location. In the novel it is compared to a rainbow, "[y]ou can't reach its end" (Miéville *Un Lun Dun* 98) and is further given a human emotion when it is described as "shy". The descriptions of Pons Absconditus make the bridge sound like the bridge is given physical and human characteristics. This personification of the bridge builds further on the idea that the bridge is an important key element in the novel and supplements the initial thought that the bridge itself is more than just a bridge from one place to another.

Pons Absconditus serves as a border zone, and even though the bridge is located in various geographical locations within UnLondon, the bridge is an inbetween space. This shows that there are several levels of borders and border zones, and that one can exist within another. When reading *Un Lun Dun* through a border theoretical perspective, Pons Absconditus represents an interesting border in the way that it operates on several different border planes at the same time. It works on the epistemological border plane of knowledge because of how knowledge literally exists on the bridge, with both the Propheseers and the

book of Prophecies "live" or exist on the bridge. Further, Pons Absconditus creates its own topographic geographical location within UnLondon in how the bridge is able to move around in the abcity and, as it turns out, move between UnLondon across to London. As such, the bridge is its own third space within *Un Lun Dun* – able to move across from the abcity to the city and within UnLondon with incredible speed.

There are several points of access from London into UnLondon – the turning wheel that transports Zanna and Deeba for the first time into UnLondon, and Pons Absconditus that brings Deeba back home to Kilburn when her quest is finished. In addition to Pons Absconditus and the turning wheel, there are other passages between London and UnLondon – all of which are strengthening the connection between the city and the abcity. Remembering Pons Absconditus, the bridge from somewhere to somewhere else, Deeba tries her best to find another entrance into UnLondon that is similar to the bridge that can move around and bring people to the place that they need to go. "Deeba walked over several bridges, always trying to concentrate on somewhere else at the other end – somewhere in UnLondon. It didn't work" (175). The library is in itself a room filled with knowledge, both new and old, and it is accessible to anyone who can read. It seems fitting that one of the entrances to UnLondon would be located in a library. "Pigeons. Difficult to get in. Enter by booksteps, on storyladders" (176). Deeba went to her school's library and started climbing the bookshelves like a ladder – a ladder that lead her straight to UnLondon. This could be an epistemological border of knowledge that have been placed here to illustrate both the differences between the known and the unknown in general, but also to point out the fact that not all have access to UnLondon – similar to the level of access onto Pons Absconditus. If Deeba did not have any previous knowledge of UnLondon, it is very unlikely that she would randomly start climbing the bookshelves and get high enough to move between the city of London into the abcity UnLondon. The different points of access into UnLondon illustrate both a topographic border in the change in space and in the representation of the inbetween that serves as a connector, a bridge, between a city and its abcity. Further the border space in the inbetween is presented as an epistemological border, separating those with and without knowledge of the abcity's existence.

The characters in *Un Lun Dun* are quite memorable – a bird in a cage operating a human body, cannibalistic giraffes and a man that can speak words into creation. Each character represents a border in themselves by portraying and existing as two things at the same time, like the mind of a bird combined with a human body. The character of Deeba can

also be seen as a bridge in the novel. One of the characters from Jojo Moyes's latest novel gave the idea of connecting another bridge to the character of Deeba:

> nobody gets everything. And […] immigrants know this more than anyone. You always have one foot in two places. You can never be truly happy because, from the moment you leave, you are two selves, and wherever you are one half of you is always calling to the other. This is our price […]. This is the cost of who we are. (Moyes 294)

From the moment Deeba entered UnLondon the first time she was destined to always be a part of both worlds. When in UnLondon the first time she could not help to let her mind wander back to London and her parents in Kilburn, and she did try her best to get herself and Zanna back to where they belonged. However, once back in London, Deeba could not forget what she had left behind in UnLondon, and in discovering more and more about the plot that would ensure the Smog's victory she could not possibly stay in London without doing anything to help. Although still somewhat ambiguous, Deeba's role in UnLondon and within the prophecy is made through elimination. Zanna does not remember UnLondon and therefore she could not be of any help, but Deeba does. Deeba is an immigrant, and with one foot in each city, she belongs to neither and both at the same time. She has things to do in both cities – the one where her sole job is to grow up, finish school and stay out of trouble – the other where the whole existence of a city falls upon her young shoulders.

