

Fantasy as a Peripheral Modernism:  
Uneven Development in Charles de Lint's Urban Fantasy

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**Abstract**

Modern fantasy must be analyzed as a modernist literature that posits a critical gesture of refusal of the conditions of modernity. As a form of irrealism, a category that includes Gothic and magic realism, fantasy claims to represent a deeper realism even if it uses non-realist techniques to do so. The combined and uneven capitalist world-system inscribes itself in the urban fantasy of Charles de Lint, which as a peripheral modernism combines residual forms and folkloric, non-modern content within the realist novel. This symbolic act allegorizes ‘the synchronicity of the non-synchronous,’ a principal condition of modernity. In de Lint’s novel *Moonheart*, the uneven relationship between colonizer and colonized becomes symbolically resolved through its utopian romance structure, despite the incapability of the Canadian state’s policy of multiculturalism to redress First Nations inequality. *Mulengro* expands the Gothic horror of a Rom superstition into a diagnosis of the general conditions of alienation that haunt modern capitalist society. In *Dreams Underfoot*, de Lint’s short story collection, fantasy represents the unevenness of cities, where the right to the urban life is at stake within the sublime urban totality.

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## Introduction: Fantasy as a Peripheral Modernism

Praised for its subversion<sup>1</sup> and derided for its escapism,<sup>2</sup> overlooked for its heavy commoditization<sup>3</sup> and yet hailed as a rejuvenation of reified forms,<sup>4</sup> fantasy presents contradiction and paradox. An alternative to the dominating aesthetic of realism, fantasy can be treated as a mode in opposition to mimesis<sup>5</sup> or as a form in itself, arising at the end of the nineteenth century with the work of William Morris.<sup>6</sup> Later popularized by J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1953), fantasy is a literature of magic, which places it in conflict with the scientific positivism of the Enlightenment. However, it is nonetheless quintessentially modern, since it responds to the lived experience of modernity. Conditioned by historical processes, including the spread of industrial capitalism around the globe, fantasy is an emergent form that could not exist without the development of "the techniques of literary realism" that sought to describe the changing world (Eilers 319). Fantasy texts dialogize realism and its antinomy, fantasy, particularly in 'contemporary' fantasy,<sup>7</sup> where magic enters the modern world. In such texts, the modernist experimentalism of combining realism and fantasy cannot be ignored.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosemary Jackson identifies the subversive potential of fantasy's questioning of reality in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981).

<sup>2</sup> Darko Suvin has also called fantasy from a Marxist context as "a subliterature of mystification" (*Metamorphoses* 9), although he later specifies that this criticism was primarily directed against horror ("Effusion" 225). J.R.R. Tolkien addresses common charges of the escapism of fantasy in "On Fairy-Stories."

<sup>3</sup> Mark Bould notes how the "structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches" of José Monleón, Rosemary Jackson, and other theorists "seem incapable of admitting to the existence of the fantasy text as a commodity" (Bould 71).

<sup>4</sup> Fredric Jameson hails romance and thus, by implication, fantasy as a form that can oppose the reification of realism (*Unconscious* 104).

<sup>5</sup> Katherine Hume calls fantasy and mimesis "the twin impulses behind all literature" (195). Note that actual fantasy texts must use mimetic technique to produce the 'illusion' of the non-real. This reveals fantasy and mimesis are interdependent modes. From here on in 'fantastic' refers to the mode; 'fantasy' to the form or genre.

<sup>6</sup> Morris's work saw the birth of fantasy as a sub-genre of romance, according to Patrick Burger (1). Eilers makes a case for William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) (319).

<sup>7</sup> Contemporary fantasy is distinguished from epic fantasy, alternatively known as heroic or 'high' fantasy. Mikhail Bakhtin refers to contemporaneity as "a simultaneity of times—in past, present or future" but especially to "the two temporal simultaneities ... of author and created character, or of author and event. ... Epic occurs in an absolute past that could never have been *sovremennyj* [contemporary] to its author-bard or to its audience ... The novel, in

