

## The Weird of Globalization: Esemplastic Power in the Short Fiction of China Miéville

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Most of the [science fiction/fantasy/horror] I'm interested in is about the numinous, the transcendent erupting out of the everyday, and ironically, horror does that particularly well (though it's concerned with the Bad Numinous). [...] For me, the horrific, in the shape of the dark uncanny, the monstrous, the unholy, is one of the most fascinating aspects of fantastic literature, and it's for that reason, I think, that though I'm not normally thought of as a horror writer, I'm a writer of SF and fantasy heavily influenced by the weird, grotesque horror tradition.

—China Miéville.(1)

This article concerns the poetics and politics of ‘the transcendent erupting out of the everyday’ as it appears in China Miéville’s short fictions. I will argue that Miéville uses techniques familiar to the Romantic poets to create a Gothic of contemporary globalisation in his stories ‘Go Between’, ‘Different Skies’ and ‘Foundation’.

The technique Miéville uses is one which the Marxist-Trotskyist writer and theorist Ben Watson discusses in another context in his book *Art, Class & Cleavage*.(2) Watson borrows from S.T. Coleridge’s notion of ‘esemplastic power’ ‘a term he coined to mean “shaping into oneness”, [which] elevated imagination into a mystical transcendence of time and space: a vision only available to the select’.(3) Despite objecting to its apparent overtone of ‘elitist mysticism’, Watson sees this as an important means for bringing the globalised interrelationships of social structures to consciousness. ‘Esemplastic power’ is found in texts which demonstrate a ‘[s]ynoptic transparency of social relations’ typically through the use of fantastic or anti-realist techniques to imaginatively join-up things which are actually related but are thought of as distanced, or even distinct from one another, by history or geography. He quotes Coleridge’s lecture ‘On The Slave Trade’ (1795) to this effect:

Provided the dunghill be not before their parlour window, they [the Many] are well content to know that it exists, and that it is the hot-bed of their pestilent luxuries.—To this grievous failing we must attribute the frequency of wars, and the continuance of the Slave-trade. The merchant finds no argument against it in his ledger: the citizen at the crowded feast is not nauseated by the stench and filth of the slave-vessel—the fine lady’s nerves are not shattered by the shrieks! She sips a beverage sweetened with human blood, even while she is weeping over the refined sorrows of Werther.(4)

Many other anti-slavery pamphlets used a similar conjunction of imagery to make their point at or around this time. At a conference on Globalisation and Writing in 2007, Carl Plasa gave a particularly informative paper describing the rhetorical tactics by which abolitionists likened sugar consumption to cannibalism; one particularly Swiftian pamphlet commented that the best way to refine and sweeten rough rum was by putting the ‘whole body of a roasted Negro’ into the cask to soak up the impurities, adding ‘far be it from me to insinuate...that any such methods are used to meliorate West India Rum’.(5) A senior academic at time commented that we do not yet have a similarly strong conjugation of images (blood and sugar) to bring to bear on contemporary globalisation protests; Miéville’s short fictions demonstrate that we do have such striking imagery.

Miéville is certainly familiar with Ben Watson's writing, and the 'dialectical social-realism', or 'seeing things in their connectedness'(6), that Watson so polemically calls for is precisely what Miéville's prose achieves in his short stories 'Go Between', 'Different Skies' and 'Foundation'.(7) These stories play upon the revelation of social relations *as a totality* as a moment of either sublime terror or paralysing paranoia which offers the individual a cosmic vision of their own unseen connections to other people around the world: a vertiginous, near-Gnostic uncovering of the overdetermined linkages of globalisation. As Watson says, 'synoptic transparency of social relations provokes nausea'(8); it is a horror writer's literalised metaphor, an SF writer's dystopia, or a Fantasy writer's grotesque satire: it is about correlating the boundaries between genre style and social history.

China Miéville describes Horror, SF and Fantasy as 'different accents within an overall field of Fantastic Literature', stating that the genre fiction he prefers is that which is concerned with 'the numinous, the transcendent erupting out of the everyday', adding that 'ironically horror does that particularly well'.(9) This sentiment is particularly evident from Miéville's short fictions, the most notable of which are structured broadly as horror stories: 'Go Between', 'Foundation' and 'Different Skies' which this paper deals with in context of Miéville's writing on the history of Weird fiction.