The connection between London and UnLondon has been described, but to vision Deeba as a bridge between the two cities opens up for a new interpretation of her character. This because she initially was not supposed to be aware of the abcity of UnLondon at all, and because she indeed is not the chosen one – she is the UnShwazzy. Destiny, or the prophecy, named Zanna as the salvation of the abcity, and Zanna was supposed to be the one to defeat the Smog. When this did not happen, Deeba, with her connection to both cities, took it upon herself to fulfill Zanna's prophecy, and she was able to do so because of her placing of one foot in each city. Deeba's character thus function as a bridge itself in *Un Lun Dun*, showing how the city and its abcity is connected through more than just one entrance or passageway.

6.1.2   Bridges in *The City and the City*

In Miéville's *The City and the City*, crossing the invisible border-line between Besźel and Ul Qoma is illegal. The only way to legally cross the border from one city to the other is through Copula Hall and serves as a safe space in the novel. In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Copula is defined as "something that connects" ("copula"), and in the novel this is exactly

what Copula Hall does. The passageway between the two city-states regulates the separation of the two cities and creates a bridge between the two. This passageway, in addition to the border itself, manifests a third space in the novel. Copula Hall is described as its own space in the novel – belonging to neither Besźel or Ul Qoma.

> It is one of the very few places that has the same name in both cities – Copula Hall. That is because it is not a crosshatched building, precisely, nor one of staccato totality-alterity, one floor or room in Besźel and the next in Ul Qoma: externally it is in both cities; internally, much of it is in both or neither.
> (Miéville *The City and the City* 72)

Copula Hall is thus a space in the novel that is similar to the border itself. The border-space between Besźel and Ul Qoma is not just a thin line, but several feet of border-space that belongs to both and neither city – it is the same with Copula Hall. Standing on the Besźel-side of Copula Hall one can see those entering from Ul Qoma. The shared space is a border zone, a liminal space that opens up for a third space of interpretation and meaning. "Border zones are places of negotiation and hybrid interpretation, [and] they can also become contact zones between the real and the imaginary" (Border Poetics, 2018f). The description of the border zone is impeccable in relations to Copula Hall. Copula Hall is indeed a shared space and a border zone between Besźel and Ul Qoma and can be described as the border between the real and the imaginary. Since each city has to unsee and unhear each other, the opposite city then becomes imaginary. Nothing is certain and every thought concerning the sister-city would have to be imagined because of the exclusion of actual information. For a Besź citizen, only the city on the Besźel-side of the border would be real, and Ul Qoma would be imagined. It is the opposite for an Ul Qoman citizen. Copula Hall, on the other hand, is a shared geographical space between Besźel and Ul Qoma, and all citizens travelling into and through Copula Hall would have to go through the change of imagining what is real and seeing what was originally imagined.

Copula Hall is a liminal zone in *The City and the City* and functions as a connector between two cities. The shared space is in addition arguably a third space in the novel because of how it belongs to both and neither city, and further because of how it allows for a full view of both cities at the same time. The same can be said to describe Breach. Belonging to neither city and with the ability to operate in both, Breach is the ultimate policing power in *The City and the City*. In following Inspector Borlú, the reader follows how he changes and evolves as a character throughout the novel. As Deeba in *Un Lun Dun*, Borlú is left at the end of the novel with one foot in each city, belonging to both and neither at the same time. In contrast to

Deeba, this third space that Borlú now exists within has a name and a purpose. In belonging to Breach, Borlú is unable to unsee both Besźel and Ul Qoma. He can see the changes, where the border crosses from one city to the other, and see every citizen of either city and know where they belong. "I have a great deal to learn, and no choice but to learn it, or to go rogue, and there is no one hunted like a Breach renegade" (Miéville *The City and the City* 373). Inspector Borlú and everyone else belonging to Breach is a liability – they know too much. It is impossible to unsee once they have seen and is therefore responsible to keep Breach hidden. Borlú now belongs to Breach, and he is obliged to keep Breach in the hidden and invisible inbetween between the city and the city. "My task is changed: not to uphold the law, or another law, but to maintain the skin that keeps law in place. Two laws in two places, in fact" (373). Breach is a third space in *The City and the City*, but Breach also stretches beyond its own inbetween space and blur the lines between Besźel and Ul Qoma – Breach operates on both sides as well as in the inbetween, and therefore Inspector Tyador Borlú belongs to both cities and none at the same time.