Fantasy must be regarded a modernist literature, and specifically as a peripheral modernism. Modernism is frequently defined as a particular formalism that exposes its own construction and as a style that emphasizes fragmentation and experimentation over realism. However, the concept of modernism as “writerly technique (self-conscious, anti- or at least post-realist, etc) and as a Western European phenomenon” must be expanded to encompass, in Adorno’s sense of ‘modernism,’ any literature that refuses modernity, understood as the experience of life under the pervading, unevenly developed capitalist world-system (WReC 18-19). Fantasy is a peripheral modernism in the sense that it maintains an “aesthetic distance” from central modernist trends (Casanova 12). Fantasy is “coeval with other modernities” and shares aesthetic values attributed to modernism (WReC 14). Brian Attebery observes that “one difference between fantasy and the genres of realism and naturalism is that fantasy typically displays and even celebrates its structure,” a statement that equally applies to modernism (“Structuralism” 83). If “modernism ought to be conceptualised as a cultural formation of resistance to the prevailing—indeed, the hegemonic—modes of capitalist modernisation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe,” then fantasy is an oppositional literary form that performs a similar gesture of refusal (WReC 19).

The central argument is as follows: the combined and uneven modern capitalist world-system inscribes itself in the urban fantasy of Charles de Lint, which as a peripheral modernism combines residual forms and folkloric, non-modern content within the realist novel. This symbolic act allegorizes ‘the synchronicity of the non-synchronous,’ a principal condition of

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contrast, permits authorial- and reader-access to the artistically represented world” (Holquist 426). Likewise, an epic fantasy takes place in not only an inaccessible time but a non-existent space, a ‘secondary world’ such as J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth, while contemporary fantasy is more ‘novelistic’ since it author, reader, and even the fictitious characters inhabit the same time and space.

modernity. Secondly, it ideologically resolves the uneven relationship between colonizer and colonized in the multicultural present of Canada. Finally, fantasy as a peripheral modernism represents the unevenness of cities, where the right to the urban life is at stake within the sublime urban totality.

Various critics have begun to analyze fantasy as a modernism. Brian Attebery, in his chapter “Make it Old: the Other Mythic Method” from his recent book *Stories about Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth* (2014), argues for the modernism of early-twentieth century fantasy by comparing the mythic methods of T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* (1922) to Charles Williams’ *War in Heaven* (1930). The collection of essays *Baptism of Fire: The Birth of the Modern British Fantastic in World War I* (2015) charts the reactions of, among others, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, E.R. Eddison, and Sylvia Townsend Warner to a formative event in the development of European modernism.<sup>8</sup> *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (2015) by the Warwick Research Collective allows for claims that fantasy, Gothic literature, magic realism, and other irrealist texts with magical aesthetics can register the conditions of the modern capitalist world-system as oppositional forms to modernity. But a significant problem opens up when comparing the resemblant forms of magic realism and contemporary fantasy.

What distinguishes a largely Anglo-American fantasy tradition from magic realism?<sup>9</sup>

Gregory Bechtel observes how, on a basic level, “magical realism (implicitly) asserts that *there*

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<sup>8</sup> I will not be consulting this collection in detail, but I note it in passing since it adds embellishment to my thesis.

<sup>9</sup> Magic realism is occasionally written ‘magical realism.’ Maggie Ann Bowers offers a distinction: “in magic realism ‘magic’ refers to the mystery of life: in marvellous and magical realism ‘magic’ refers to any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science” (19). I take the expedient of letting ‘magic realism’ substitute for both categories.



*is no such thing as magic* while syncretic [i.e. contemporary] fantasy insists that *magic is real*" (119; italics in original). The definition of fantasy as a literature of the 'impossible' conceals how an uneven geography determines what is considered fantasy instead of realism. Attebery argues that the impossible "might just as well ... be called non-Western reality" ("Politics" 10). He goes on to describe fantasy as "not the clash between the real and the unreal, but as the meeting ground between empirical and traditional world views, or at least the discourses those world views have generated" (10). This wide definition subsumes not only modern fantasy but magic realism and even the Gothic novel—any discourse where empiricism is dialogized with other epistemologies.<sup>10</sup> Magic realism from peripheral areas—whether Africa, India, Latin America, or elsewhere—can be confused with fantasy if its realist value is not recognized.<sup>11</sup> Contemporary fantasy complicates the confusion, since its fantastic content coexists with a modern setting. The contradiction between what is considered impossible and what is realist can only be resolved with a methodology that considers modern fantasy in the context of world literature.

Charles de Lint's urban fantasy,<sup>12</sup> a mode of contemporary fantasy which he once described as "North American magical realism" poses the question of whether fantasy can function like magic realism, especially given the added problem that his work emerges from

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<sup>10</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin's sense of dialogism is "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. ... Any unitary language "is relative to the overpowering force of heteroglossia, and thus dialogism" (426).