In his essay 'M.R. James and The Quantum Vampire'(10), Miéville writes that M. R. James represents the border between what he describes as the declining 'hauntological' in nineteenth century ghost stories and the ascendant Weird in twentieth century Horror. The Weird is not about returns, spectral presences, hauntings (or absences which invoke presence) to Miéville and I suggest that his fictional project constitutes an attempt to unite or resolve contemporary Weird writing's uneasy relationships with its historical roots in Modernism and avant-garde writing on the one hand and pulp and Gothic on the other; his writings draw the analogy between this generic shift and the concrete historical shifts of contemporary modernity, thematising historical conditions *as generic modes*. In other words, Miéville's short fictions are Jamesean ghost stories and while their relation to realism is a spectral one, their symbolic and allegorical power is tremendous because they waver between the historical form of the 'ghost story' and the more grotesque mode of the contemporary Weird tale. The relation of these fictions to the society or social visions which they present is heterogeneous but, in the sense of 'families of realisms' where Andrej Gasiorek interprets realism as more of a 'cognitive stance' than a strict method, Miéville's short stories can be situated on the borders of realism as a mode of realist-materialist, or 'dialectical social realist' writing.(11) They haunt *because* they present a kind of 'realist' representation which is itself haunted by concepts which appear to be outside of realist modes but are *known* to exist, drawing attention to the Real which is always beyond representation. Miéville places the trans-national linkages of global trade and *realpolitik* into the role of the almost-repressed—he almost 'ghosts' them.

Miéville is renegotiating the space of realist discourse in these stories, taking relatively small scenes and relatively more sparse prose from the style of his novels, and loading them with conceptual associations that will enable his reader to pick out the threads which lead out into the wider world of the story; and thence into a new perspective on their own location within the complex webs of actually existing globalised interrelationships, previously unseen or unconsidered, in their own lives. These new perspectives his stories present are caused by characters overhearing or finding some object which produces an effect of 'cognitive estrangement' on the reader, the process of creating a space for critical reflection within the fantastic as described by Darko Suvin (see Suvin *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*).(12) Suvin identifies it primarily with SF as a paradigmatically modern genre form, but Miéville argues that it can operate just as well in fantasy frameworks (see 'Cognition as Ideology' in *Red Planets*(13)), something his short stories demonstrate. Miéville's characters each receive some clue which leads to (es)strange(d) places which waver between being close representations of our own world;

they are founded on the closeness and estranging power of political division: these stories concern struggles and conflicts within the skin of mundane ‘society’ directly, and disturbingly, analogous to the cross-purposes of the more extreme fringes of political activism. Conflicts, in other words, which both are and are not *present* to ‘mainstream’ society by being represented as either marginal and of minority interest, or as pervasive and naturalised as globalisation, both equally occluded: they are allegories of fringe political activism.

In ‘Go Between’ this is literal as the protagonist receives messages in small containers passed to him through food items:

He stared at the chocolate and thought *but I was about to take the other one*. It was a long time since he had dwelled on that phenomenon. He had thought himself inured to his instructors’ unerring knowledge of what he would pick. In the first months he had been constantly aghast at the fact, had imagined unseen cadres watching him, gauging what he was about to buy, somehow pushing their messages into things just before he touched them, but that was impossible. The inserts were there already, waiting for him.(14)

This latency (always already present within things), this suspended expectation and overweening sense of observation, creates a deeply paranoid worldview where the small and everyday contributes to or detracts from something greater, more momentous or meaningful, which is happening elsewhere. It is through these quiet, intense elsewheres and the feeling of invisible machinery at work—ideological, social or physical—that Miéville invests in the reader the sense of the material in these short fictions.

It is almost the opposite technique from the lush prose of his secondary world of Bas Lag because it deals with the mundane in an apparently mundane way before leading the reader into much more metaphorical realms with a relatively spare imagery. This is evident from the products which the go-between, Morley, finds his messages in: they are wholly generic and mundane (bread, chocolate) yet mystified, rendered uncanny in this world of brand-saturation precisely by being *un*-branded. Meanings which would place them into a consumer-consciousness are effaced within the story and substituted with direct instructions moving up and down through some unseen chain of command, a very different paradigmatic chain from a realist portrayal of consumer society. As products they are of course already in a system of meanings with which we are all familiar, where corporate identities quietly and persistently issue imperatives and commands all their own; by estranging them from this and into anonymity while making them repositories for *direct* instructions Miéville aligns them with the passing of concealed messages and thus with notions of resistance. It functions as a story of individualised collective actions (gone wrong?), with all the paranoia that this might suggest, and carries strong overtones not just of (anti)globalisation campaigners and international solidarity movements but of state-corporate collusion and manipulation.