6.1.3   Bridges in *Embassytown*

In China Miéville's *Embassytown*, there is an epistemological border separating what is known and what is unknown. In this novel, the border of knowledge is restricted and unbounded by the understanding of language – or more specifically, Language. Humans speak one language, and because of their basic alien nature, the Hosts speak another. Humans generally cannot understand what the Hosts are saying, and the Hosts are incapable of recognising the "noise" humans make as an attempt of communication. The bridge between the two species then become cloned human pairs called Ambassadors. Ambassadors serve as a bridge in two ways. First, they are created to speak simultaneously and through one mind, creating the illusion to the Hosts that there is only one speaker. The result is that the Ambassadors serve as a bridge between the human colonisers and the Ariekei aliens, and without them the humans have no other way of communicating with the Hosts. Without the ability to communicate, the society that the two species have built together in unison is bound to be destroyed. Second, the creation of cloned Ambassadors makes each pair themselves a bridge between each other. The cloning process creates a bridge between two separate individuals, ultimately and for all intents and purposes making them into one person – one Ambassador. The connection between the two individuals in each pair of Ambassadors serves as a bridge that connects and is a necessity for communication with the Ariekei to be possible.

The Ambassadors are in themselves bridges between two individuals, and further each pair of Ambassadors together serve as a bridge between the human colonisers and the Ariekei aliens.

Language is at the heart of *Embassytown*, and further the limitations and possibilities with the use of Language and through communication between species. The creation of Ambassadors is a bridge to make communication possible, but the Ariekei is still confined by Language. "Before the humans came we didn't speak. […] We didn't speak, we were mute […] We speak now" (Miéville *Embassytown* 336). The Absurd cut of their fanwings and became deaf to Language to escape the confinement Language presented, and the cure to Language is through telling lies and speaking metaphors. "We weren't teaching the deafened to communicate: we were showing them they already could, and did" (324). With the intent of making communication possible, the human colonisers helped Language incarcerate the Ariekei, ultimately making it impossible for them to break out of the mesmerising language on their own. Avice Benner Cho came to the realisation that the humans with their cloned Ambassadors were never fully able to communicate through Language. "'We could never learn to speak Language,' I said. 'We only ever pretended. Instead the Absurd have learnt to speak like us. The Ariekei in this room want to lie. That means thinking the world differently. Not referring: signifying'" (295-296). To break out from the bond of Language, similes had to become metaphors, and further the Ariekei could learn to speak through those metaphors. "With the boisterous astonishment of revelation they pressed the similes by which I'd named them on until they were lies, telling a truth they'd never been able to before. They spoke metaphors" (309). By giving them names and giving them the ability to tell truth within the ability to speak lies, Avice teaches the Ariekei to break free from the boundaries of Language.

It is easy to just see the Ambassadors as characters in *Embassytown* with the function of a bridge – they are connecting two species together through the ability to perform and speak both language and Language. It is initially considered an ability to be praised and is rather glorified in its self-proclaimed importance. However, Avice can be analysed as the ultimate bridge in the novel in how she is able to connect the two species closer together, bridging the gap between two sides of an impending war. Avice seeks to find a solution to the problem that she and all of Embassytown is facing, and she tries to move across the epistemological binary opposition from not knowing to knowledge of what she needs to do to salvage peace. Like Deeba in *Un Lun Dun*, Avice never gives up her search for a solution that benefits Embassytown and everyone in it – humans and Hosts alike.