<sup>11</sup> The reception of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) exemplifies this contradiction. "In the West," Rushdie writes, "people tended to read *Midnight's Children* as a fantasy, while in India people thought of it as pretty realistic, almost a history book" (xiii-xiv). By Rushdie's own account, Western readers who are blind to the contradictory social realities of the global periphery regard Rushdie's magical aesthetics as fantasy instead of realism. An uneven world system dominated by capitalism creates not only the social disjuncture that forms the preconditions for the emergence of magic realism as an aesthetic, but also the uneven reception of magical aesthetics.

<sup>12</sup> Urban fantasy denotes "texts where fantasy and the mundane world intersect and interweave throughout a tale which is significantly *about* a real city" ("Urban Fantasy" 975; italics in original).

North America, instead of the literary peripheries of India or Latin America (“Considering” 114). De Lint’s work forms the centre of analysis since his work asks precisely this question. The scope of this thesis’s interpretive project extends beyond Canadian fantasy to (semi-)peripheral magic realism, Gothic literature, and irrealisms of all kinds, from regions all over the globe. It extends to the growing body of modern fantasy emerging from the (semi-)periphery where magic realism is often the assumed irrealist aesthetic.<sup>13</sup> It proposes that even mainstream, Tolkien-derivative fantasy registers the world-system, even if it does not engage critically with it as a peripheral modernism. Modern fantasy is a peripheral modernism deriving from peripheral areas, where uneven development is felt most strongly, and from the centres of world literature.

Globalized capitalism must be examined as a world-system in which the conditions of combined and uneven development<sup>14</sup> determine not only economic unevenness, but the hierarchies of world literature. Capitalism has spread across the globe in an ongoing process beginning in the Renaissance and the Age of Exploration, establishing over the course of time economic centres of consumption in the European and North American mother countries, while colonies and ex-colonies are peripheralized. Even today, world capitalism produces a hierarchy where the production of commodities largely occurs on the peripheries and consumption largely in the centres. This uneven dynamic inscribes itself in world literature, which has a geography “based on the opposition between a capital, on the one hand, and peripheral dependencies whose

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<sup>13</sup> Usman Malik, first Pakistani to win a Bram Stoker Award for Short Fiction in 2014, has had his work published as weird fiction, but how his work relates to magic realism remains a matter of some controversy. Another novel that blends the traditions of magic realism and genre fiction is *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) by Junot Díaz. As more authors from the (semi-)periphery gather acclaim in the global centres of world literature, the line between magic realism and fantasy will likely continue to blur.

<sup>14</sup> Combined and uneven development describes “a situation in which capitalist forms and relations exist alongside ‘archaic forms of economic life’ and pre-existing social and class relations” (WReC 11). Embedded quote is from Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 432.

relationship to this center is defined by their aesthetic distance from it” (Casanova 12).

Conceiving capitalist modernity as a multi-scalar centre-periphery system enables the provincialization of Europe and a transcendence of Eurocentrism. With this theory, the Warwick Research Collective reconceptualises “the notion of modernity, which involves de-linking it from the idea of the ‘west’ and yoking it to that of the capitalist world-system” (15). Furthermore, modernism must be understood “as an encoding of the capitalisation of the world,” extending the domain of modernism to earlier decades and centuries than the twentieth and late-nineteenth centuries and beyond the European modernisms of Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound (WReC 18). This study adopts these definitions of modernity and modernism.

If “the effectivity of the world-system will necessarily be discernible in any modern literary work,” then it follows that the development of capitalism is traceable in the development of fantasy (WReC 20). Darko Suvin periodizes fantasy using three different historical corpuses in which “the massification and acceleration of capitalist reification is evident” (“Effusion” 217): post-Tolkien heroic and horror fantasy (1960-present), classic fantasy—spanning from William Morris to Tolkien (1880-1960)—and the Gothic-Romantic fantastic of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Nikolai Gogol (1764-1830) (“Effusion” 212; 217). In this latter category, fantasy often took on the form of either the uncanny or ‘the fantastic,’ as defined by Todorov: the “hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event” (25). The prominence given to *doubting* reality suggests a response to the surreal alienation experienced during the beginnings of industrial commodification. This corpus bears little direct relation to classic fantasy, which added realist techniques to children’s fairy-tale hypotexts, in order to eventually produce fantasy novels set in independent ‘secondary worlds.’ Classic fantasy authors such as George MacDonald, J.R.R.