Doubts necessarily circulate, almost overwhelmingly in the protagonist Morley, as in other Miéville characters: motivation, action, result, consequences—all become questionable. The precise nature of the instructions is troublingly clouded by this speculation:

For much of the time he had just assumed, vaguely, that they must be instructions, messages that could not be trusted to phone lines or email, rolled in protective carapaces. He could not fail to notice, though, that the small hard thing in his chocolate had resembled nothing so much as a bullet.(15)

Faith becomes the only guidance for the passing of the message: it must be important and worthwhile because to think otherwise would be to posit an even greater question about an insane and meaningless universe, a life-dwarfing anxiety which cannot ever be quite dispelled.

A jockey tested positive for drugs, there was a bloodless coup, a bloody intervention. Morley saw the little bullet or bullet-shaped thing or tightly folded instructions in a bulletlike case held in the hand of the horse rider or the doctor whose test discredited him, in the pocket of a the African general who took power promising peace, in the gun belt of the mercenary whose forces invaded the capital.(16)

Paranoia becomes a positive force. Morley, distracted by a discussion about Chechnya held down the pub, hopes that the people who issue him his orders from ‘their white room, or their cave [...] [t]heir satellite’ will send him something which affects the outcome of the Chechen conflict.(17) Where one of his nameless companions speculates about possibilities of intervention, ‘if you could do something about it’, Morley immediately thinks, ‘*I can*’.(18) Having once had this thought, or rather this feeling of connection with Chechnya, the delivery of his final package *becomes* all about Chechnya as he waits to send it on in a Post Office queue:

Men and women from his own organisation, or from *splinters* from that organisation, renegades, or opponents dedicated to destroying him, those who would make things far worse for Chechnya, for the economy, those he must stop.(19)

There is a bleak humour to the peregrinations of the protagonist here. It is a paranoid text which seems to belong quite specifically in a post-1950s ghost story anthology (something not unlike the trauma-hauntings of Robert Westall’s ‘The Boys Toilets’ (school bullying) and ‘The Haunting of Chas McGill’ (post-war psychic disturbance)). The spectral thing here is responsibility, but it could be real or imagined, product of schizophrenia or of some sinister force working in the wings of the world to organise the theatres of war and peace; it is a ghost story of a consumer as opposed to one of an antiquary.

All of these stories concern everyman figures of The People whose worlds are thrown into subtly different scales of disturbance. Of Miéville’s short stories, ‘Different Skies’ is the one which appears the most domestic in scope and scale, yet it is key to revealing the presence of Miéville’s globalised interests even in stories which do not seem to be immediately concerned with globalisation. In terms of its scale then, the story ‘Different Skies’ appears quite distinct from these others at first. It begins with an old man deciding to buy an antique window-pane to brighten up his flat and from there quickly evolves into something more unsettling. As a scenario this is perhaps the closest that Miéville has come to an M. R. James narrative so far, resembling as it does ‘Oh Whistle and I’ll Come to You’ in its formal conventions, but it also connects us to Miéville’s ‘Quantum Vampire’ discussion about the historical movement from the haunting, the uncanny, to the Weird where he writes that ‘James’s repeated insistence that he is an “antiquary” is not convincing’ because ‘[h]e is acutely conscious of capitalist modernity, and a surprising number of his “ghosts” manifest through it’. (20) His own narrator makes no claims to antiquarianism but does explore his own position as consumer and the generational divide between himself and other contemporary consumers.

For the narrator of ‘Different Skies’ the past is definitively another country and the opening lines, ‘seventy one and melancholy’, are a statement of profound alienation. Here contemporary Britain is another world and we are presented with a narrative which is as paranoid and overdetermined as that of

‘Go Between’, but here it is a kind of meta-Gothic narrative: it is a haunting by the contraries of the new and the old.