6.2 The epistemological border plane of knowledge

Within *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, knowledge in various forms play an important part of each novel. In *Un Lun Dun*, the search for a solution to UnLondon's problem with the Smog and everyone and everything working for the evil side dominates the whole story. No matter how the story unfolds throughout the novel, the search for knowledge of what would be the right path to savour is always present. However, the narrative unfolds very differently from what the reader might expect. Deeba is the UnShwazzy and she is not the one destined to save UnLondon. Further, Deeba does not "follow the rules" and she ignores a lot of the advice and prophecy's that the Book contains as truths. Ultimately, what saves UnLondon is Deeba's ability to think beyond the restrictions of the knowledge given to her in a book and she thinks for herself, leading her to find a way to both save UnLondon and be able to travel home with her existence still intact in the memories of those who she loves.

In *The City and the City*, knowledge plays a vital part in the way that Inspector Borlú, nor the reader, has access to all knowledge at the same time. First, the crime that needs to be solved introduces the first mystery, and thus introduces one element or side to the story that neither the characters in the novel or the reader has access to. Second, the border-line and Breach itself contributes to further the mystery in the way that no character in the novel has access to it, and if someone does, he or she would disappear and belong to Breach itself, and in extension, become unreachable. Third, David Bowen's book in the novel about Orciny creates this ambiguous alternative to what Breach is, what exists between the two cities and who truly possesses the power of knowledge in the novel. All these unanswered questions contribute to the murder-mystery that the novel has built its storyline around, in addition to create internal differences between the known and the unknown.

In *Embassytown*, the epistemological border plane of knowledge is represented in the way that language itself obstruct communication and separates two species living side by side even further than necessary. Communication is initially difficult because of the genetic differences between the aliens and the humans – one having one mouth to one mind and the other having two mouths to the same mind. The basic premises of language are thus exceedingly different in the two species, but the difficulties are not only limited to the physical conditions of speech. The correlation between speech and thought in the Ariekei constitute a premise of their ability to speak Language, and further complicates their ability to communicate. It seems as though this premise of Language and speech is something that both the Ariekei and the human colonisers have come to terms with over generations, despite of

how this leads to a way of communicating that is excruciatingly slow and limited to only a few people. There is a balance in how the human colonisers and the Ariekei communicate and function with each other, and their mutually dependence on each other results in a peaceful way of living in Embassytown.

Knowledge and the epistemological border plane are present in all three of China Miéville's novels. "What lies on the other side of […] a border is often perceived as unknown" (Border Poetics 2018b), and in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*, knowledge or the lack of thereof creates barriers and borders that the plot and the characters are forced to exist within, but also that they are able to confront and break out of.

6.3 Two cities

All of China Miéville's novels take place in a city. *Un Lun Dun* has both London and UnLondon where the plot takes place, *The City and The City* has both Besźel and Ul Qoma in addition to city-spaces like Breach and Orciny, and finally, the plot in *Embassytown* takes place in Embassytown. In both *Un Lun Dun* and *The City and the City*, the doubling of a city is quite obvious. London and its abcity UnLondon mirror each other, and however different the two cities might be, they are a doubling of the same city. It is not easy to say where exactly UnLondon is in relations to the geographical location of London. An abcity is the shadow city of the city it is mirroring. UnLondon is thus the shadow city of London. UnLondon mirrors London, but the two cities are at the same time quite different. When Zanna and Deeba accidentally travel to UnLondon the first time, they describe their new surroundings like a black-and-white film. The light changes, the sounds in London disappear and it is obvious that they no longer are in London. "They were somewhere very else" (Miéville *Un Lun Dun* 31).

It is tempting to look at UnLondon as a city that is up-side-down from London because then the mirroring of the city of London can be understood in more ways than just the one. First, if the city of UnLondon is up-side-down from London, then the abcity can be perceived as a reflection of the city that it is mirroring. The mirroring can be seen as a topographic border that functions as a symbolic border which distinguishes a binary opposition between a city and its abcity. The cities are not plainly the same and the mirroring of London is thus increasingly more complicated than just a doubling of a city. UnLondon is a shadow of London, and is described in plain colours like black, white and grey. The

differences between the two cities are what ultimately make the mirroring and doubling exceedingly more complicated, and what ultimately lead to making the two cities binary oppositions.