Tolkien, and Lord Dunsany reacted to the creative destruction of the English countryside during second-phase industrialization. In the post-Tolkien contemporary moment, late capitalist reification multiplies and converges genres in a dynamic market, which leads to Attebery's justified designation of fantasy as a "fuzzy set" (*Strategies* 12). This fuzzy 'definition,' however, must be replaced with a historicized understanding of genre and form.

Fredric Jameson's theory about the sedimentation of genre and the ideological content of texts provides the hermeneutic needed to historicize fantasy. Instead of treating fantasy as a fuzzy set or as a mode, I ask Attebery's more useful question in "The Politics (If Any) of Fantasy": "Is the use of folk beliefs in a fantasy a political act?" (3) Strangely enough, Attebery dismisses Marxist critics of fantasy, including Jameson's commentaries, stating that "their analysis in terms of [fantasy's] radical or reactionary credentials seems mostly beside the point" (2).<sup>15</sup> But in fact Attebery's observation that "folk culture can be subversive in a capitalist system by being independent of it" hints at the radical potential of fantasy (4).

The fantasy novel is a modern form that sediments older literary forms and their corresponding ideological and utopian content. The fuzzy set model implies that "we cannot be sure how to understand the texts [of a genre] as a class," owing to the loose borders of the genre (Cohen 204). However, novels can be historicized by analyzing how traces of previous modes of production endure into the form and content of modern texts. The dialogizing of romance, fairy tale, folktale, and myth with realism can be interpreted as a "symbolic resolution to a concrete

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<sup>15</sup> China Miéville criticizes Jameson for not historicizing fantasy, since he implies that fantasy emerged from medieval epic "in some more or less direct way" ("Gothic" 662). Oddly enough, an apparatus for the analysis of fantasy exists in Jameson's own "Magical Narratives" chapter in *The Political Unconscious* (1981). Patrick Burger has used Jameson's chapter to analyze modern fantasy's political unconscious in the works of Morris, Tolkien, and T.H. White.

historical situation,” namely, the ‘synchronicity of the non-synchronous’ in modernity (Jameson, *Unconscious* 117). This study emphasizes not fantasy as a mode in itself but the fantasy *novel*. Jameson describes the novel as “not so much an organic unity as a symbolic act that must reunite or harmonize heterogeneous narrative paradigms which have their own specific and contradictory ideological meaning” (144). Treating fantasy as a novel transcends the morass of various theorists’ often irreconcilable and totalizing definitions of fantasy and the fantastic.<sup>16</sup>

### Urban Fantasy in Context

Contemporary fantasy encodes combined unevenness in its structure. According to John Clute, a contemporary fantasy “sets the mundanity of the present day in clear opposition to the fantasy premise,” often in a crosshatched setting “in which radically different realms co-exist” (“Contemporary Fantasy”). This makes contemporary fantasy a prime genre in which to observe the simultaneity of modernity. Clute himself acknowledges that of all forms of fantasy, contemporary fantasy has “learnt most” from magic realism (“Contemporary Fantasy”). It is therefore the family of fantasy texts that potentially places the highest stakes on realism.

One of the most popular modes of contemporary fantasy is urban fantasy, in which the fantastic enters the metropole or, alternatively, the metropole itself becomes the fantastic entity. John Clute describes urban fantasies as “texts where fantasy and the mundane world intersect and interweave throughout a tale which is significantly *about* a real city” (975; italics in original). He traces a retrospective lineage that ranges from Petronius Arbiter’s *Satyricon* to Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) to Thomas Pynchon’s *V* (1963) and other

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<sup>16</sup> Theorists who have contributed definitions include Hume (1984), Jackson (1998), Attebery (1992), Manlove (1990), Todorov (1973), and Irwin (1976).

works. In the 1980s and 1990s, the form emerged under the explicit label ‘urban fantasy.’<sup>17</sup> In urban fantasy, aspects of residual culture—figures of myth and folklore—are shown to exist as the contemporaries of everyday people, which strengthens the sense that “urban form is based on simultaneity” (Kofman and Lebas 19). Tim Power’s *The Anubis Gates* (1983), Megan Lindholm’s *The Wizard of the Pigeons* (1986), and Emma Bull’s *War for the Oaks* (1987) are paradigms. These texts “treat the late 20th century as an essentially urban drama” (“Urban Fantasy”). Indeed, urban fantasy is the mode or subgenre of fantasy that most directly represents modernity as such, and its stark disjuncture with the non-modern.

