

“Temporal Crosshatching: Mapping Sentient Spaces”

In this paper I explore the animate cities, edifices, and streets of China Miéville’s *The City and the City*, *Embassytown*, and “Reports of Certain Events in London.”

The latter is concerned with *viae ferae* – feral streets; in *The City and the City*, while the two (or three) cities are not readily positioned as living organisms, they may as well be thought of as such: their completely imaginary boundaries are complicated and tricky; *Embassytown* features a city whose buildings and streets are “biorigged”: they are breathing, moving entities.

My paper rereads the two novels using the notion of the cities as sentient beings. I argue that treating them as living organisms changes the dynamics of mapping both the locales and the texts. Combining this with the feral streets in the short story reveals that the mapping of these spaces must make use of strategies quite different from those used in typical mapping.

This analysis adds the dimension of temporality to the typically spatial notion of crosshatching. In other words, because of the animate nature and therefore the mobility of Miéville’s cities, edifices, and streets, the “hatching” occurs across time, in addition to space. While crosshatching makes it difficult to fix non-sentient, stationary elements on a map, mobile elements compound this difficulty because their fixing is possible only temporarily, if at all. I postulate that the mapping of animate, sentient, mobile spaces requires a creative reconceptualization of literary cartography.