A similar complicated relationship between two cities, or two city states, exists in *The City and the* City. The doubling in the novel is in how there are two cities within the same geographical space, and the complication is in how they are both similar and different at the same time. The two cities exist beside one another, so there is no question as to where either city is located. The topographical border plane in *The City and the City* is therefore less complicated than in *Un Lun Dun* where UnLondon is located in a space that is difficult to located on a geographical map. Initially, two cities can be similar but perhaps not the same. However, the two cities, Besźel and Ul Qoma, share the same governmental police, Breach, and is therefore closely linked together despite of their differences. The novel operates on several different border planes at the same time when discussing the relationship that exists between the two cities. The topographical border plane separating the Besźel, Ul Qoma, Breach and Orciny up into different spaces in the novel. The epistemological border plane distinguishes between what is known and what is unknown of both the opposite city and what lies between the cities. The symbolic border plane that introduces binary oppositions in the relationship between the city and the city, between Besźel and Ul Qoma, but also between the city and the city and Breach. The distinction between Besźel and Ul Qoma can be viewed as a binary opposition because of how the one excludes the other, and it is this interpretation of the cities in *The City and the City* that is similar to how the reader can interpret the city of Embassytown in the novel with the same name.

China Miéville's *Embassytown* operates with only one city as its main location, namely Embassytown. However, towards the end of the novel it becomes increasingly evident that there is a separation within the city that can allow for two or several cities to exist within Embassytown. "It's two cities now – one of the addicts, one of all the others – that intersect politely" (Miéville *Embassytown* 342). This quote is taken from one of the last few pages of the novel and opens up for a new understanding of how the relationships within Embassytown can function and be viewed. After reading the quoted sentence, the reader can look back upon how the city from the very beginning actually operated as two cities. The two cities in Embassytown was there from the beginning, but to separate one from the other became easier when the reading of the novel had finished. In the beginning of the novel, Avice tells her childhood stories of how she and her friends used to run into the Hosts city and compete on how far they got before they had to return to within the dome to breathe. From the beginning

of the novel, there has been a separation between the human colonisers and the Ariekei aliens, and not just in how Language has restricted the communications between the two species.

The doubling of cities can thus be found in all three of China Miéville's novels, and the doubling of Embassytown in the novel with the same name illustrate how there can be a double where the reader might not expect it to be.

6.4 The textual border planes

The three novels by China Miéville operate on the level of the textual border plane in an interesting way in how each of them is typographically divided into different sections of each novel. *Un Lun Dun* is divided into nine parts and with subchapters within each part. In addition, the novel has a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue of the novel offers an in medias res cut-out of an event that is a changing-point in the novel, but the significance of that precise event is not explained later in the novel other than in the way the readers might connect the event to the plot by themselves. In addition to being divided up into parts and chapters, the novel also has several drawings throughout the novel that divide paragraphs within chapters. The drawings often portray and illustrate vital parts, places, buildings or characters in the novel, and contribute to an adequate understanding of key elements in the novel. Important parts of the novel are drawn into the context in which they are being mentioned. For example, Miéville has drawn in the pillar of pipes and the steering wheel that Zanna turns when the girls travel into UnLondon for the first time (25), and the drawing of Yorick Cavea with the human body with "an old-fashioned bell-shaped birdcage" (304) for a head. Other drawings throughout the novel is repeated several times. The umbrellas, or more specifically the *un*brellas, are an important part of the novel, and that is perhaps the reason why Miéville has chosen to draw several drawings of the unbrellas throughout the novel. Other drawings are repeated in specific chapters or parts of the novel. The trashcans that protect Pons Absconditus reappear several times on the pages from 98-101, and the vegetation growing inside "the forest-in-a-house" (302) that is drawn from page 313 through 317. The repetition of certain drawings or variations of the same element in the novel enforces its importance and helps the reader to a greater understanding and closeness to the novel than just the words alone would create. Miéville has written a novel with several fantastic elements that can be hard to imagine and brings the novel closer to the reader on an epistemological level by using visual elements throughout the text in addition to the alphabetic. "The border crosser who crosses [the textual] boundaries is the reader, and the textual border can thus be

imagined as a kind of epistemological border to be crossed in the act of interpretation"
(Border Poetics 2018e). The crossing between visual and textual content in the novel gives
the reader, the textual border-crosser, greater access into the realm within *Un Lun Dun*.