Alexander Irvine distinguishes between two extremes of urban fantasy, between which there is much gradation: the first “redeploys the tropes and characters of older fairy tales and folklore, forcing them into collisions with a contemporary urban milieu,” and the second often takes inspiration from the urbanism of the modernists, depicting an urban setting that “creates its own rules, independent from existing canons of folklore” (201). Empirical texts can partake of both lineages. In urban settings, fantasy’s modernism appears with special clarity. By bringing folkloric elements into the city, urban fantasy replicates the movement of wealth from the periphery to the centre in the capitalist mode of production. The urban appropriates rural folklore, the culture of the (semi-)periphery, resulting in the uneven coexistence of fairies and humans in fictional cities. Raymond Williams observes how in real cities, mixed, multicultural urban populations emerge owing to capitalist and imperialist development (“Metropolis” 21; qtd. in Irvine 203).<sup>18</sup> Within this heterogeneous totality, critical perspectives of “divergence or

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<sup>17</sup> A label also associated with the subgenre of “paranormal romance” for a “broad American readership” (Irvine 200).

<sup>18</sup> For more on this topic consult Williams’s *The Country and the City* and his essay “Culture is Ordinary.”

dissent” emerge, particularly from the bohemian classes of musicians and artists (“Metropolis” 21). Such voices are what Gregory Bechtel calls “cognitive minoritarian” against the consensus, or “cognitive majoritarian,” reality (84). These perspectives enwrap readers into non-Enlightenment visions of experience—to enjoin them in a consensual fantasy. Such expressions of urban experience are modernist.

Urban fantasy registers the modern capitalist world-system through its representation of the fragmented, uneven city viewed as a sublime totality. “Spatial disjunction,” Jameson proposes, makes this totality sublime, a result of the structure of imperialism and international capitalism, which causes “the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole” (*Papers* 157). Fragmentation becomes a mode of representing the larger state of capitalism, in which “daily life and existential experience in the metropolis ... can now no longer be grasped immanently; it no longer has its meaning, its deeper reason for being, within itself” (*Papers* 157). The city becomes “a fractal of global social and geographic unevenness” because its existence depends on a system that cannot be viewed as totality (Heise 226).

Modernist works like T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and urban fantasies like China Miéville’s *Perdido Street Station* (2000) represent urban fragmentation. The ruins of unevenly developed spaces come to be one of “the great wilderness images of Modernism” (Long, “Unreal” 145; qtd. in Irvine 203).<sup>19</sup> The city is beheld as “a mysterious totality” defying human comprehension and cognition (Den Tandt, *Sublime* xi; qtd. in Irvine 202). Any emphasis upon the fantastic increases the sense of the incomprehensible. The “rhetoric of terror” at the

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<sup>19</sup> This language persists in Charles de Lint’s folkloric urban fantasy, when he describes the Tombs, a dilapidated sector of Newford, as “the lost part of the city—a wilderness of urban decay” (“The Sacred Fire” 139).

encounter of the sublime, in which the visible and hidden aspects of the city evade comprehension, becomes dialogized in urban writings by the interplay of “realism and romance, documentary narration and the sublime, positivism and the gothic” (Den Tandt xi). Since the city’s totality cannot be understood through the epistemologies of classic realism, the fantastic foregrounds the mysterious, the unknown, and the invisible, all of which confirm totality’s presence but denies its immediacy. In urban fantasy, “the fey characters incarnate the sublime” (Irvine 202).

A social experience in process finds itself encoded in urban fantasy, particularly in the work of Charles de Lint. Raymond Williams describes a structure of feeling as “a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange” (*Marxism* 131). Reading between the lines of social formations and finished products, such as de Lint’s novels, can give a sense of the processes of the pre-emergent. Cat Ashton remarks on the simultaneity of urban fantasy’s rise in 1980s and 1990s and “political initiatives in Canada and the United States to increase green space, fund public transit, and provide space and resources for the arts in urban areas, suggesting that urban fantasy both fuelled and reflected a broader cultural drive to reclaim the city in North America” (117). Authors such as “John Crowley, Mercedes Lackey, Peter S. Beagle, Will Shetterley, Emma Bull, and Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling” formed the literary generation in question (Ashton 117). De Lint’s connection to Terri Windling—his acknowledgements state that *Dreams Underfoot* was titled after one of Windling’s art shows (vii)—and his borrowing of the term “North American magical realism,” from Norman Spinrad to describe his own work, suggest that urban fantasy’s rise was a significant cultural emergence (“Considering” 115).