I found myself—I sort of *came* to, I suppose—gazing at the window over my desk. It is a splendid thing. It is very good to stare at. I was thinking of it while I walked. All the obvious, idle thoughts: Who could have made it? When? Why? Over what did it look? And so on and so on. When I walk into the little study into its light, those questions do not dissipate but return in strength. When I look at that strange glass it makes me think of all the other old windows that have been lost.(21)

There is something sinister about misplaced or displaced portals, either windows or doors, because they hold over some element or essence of their original context in a way which can threaten the stability of their new context. The window in ‘Different Skies’ destabilises context, driving the safe and mundane over some internal expressive brink:

I know it very well, by now. I have spent some time over the last days looking at the eight evenly spaced triangles around the central stone. Each is stained with its own impurities; each is a unique colour. Counting clockwise from the top, my favourite is the sixth, the slice between west and southwest. It is a little bluer than the others, and the ruby at its apex makes that blue shine.(22)

This style of description is like the H.P. Lovecraft in ‘The Beyond’ or ‘The Music of Erich Zann’, but Miéville then immediately undercuts it in a manner which serves only to heighten the reader’s awareness of his own use of that mode:

I have reread the words above with amusement and discomfort. For goodness’ sake, am I turning into some sort of mystic? I knew I was smitten with the thing—I cannot remember being so thrilled with *ownership* of anything material. But I am perturbed by what I have written: I sound like an obsessive.(23)

In foregrounding the obsessiveness of the prose—conventional to a story such as this—Miéville makes the construction of the atmosphere of the supernatural an integral part of the manifestation of the spectral. It is an understated exercise in controlling readerly expectations and its emphasis is on ‘ownership’ and the nature of the window as a material and constructed object alienated from its original context.

The supernaturalism of the window is cemented when it rains: ‘The old pane was dry. Dirty rain was pounding against its neighbours, but not a drop spattered against it.’(24) The material detail of the window, subjected to obsessive scrutiny is what produces the uncanny effect. In other words, the mundane, familiar items around us contain histories in their construction: the staining of the different glass panes is a chemical history connected to industrial processes; the building of the frame itself encompasses a history of design and craftsmanship, and so on. Making us conscious of these histories and their vertiginous connection with histories of international trade and industrialisation reveals the invisible ‘presence’ of the global within the local—this complex of multiple histories is already present within ordinary mundane objects and in being brought to consciousness they become uncanny.

[T]he red glass at the centre of my window was shining.

It sent icy scarlet light onto the desk below, and onto me. I swear that was the source of the raised hair on my neck. I gaped up at it. My mouth must have been slack. All the impurities and the scratches on the inside of that central panel were etched and vivid. It seemed to have a hundred shapes, all of a sudden, to look momentarily like a huddled embryo and a red whirlpool and a bloodshot eye. [...] All I know is that one moment it shone and then it did not. My retinas retained no afterimage.(25)

The light here embodies contradictory impulses: a colour of warm association that feels ‘icy’, a light that is intense and arresting and yet leaving no echo on the eye’s material cells. As with Morley’s containers and messages in ‘Go Between’, no single impression is given but rather a plethora of disturbing options, each of which is in some way animated, each suggesting growth, movement or process. The embryo image is then further echoed by the protagonist waking up ‘huddled like some pathetic child’ in his chair.(26)

Fear in this particular haunting is of the combatitive confrontation between youth and age accentuated by the pressure of modernity. Youth itself haunts this protagonist: ‘They croon at me and mock my shuffling old-man walk.’(27) Beyond the window which looks out onto different skies are a gang of malicious children whispering vague threats and intimidations—‘Oi, Mister you old cunt’(28) —resonating ‘in weird dimensions’.(29)

Calling me names, gearing each other up with hatred and poison to break my window and *scare me to death*.(30)

These menacing ghosts come to represent the threatening phantom of youth crime in the ‘real’ city. The undescribed children are the vague shapes, the ‘hundred shapes’ and impurities of any and all youth cultures seen from without: Teds, Mods, Skins, punks, rude boys, hoodies, etc., etc., etc. In being unclear and multiple, part of an indefinable collective moil, they become the children who surround the protagonist in London:

I have gone out and looked around, and everywhere, in all the parts of the city, wherever I have been, youth seems to fill London. I have heard animated swearing from boys and girls on bicycles and buses. I have seen signs that read “only two children at a time” on the doors of small groceries. As if that were a defence. I have wandered the streets in a strange state staring around me at the little monsters that surround us. [...] I am afraid of all these unchecked unbridled younglings. *None of them are human*. They are all like the ones who come to torment me at night.(31)

Their antipathy to the familiar is practically the entirety of their character: they are *Un*-checked, *Un*-bridled young-*lings*, Weird creatures rather than humans. It is the protagonist’s own opening words—‘Seventy one and melancholy’(32) —that have summoned up this spectre of youth against age:

During the night visitations, I have seen glimpses of flapping ridiculous shorts half a century out of date, and discerned the old-fashioned, clipped voices of my merciless besiegers (the tone is not disguised even when sneering in wide-eyed sadism). And yes of course I have thought of the years when I was like them.(33)

Though Miéville does not let the story sit so simply as to make it specifically the protagonist's own youthful self waiting for him, but rather something wider and wilder, more clouded and without discernable motive: the collective representative personification of Youth as aggressive, vigorous antagonist to Age. His fear is founded upon a loss and a lack within himself, so that it is *almost* his own youth which is haunting him through the undifferentiated presences of contrary children elevated and fetishised, through the focaliser of a flawed window glass, into "*Modern Youth*".

I cannot look at them, at any of them, without this horrible fear, but also with a jealousy. A longing. I thought at first that this was new, that it had come through the window with that alien moonlight. But when I look at other adults looking at children, I know that I am not alone. This is an old feeling.(34)

His window, a fetishised *objet d'art* of an unknown past, has become a literal fetish which grants him this epiphanic perspective on the fears he believed were unique to his own position: the sheer age inherent in the discomfort of change and of the fetishising of youth as object of desire and fear. These children are reversed *memento mori* proclaiming that they are as he once was and do not care that they will be, one day, as he is, because, as Youth, they exist only (and eternally) for (and at) that moment. Although, their description thus estranges them it also abstracts them from their social context, allowing them to be seen as representative of their time and place: they are an incarnation of the competition inherent in modernity, the aggression of the new.

This short story plays with the same terms of "Weird tale" versus "Ghost story" that Miéville dissects in his 'Quantum Vampire' essay. Comparing Dickens and Le Fanu he says on the one hand 'Dickens thinks nothing of jostling together, in "A Christmas Carol", the ghost of a person, Jacob Marley, with those of various Christmases' which he says is, to 'post-hauntological eyes', an error in, or a conflation of, categorisation; while on the other hand he also observes that Le Fanu's ghosts 'by contrast, in their moral contingency, are agents of disaster' divorced from the moral accountancy of the Ghost story schemas they apparently follow.(35) Miéville's own writings seem to be attempts to square both these circles, or elevate them into multi-dimensional forms, since they show evidence of deliberate category confusion and intimations of a catastrophe which affects even the frameworks by which we judge them.

This is continued with particular force in the story 'Foundation' where the haunting spectre is that of a war (in Iraq) whose causes and effects are closer to home than we can normally see and being granted a synoptically transparent vision of their social relations opens up a terrible gulf in the heart of the mundane. The story is China Miéville's response to the political responses to 9/11.

'Foundation' concerns a strange, quiet man who is a modern folkloric figure: 'the man who comes and speaks to buildings'.(36) The style of the narrative is rumour, with all the descriptive sparseness of a verbalised urban myth. As such it follows in the footsteps of Clive Barker's story 'The Forbidden' from his *Books of Blood* which gave the world the Candyman. Miéville's mysterious man of rumour is someone who is uncannily empowered to speak about the condition of buildings but, folklorically is cursed. He does not speak happily or willingly for, even though he 'wears a large and firm smile', he 'has to push his words past it so they come out misshapen and terse', fighting not to raise his voice 'over the sounds he knows you cannot hear'.(37) In the Gothic tradition of *Melmoth* and *The Wandering Jew* the infallibility of this man to determine which buildings will stand and which will fall comes at a hideous price which can only be imparted slightly to the listener/reader.

This 'house-whisperer'(38) is subject to powers of the world beyond his control, he hears things which others are spared and it is his curse to always be able to see and hear them where they literally underpin or undermine the visible mundane world:

He sees the foundation. He sees through the concrete floor and the earth to where the girders are embedded and past them to the foundation. A stock of dead men. An underpinning, a structure of entangled bodies and their parts, pushed tight, packed together and become architecture, their bones broken to make them fit, wedged in contorted repose, burnt skins and the tatters of their clothes pressed as if against glass at the limits of their cut, running below the building's walls, six feet deep below the ground, a perfect runnel full of humans poured like concrete and bracing the stays and the walls.

The foundation looks at him with all its eyes, and the men speak in time.

—we cannot breathe

There is no panic in their voices, nothing but the hopeless patience of the dead.