The City and the City is divided into four parts. The plot begins in Besźel where
Inspector Borlú is from and where the murder-mystery begins to unravel, and the second part
belongs to Ul Qoma. Within each part there are talking and descriptions of borders and
border-crossings, but once the reader move from part one to part two, the reader becomes the
border-crosser, crossing through Copula Hall with Borlú and with him unsee Besźel and
begin to see Ul Qoma. The division of the different parts in *The City and the City* creates
space for the reader to get closer to understanding the intricate border-system that the novel
takes on. In part three, Borlú is in Breach after breaching, further giving access to the
previously invisible space both in Besźel and in Ul Qoma. The border disappears and both
Borlú and the reader can see both cities at the same time. "In Breach. No one knows if they're
seeing you or unseeing you. […] You're not in neither: you're in both" (Miéville *The City
and the City* 304). Part three erases the borders that previously have been forced upon
Inspector Borlú and the reader, and thus gives access to the third space between the city and
the city that up until part three has been unreachable. The last part is titled "Coda – Breach" –
coda, meaning farewell or climax – and gives a windup of the novel.

> Inspector Tyador Borlú is gone. I sign off Tye, avatar of Breach, following my
> mentor on my probation out of Besźel and out of Ul Qoma. We are all
> philosophers here where I am, and we debate among many other things the
> question of where it is that we live. On that issue I am a liberal. I live in the
> interstice yes, but I live in both the city and the city (373).

These final sentences in *The City and the City* illustrates the position of Breach and gives the
reader a closing part of the novel that enhances the importance of the division of parts and
spaces in the novel. Besźel and Ul Qoma are their own spaces, separate from each other and
with their own laws and rules. To belong to Breach means to live in the inbetween space and
further, Breach erases the identity to those who breach and make them a part of Breach itself.

China Miéville's *Embassytown* is divided into nine parts with an unequal number of
chapters within each part. In addition to the nine different parts, the novel also has a prologue
and a proem. The prologue offers insight into an important event yet to come in the narrative.
The proem, in contrast to the prologue, gives important background information about Avice
Benner Cho, who she is, how she grew up and how she became an immerser. The interesting
thing about the specific separation of different parts of the novel is that the first three parts not

only contain numbered chapters but are all divided into either "Latterday" or "Formerly" with their own counting of chapters, which makes the first chapter in part four chapter 9 although there is a total of 18 chapters in the first three parts. Of the three novels in this thesis, *Embassytown* is the only one that is told from a first-person perspective which gives the division of parts and chapters a natural place in the novel with Avice telling her story. Avice's perspective in the novel brings with her the reader as a border-crosser. The temporal border is important in the novel because of how the main character, Avice Benner Cho, shares her experiences back in time, thus separating between the past and the present. Avice's story catches up to the present and takes the reader with her into the future. The division of parts and chapters in *Embassytown* work on the textual border plane that separate the different periods in time within the novel. The prologue that is set in the present is followed by a proem and three parts with in total 18 chapters of Avice telling her story and the story of Embassytown. She is giving background to explain the importance of "the impossible new Ambassador" (6) that has arrived to Embassytown.

The textual border planes in each of China Miéville's novels exemplifies one of the ways the novels work well with a border-theoretical analysis. The construction of chapters and parts move up a level from the textual analysis on the level of words and sentences, and further, a novels most outer border is its cover.

6.5 Front covers and epigraphs

To conclude the section on borders on the level of the novels it is natural to take a look at what actually is the outmost borderline of a novel, and how China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* have borders represented already on their front covers. As all of Miéville's novels, the three novels used in this thesis have very specific covers picturing two different elements connected together. It should be mentioned that it exists versions of the novels that picture other elements of the novels than those described in this section, but there is no need to address them further in this thesis. *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* all have front covers that consists of two different drawings or pictures combined with a horizontal line. In addition to the front and back cover representing the outmost border of each novel, the combination picture on the front is a border created in itself. When opening the novels, the reader crosses the textual border of the novels themselves and with it crosses the first border – the border from outside to inside the novel and the border represented on the front cover.