The political initiatives Ashton remarks on found inspiration in Henri Lefebvre's "Right to the City," which is a useful document outlining a program for the socialist reform of urban space and hints at the utopian project that lay behind the drive to bring elements of fantasy into the city. Given Canada's racialized and commoditized urban spaces,<sup>20</sup> the segregation of First Nations onto reserves, and the systemic problem of homelessness especially among indigenes, Henri Lefebvre's call for the right to the city feels poignantly relevant and no less so in a nation that so prides itself on multiculturalism. The right to the city is a call for "a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*" (Lefebvre, *Cities* 158; italics in original). The city is where human connections are made, the "place of encounter" (*Cities* 158). Just as Canada's multicultural policies came into effect, "out of the global recessionary economies of the 1970s, the post-Fordist city rose like a phoenix" (Heise 222). This created a contradiction between the commitment to accommodation and the decay of urban cores. The right to the city attempts to resolve this contradiction. Charles de Lint is among a generation of writers that shares a concern with the right to urban life—a structure of feeling that crystallizes into urban fantasy, a modernism that articulates itself through representations of the sublime, fantastic city.

### Outline of the Present Work

Charles de Lint is a Canadian author resident in Ottawa who moonlights as a folk musician. He has been called "the Father of Urban Fantasy" and is "unquestionably the most prolific and the most honored Canadian author of fantasy" (Van Belkom 42; Ketterer 117). Having flirted with the label "North American magic realism," he prefers "mythic fiction" for his

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<sup>20</sup> In her book *Claiming Space: Racialization in Canadian Cities* (2006), Cheryl Teelucksingh discusses how "celebrated Canadian markers of racial diversity and racial harmony that are spatially managed through systems of domination are in fact commodified versions of multiculturalism in the forms of 'ethnic culture,' 'ethnic neighbourhoods,' and 'ethnic restaurants'" (1).

own work because it refuses limiting market categories (de Lint, “Considering” 114; Van Belkom 42). Mythic fiction is “basically mainstream writing that incorporates elements of myth and folklore,” indicating his desire to reach a mass audience interested in realistic characters (Reid 50). In 1984 he won the first annual William L. Crawford Award for Best New Fantasy Author having published two novels that year including *Moonheart* (1984), a contemporary fantasy set partly in Ottawa and partly in an Otherworld that blends Celtic and Native American mythologies (Reid 50). His 1985 horror novel *Mulengro* recounts a series of supernatural murders that afflict Ottawa’s Rom community. His collection *Dreams Underfoot* (1993) introduces his sprawling fictitious city of Newford, the setting for much of his short fiction, with recurring characters such as Jilly Coppercorn and Christy Riddell who venture through bohemian art galleries as well as Newford’s derelict ruins, populated by urbanized fairies.

This study will be divided into three chapters: the first outlines the theory of analyzing fantasy as a modernism of the capitalist world-system, and the next two chapters analyze my primary texts. The initial chapter theorizes how the conditions of combined and uneven development register themselves in the form and content of contemporary fantasy, which adopts a modernist path to critique. I begin by examining the relationship between form and content, which becomes disrupted in Indian and Latin American realism, where misplaced ideas of European realism result in disjointed representations, necessitating critical realisms that foreground the stakes of representation.<sup>21</sup> Magic realism arises as separate solution that uses an uneven aesthetics to establish deeper realism through experimentation. Such modernist forms

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<sup>21</sup> For an exposition on realism in the Brazilian context consult Roberto Schwarz’s *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*.

gain legitimacy by being more ‘realist’ than reified realism. Modern fantasy, especially contemporary fantasy, also registers the modernity of the non-modern. Both magic realism and fantasy may be treated as types of irrealism,<sup>22</sup> which uses magical content as a path to a deeper realism about experience itself.

I will then examine the utopian impulse behind modern fantasy and how it adopts ideas from and reacts against postmodernism, which Jameson calls the cultural logic of late capitalism. Fantasy’s response to the postmodernist issues such as the crisis of historicity, absurdity, difference, the simulacrum, play, and commoditization are examined. As a romance, fantasy can restore a sense of historicity and utopia to postmodernity. As an irrealism, fantasy indicates the existence of the Real, which lies beyond simulacra. As a commoditized form, fantasy occasionally reifies representations of cultural difference to gain an edge in the market, but at the same time, difference in form leads to innovation.