—we cannot breathe and we shore you up and we eat only sand

He whispers to them so no one else can hear.(39)

These unseen dead men are those whose deaths have cemented the way of life of others who know nothing of their lives or deaths; the structure they form the foundation of is an ideological structure, the tall buildings of 'the West' symbolising and reflecting its sky-scraping political economy. They are the dead enemy soldiers from the First Gulf War who were bulldozed alive into their bunkers. In a direct, not to say didactic, manner, Miéville makes them stand for all the dead whose unknown bodies have fallen beneath other ideational (super)structures. These buildings which they support are textual constructs standing for material history and the man who speaks to buildings is constantly in negotiation with the Foundation to keep those buildings intact. It is a provocative textual construction given that 'Al Qaeda' is typically translated as either 'The Base' or 'The Foundation'(40), and Miéville uses it to bind together two apparently opposed perspectives into a globalised context, to challenge the reader's sense of scale and of cause and effect.

Miéville's metaphor draws together all social structures into a holistically connected monolith (or rather, a construction of monoliths) whose foundations are those who speak to this man:

Every home is built on them. It is all one foundation, that underpins his city. Every wall weighs down upon the corpses that whisper to him with the same voice, the same faces, ripped-up cloth and long-dried blood and bodies torn up and their components used to fill gaps between bodies, limbs and heads stowed tidily between men bloated by gas and spilling dust from their cavities, the whole and partial dead concatenated.(41)

This massive social monolith is, of course, one which this man has, in true Ancient Mariner fashion, helped build, being one of the troops who had, in 1991, taken part in burying them in their entrenchments (42):

On the 25th of February in 1991, he had helped build the foundation. And he looked out across the spread-out, flattened acres, the desert made neat, wiped clean for those hours, he had heard dreadful sounds. He had seen suddenly and terribly through the hot and red-set sand and earth to the dead, in their orderly trenches that angled like walls, and intersected and fanned out, that stretched for miles, like the plans not of a house or a palace but a city. He had seen the men made into mortar, and he had seen them looking at him.(43)

Thus individual social responsibility is placed back into the context of the superstructures which ‘determine’ the behaviour of the people who live out their lives ‘under’ them—meaning *us*—and we are forced to confront our own responsibilities for the political choices made by our representatives as an extension of our own actions. Miéville’s Marxist perspective is central to his point about the application of our imagination to bridge global distances, it is a demonstration of the esemplastic power of fantasy; it carries a great deal of critical import for constructing and analysing other, dissenting political positions for developing globalised literary theories. In Miéville’s Fantasy fiction there are no Orcs (whose very names connote hellishness), just different people with different problems; fittingly then, in this, his most overtly Gothic short story, it is significant that his Everyman figure here is a former soldier presented not as a devil but as a scapegoat.

This modern Ancient Mariner is a conduit of exchanges in the manner of a peacekeeper. He is constantly haunted by a presence of history that those around him do not feel, and constantly in dialogue with that history. Through this constant communication he seeks to prevent further horrors occurring even though he knows it is sometimes inevitable, and sometimes he ambivalently walks away. The point of this fable is that communication is essential to prevent horrible events and, when they have happened, even more necessary to attempt an understanding of them in human terms away from the dehumanising rhetoric of political absolutes which see Satans, great and small, in everything. Its narrative is as concerned with the nature of story-telling as with a specific political perspective: how to attempt to tell unfamiliar stories about apparently familiar events. In grappling with this it shows its generic inheritance as a tale from a modern Arabian Nights, or a smoke-darkened Persian Gulf day.

These stories resemble the early Gothic novels in important ways: like novels such as Beckford’s *Vathek* these texts both tongue-in-cheek and grotesque by turns but with serious import in their grotesquerie. More specifically: they are texts where the baroque extremes of description are drawn directly, and recognisably, from exaggerated focus upon the small details of the mundane world. The development of a contemporary Gothic of globalisation in Miéville is a recuperation or revisitation of the esemplastic power of the Romantic imagination as a renewal of the Marxist imaginary, linking the local to the global through the tools of modern genre writing.