The epigraph of a novel is often an important part of the reading of any novel because of how it can set the theme of what is to follow. The epigraph in *Un Lun Dun* is in the form of a drawing of a window with broken glass and a sign with "Un Lun Dun" in capital letters written on it. A window is a liminal space in itself, representing the threshold between two spaces, but is also a foresight into the important part of the novel that presents the reader with the Black Window in Webminster Abbey that holds the solution to defeating the Smog and saving UnLondon from evil. The drawing might not look like an ordinary epigraph, but it sure sets the theme of the novel when going back after finishing the reading and have another look at the drawing. The epigraph in *The City and the City* is a quote from Bruno Schulz: "Deep inside the town there open up, so to speak, double streets, doppelganger streets, mendacious and delusive streets". The epigraph suggests the doubling of city-elements and streets, which is very much present in *The City and the City*. The quote refers to doubling and hybridity and gives alludes to the theory that there is something in the inbetween, in the third space, between the city and the city. The epigraph in the beginning of *Embassytown* is a quote from Walter Benjamin: "The word must communicate *something* (other than itself)". Each epigraph from each novel gives the reader some foresight into what the novel is about, and further the epigraphs all represent some kind of border. As Mireille Rosello and Stephen Wolfe writes in the introduction to *Border Aesthetics*, "[l]iminal space should […] be considered as a location of contact (11), and the epigraph is a liminal space that connect the overarching theme of the novel into a few lines or a picture, giving the reader a way into the novel.

Both front covers and epigraphs give the reader a foresight into what each novel is about, and especially in *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*. All three novels present borders that refer to and give insight into what kind of borders that can be found in each of them. The outmost border representation that is the cover of a novel represents the border between the inside and the outside of any given novel. In the case of China Miéville and his works of fiction, the opening of the novel's cover gives each individual reader a way into his created fictional world, and further gives the opportunity to explore his interesting narratives from a border-theoretical point of view.

7 In conclusion

Reading novels through the use of border theory gives a new entry point into literature. As David Newman points out in "Lines that continue to separate us" that a border is no longer a barrier where the other side of the border is invisible, but that the border has transformed to a space of coexistence and cooperation.

> Our understanding of territories and borders is less rigid and less deterministic than in the past. Territory and borders have their own internal dynamics, causing change in their own right as much as they are simply the physical outcome of decision making (31).

A border-theoretical reading creates access and a third space within analytical readings and interpretations of novels and literary elements within them. The borders and spaces that can be found and analysed in literature causes a dynamic and a change that is less rigid and deterministic than what the traditional perception of borders might seem. China Miéville is a writer of science fiction within the new weird genre that allows for new spaces and levels of liminality to emerge within literature. Further, his novels – with challenging language and intriguing characters and setting – opens up for a dynamic understanding of borders in literature. Miéville's *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* enact with and expand border theory in how all three novels can be used to describe and analyse border elements within literature, and the novels align themselves well within the already existing field of border theory. Each novel has elements that can be used as an example of how borders exist within literature, and further exemplifies that borders in not just one thing or the other but exists within and upon each other, giving the novel and each individual border and border plane multiple analytical abilities.

In *Un Lun Dun,* the character Deeba represents an epistemological and symbolic border in how she searches for knowledge that she previously did not possess. Further, she functions as a topographic border in the novel, representing an inbetween space between London and UnLondon. The third space that is created in Deeba as a character operates within a symbolic metaphorical landscape, and her character alone illustrate how the novel can be analysed on multiple border planes with just one element from the novel. Pons Absconditus is another example of how one element from the novel engages with several border planes at the same time – the epistemological border plane of knowledge and the topographic border. Similar to *Un Lun Dun*, *The City and the City* operates on several border planes simultaneously, and similarities can be drawn between Deeba and Inspector Borlú as

characters that cross borders between two cities – and with it cross between several different border planes. Borlú crosses the topographical borders that exist between Besźel and Ul Qoma, and further between the two cities and Breach, and in doing so also crosses the epistemological border of knowledge. The epistemological border is restricted by the topographical border in the notion of seeing versus unseeing, further representing a symbolic border of binary opposition.