The second chapter examines uneven development in Canada and how *Moonheart* responds to the legacy of colonialism during the multicultural present. *Moonheart* symbolically resolves the historical contradictions of combined and uneven development in Canada through the ideological content of its uneven form, in which romance and realism become dialogized, and through the ideological structure of its content, which seeks to reconcile the semes of ‘modernity’ and ‘community’ through a narrative that projects a multicultural utopia. I compare

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Löwy defines irrealism as not “an alternative, a substitute, or a rival to critical realism: it is simply a different form of literature and art, which does not attempt, in one way or another, to ‘reflect’ reality,” and it encompasses as a category an array of forms including “gothic novels, fairy tales, fantastic stories, oneiric narratives, utopian or dystopian novels, surrealist art, and many others” (“Current”). The Warwick Research Collective note that irrealism’s “anti-linear plot lines, meta-narratorial devices, un-rounded characters, unreliable narrators, contradictory points of view, and so on” correspond to Euro-American modernist techniques but can be interpreted more broadly as “the determinate formal registers of (semi-)peripherality” (WReC 51).

*Moonheart* to works of magic realism. I also indicate how aspects of the Gothic novel in *Moonheart* encode the violence of capitalist accumulation by representing a return of Canada's repressed colonial history. The ideological content of *Moonheart*'s form performs a symbolic resolution to colonial history in the wake of liberal multiculturalism's failure as a Canadian state policy to redress the uneven development of the First Nations.

I then map out the form of *Moonheart*'s content, using a Greimas semiotic rectangle. *Moonheart* rejects late capitalist alienation and projects a utopia that redresses alienation and racial reification, through a return to an oppositional residual culture, where a sense of an inclusive, open community can be adapted to the present.<sup>23</sup> However, Jameson's proposal that "the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily utopian" (*Unconscious* 286) suggests that the multicultural utopia projected by *Moonheart* also acts as an ideology that smoothens the lingering social contradictions within multicultural policy itself.

The third chapter examines how *Mulengro* and *Dreams Underfoot* use fantastic content to represent uneven, postmodern cities, turning urban underworlds into magical Otherworlds. Doing so, de Lint articulates a structure of feeling consisting of a "cultural hypothesis" about the renewal of urban environments (Williams, *Marxism* 132). The transformation of underworld into Otherworld in de Lint's fiction produces an irrealist representation of urban space as a sublime totality in which residual forces, or the poor and homeless, can inhabit modernity and claim "*the right to the city*" (Lefebvre, *Cities* 158; italics in original). I begin by tracing how the pastoralism of classic fantasy persists in the environmental concerns of de Lint's urban fantasy, which

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<sup>23</sup> My use of the term 'residual culture' follows the delineation of the category by Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* (1977). Residual, dominant, and emergent culture will be explained in Chapter 1.

articulates a utopian aspiration for a healthier urban habitat that emphasizes the value of community. In *Mulengro*, the Rom of Ottawa are denied the right to the city when a ghost begins to murder those who are ‘unclean’ owing to their adoption of non-Rom ways of life—that is to say, those who have adopted to modernity. The spectre’s consumption of the souls of the dead articulates an anxiety about the incorporation of the Rom’s pre-capitalist mode of production, centred around handicrafts, into the alienating market forces of late capitalism.

While *Mulengro* tends to place country life over city life, *Dreams Underfoot* likens the unevenly developed, ruined neighbourhoods of Newford to a wilderness, articulating a sense of the urban sublime and a more complex relationship between city and country. I first describe the role of the homeless and marginalized in de Lint’s Newford fiction—and, standing in for them allegorically, those creatures of urban legend, such as the Sasquatch—who appropriate space from the abstract space produced by late capitalism. I will then examine the role the *genii loci*, or spirits of a place, play in de Lint’s representation of urban space, their presence implying the city’s livability while their departure entails economic, social, and environmental decline. I will then more closely examine de Lint’s theory of ‘consensual reality’ which by critiquing hegemonic realism justifies the existence of the fantastic as a critical irrealism. The violation of habitual reality by the appearance of invisible entities—fairies, ghosts, and spirits—functions as an allegory for the sublime social totality.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The preconditions for allegory include both an “affirmation of the *existence* of truth” and “the recognition of its *absence*” (Cowan 114; italics in original). Fantasy likewise affirms the existence of a mysterious reality, while implying through its break with realism that truth is absent from immediate experience.