1. Miéville, China in interview with *Science Fiction & Fantasy Chronicles* online forum—see <http://www.sffchronicles.co.uk/forum/3169-the-china-mieville-interview.html>, 28/11/2007.
2. This text is a polemic and a provocation designed to agitate and argue with its potential readership, reading it provokes completely contrary responses, laughter and agreement one moment and fierce disagreement with his analysis the next. Although there are significant aspects to disagree with because of its idiosyncratic stance, the book can be used very productively in conjunction with readings of left wing Fantasy writers to emphasise the importance of materialist conceptions of the function of the imagination.
3. Watson, Ben, *Art, Class & Cleavage* (London: Quartet Books, 1997), p. 28.
4. Coleridge, from *The Watchman* (1796), quoted in Watson, Ben, *Art, Class & Cleavage: Quantulumcunque Concerning Materialist Esthetix* (London: Quartet Books, 1997), p. 24.
5. Burn, Andrew, ‘A Second Address to the People of Great Britain: Containing a New and Most Powerful Argument To Abstain From the Use of West India Sugar. By An Eye Witness to the Facts Related’ (1792) quoted in Plasa, Carl, ‘“Stained with Spots of Human Blood”: Sugar Abolition and Anthropophagy’, Paper delivered Globalisation and Writing, organised by Jonathan Neale (Bath Spa University, March 31st – April 3rd, 2007).
6. Watson, *Art, Class & Cleavage*, p. 22.
7. Miéville referred to Watson by name as a fellow defender of maximalism in prose writing during a debate on ‘Maximalism versus Minimalism’, UEA 06/03/2008.
8. Watson, *Art, Class & Cleavage*, p. 24.
9. Miéville, China in interview with *Science Fiction & Fantasy Chronicles* online forum—see <http://www.sffchronicles.co.uk/forum/3169-the-china-mieville-interview.html>, 28/11/2007.
10. Miéville, China, ‘M. R. James and the Quantum Vampire’ from *Collapse*, vol. IV ed. Robin MacKay, pp. 105—28.
11. Gasiorek’s book on post-war British fiction says ‘If realism is a multi-faceted family of writings that alter from period to period, then its various products need to be seen in a historical rather than formalist manner. Realism discloses not so much a set of textual characteristics as a general cognitive stance *vis-à-vis* the world, which finds different expression at different historical moments, manifesting itself in a wide range of fictional forms. The formalist conception of realism, so passionately attacked by Brecht in his debate with Lukács, rests on an unchanging conception of literary form that in turn presupposes historical stasis. It “fixes” both social reality and the literary work.’ (Gasiorek, Andrej *Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 14.) It is this idea of a plurality of Realisms shifting with historical circumstance which comes closest to expressing the relationship between Modernism and Realism in contemporary Fantasy writing, but it needs to be modified in respect to Miéville. One of the first nuances to add must be the conscious application of genre, not just as techniques and isolated tropes but as tradition.
12. Suvin, Darko, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 64.
13. Miéville, ‘Cognition as Ideology: A Dialectic of SF Theory’ (pp. 231-48) from *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction* eds Mark Bould and China Miéville (London: Pluto Press, 2009).
14. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 128.
15. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 132.
16. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 133.
17. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 133.
18. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 134.
19. Miéville, ‘Go Between’, p. 136.
20. Miéville, ‘M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire’, p. 121.

21. Miéville, 'Different Skies', (pp. 147—164) from *Looking For Jake* (Ballantine Books: New York, 2005), p. 150.
22. Miéville, 'Different Skies', pp.150—151.
23. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 151.
24. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 154.
25. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 152.
26. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 154.
27. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 160.
28. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 158.
29. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 157.
30. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 160.
31. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 161.
32. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 147.
33. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 162.
34. Miéville, 'Different Skies', p. 161.
35. Miéville, 'M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire', pp. 117—118.
36. Miéville, China, 'Foundation' from *Looking For Jake* (New York: Ballantine, 2005), p. 25.
37. Miéville, China, 'Foundation', p. 25.
38. Miéville, 'Foundation', p. 25.
39. Miéville, China, 'Foundation', p. 27.
40. Jason Burke writes: "Al-Qeada" comes from the Arabic root *qaf-ayn-dal*. It can mean a base, as in a camp or a home, a foundation [...] beneath a house or a pedestal that supports a column' as well as meaning 'a precept, rule, principle, maxim, formula, method, model or pattern'. Burke, Jason, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (London: Penguin Books, 2007 [2003]), p. 1.
41. Miéville, 'Foundation', p. 28.
42. Miéville refers his reader to an article by Patrick Sloyan entitled 'How the Mass Slaughter of a Group of Iraqis Went Unreported', *The Guardian*, 14th February 2003.
43. Miéville, 'Foundation', p. 31.