The conclusion is that border planes, although separate and distinct from each other, are presented within *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown* as border planes that operate on top of each other, and further gives the conclusion that one border plane does not exclude another. Borders are thus not in themselves binary oppositions that are either one side or the other of a wall or a fence, but rather have evolved to represent something more than two sides – for example how the border can be a space of its own, like Pons Absconditus in *Un Lun Dun*. The illustration of multiple border planes existing within one literary element and within each of Miéville's novels exemplifies how Homi Bhabha's theory of Third Space can be used to analyse novels through the use of border theory. […] identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness […]. [H]ybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses" (Rutherford 211). Borders are not fixed into a static status quo, unable to be crossed or altered within time and social construction. Furthermore, borders are more than just the geographical separation of space and can be used to give readers deeper understanding of new and old novels. "[H]ybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them" (Rutherford 216). Borders in literature creates an opening for readers to interpret meaning in literary elements, and a border-theoretical approach to literature can further present the reader with new clarity surrounding literature. The third space

Miéville's use of *weird fiction* in his science fiction novels operates on the borders of hybridity and gives transparency of complex literary elements. Weird fiction can function as the third space in common across *Un Lun Dun, The City and the City* and *Embassytown*. The weird fiction genre allows for the interesting and peculiar elements in each novel – Pons Absconditus and the UnGun, Breach and the notion of unseeing, Language and Ambassadors – bringing the novels to another level of science fiction that establish a basis for a border-theoretical reading of each novel. Weird fiction is a genre that mixes together horror, fantasy

and science fiction, and Miéville has found a way to write within the genre that can create worlds and fictional realities that allows for an introduction of borders within literature.

The different border planes introduce an approach into the field of border theory and further organize the theory into a place of common ground on how to perceive and analyse borders in literature. The point of these border planes is that they can "be conceptualized as articulations, mappings or projections of each other on different, layered planes" (Border Poetics 2018a). Along with the ideas of David Newman, Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe's collection of articles on border poetics and border aesthetics, and Homi Bhabha's theory on Third Space, the border-theoretical field of research gives the field of English literature an extensive point of entry into borders in fiction. Ultimately, a border-theoretical reading of a novel can contribute to a new access point into literature – the opening of a border that previously has been closed. The third space does not only exist within the novel but can also be created in the reader as an access point to the inbetween – making it possible to further explore identity, culture, national histories and people through reading literature. A border-theoretical reading can allow for the reader to understand society and culture as its own entity and further see and understand the borders that exist within society and culture.

8 Further research

With the limitations of a master thesis comes the question of what to include and what not to include in the restricted space that is a thesis, and there are fields of research within each of China Miéville's novels that have not been used as illustrations of borders in literature in this master thesis. Miéville has created a new language within his novels where each word has a deeper meaning than just the first interpretation or perception. The use of the term 'unseeing' alone makes for an exciting field of research in how it does not simply mean to not see something or someone, but literally means to *un*see. As with the naming of the bridge in *Un Lun Dun*, Pons Absconditus, that can be read as just a name for a bridge, but with deeper analysis is on purpose given a name that speaks directly to the bridge's function in the novel. The use of language and the small alterations to language throughout these novels would therefore make an interesting field of further research. Further, this thesis has mentioned the genre of weird fiction, and the analysis of the genre through the works of China Miéville can make for an interesting field of research. In addition, each novel could benefit from a closer analysis of each border plane – the symbolic, epistemological, topographical, temporal and textual border plane. Each of which could in themselves make for an interesting analysis of Miéville's novels. After spending a year reading and analysing the world of China Miéville, it has become apparent that his created universe moves beyond what a single thesis can give proper justice, but this thesis has created a way into reading Miéville through a theoretical approach – an approach that hopefully creates new ways of analysing his works of fiction.

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