## Chapter 1: Fantasy as a Modernism of the Capitalist World-System

Modern fantasy registers the distinct experience of modernity. This makes fantasy a literature of the “*modern capitalist world-system*” (WReC 15; italics in original). Its perceived anachronism becomes a determinate indication of its modernity, its use of residual literary forms and content allegorizing the conditions of combined unevenness. Joining the pre-modern and the modern, fantasy shares with magic realism the “organizing category ... of a mode of production still locked in conflict with traces of the older mode” (Jameson, *Visible* 138). This is especially true of contemporary fantasy, or urban fantasy, in which authors like Charles de Lint locate “the sublime in the irruption of reawakened supernatural powers into the urban landscape,” a return of magical elements from displaced romance (Irvine 201).<sup>25</sup> The conditions of combined and uneven development register themselves in the form and content of contemporary fantasy, which adopts a modernist path to critique.<sup>26</sup>

This chapter examines fantasy as a modernism, a form of emergent culture that arises in the space made by residual culture’s active opposition to dominant cultural processes.

Definitions of modernism must transcend its limited application to the canonical Anglo-American stylistic experimenters of the early-twentieth century to include any literary work that refuses modernity, understood as the lived experience of life under capitalism.

The argument opens by tracing how the disjuncture between form and content in Indian realism leads Indian novelists to expose realism’s own construction, resulting in experimental

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<sup>25</sup> Northrop Frye calls “displacement ... the adjusting of formulaic structures to a roughly more credible context” (36).

<sup>26</sup> Note that while the Warwick Research Collective includes non-dissident novels in their methodology, Adorno considers a work to be truly *modernist* if it critiques modernity and adopts experimental aesthetics (WReC 20). For a fantasy novel to be modernist, it must break from stagnant aesthetics rather than submit to the reification of literary style, genre, and form.

forms. One significant result of this process is a critical realism that foregrounds the stakes of representation itself. Another is magic realism, a kind of irrealism that nonetheless strives for deeper realism through experimentation with less realistic narratives. This process arises as a result of the colonial literary inheritance, the unevenness of the world literary system, and the conditions of combined and uneven socio-economic development. In the next section, I describe the form of modern fantasy as an articulation of the state of combined unevenness, which is the template of modernity under world capitalism. Fantasy is a modern form not despite its use of earlier literary forms, such as medieval romance, fairy tale, and folktale, but *because* of them. The act of combining romance with the modern novel is symbolic act that consciously unites a literary form in which traces of previous temporalities can coexist with the modern present. There is a realist impulse behind modern fantasy, since by foregrounding its construction, and representing this simultaneity, fantasy can claim to represent deeper realities inaccessible to immediate experience.

I then discuss how modern fantasy is a critical irrealism, along with magic realist texts that return to residual narrative forms, sometimes as a postcolonial, anti-realist project. Magic realism's use of residual literary forms registers the unevenness of the world-system in a way comparable to how modern fantasy employs romance to represent coeval modernities.

Fantasy's intrinsic politics of form then offers itself up to discussion. Romance projects a "salvational historicity," making fantasy utopian in its very narrative (Jameson, *Unconscious* 148). It is a form that celebrates the general utopian impulse, rather than, necessarily, a

constructed utopia in the tradition of Thomas Moore.<sup>27</sup> Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-Stories" supports this reading of fantasy.

Fantasy responds to capitalist globalization in a way comparable to how the Gothic novel, an antecedent form, responds to industrialization. Gothic motifs symbolize the violence of capitalist accumulation, a language used by Marx himself. Some fantastic Gothic tropes—for example, vampires—symbolize types of capitalist consumption.<sup>28</sup> These monsters, catachrestic representations of real historical forces, are critical irrealist in how they foreground the impossibility of recognizing the social totality.

In the contemporary moment, modern fantasy opposes late capitalism, but also adopts its cultural logic. Fantasy can restore postmodernism's lost sense of historicity, or reify the past. It mimics capitalism's absurdity, but performs an irrealist critique. It adopts a postmodern politics of difference to structure its alternate realities, but doing so, supposes the existence of a Real that lies beyond the visible, beyond the simulacrum. Despite heavy commoditization, which alters the content of the form, modern fantasy nonetheless retains its subversive impulse.

### Magic Realist Aesthetics and World Literature

Realist literature has the most aesthetic value where form is in genuine balance with content. Karl Marx insisted on this dialectical balance when he wrote, in *Rheinische Zeitung*, "form is of no value unless it is the form of its content" (qtd. in Eagleton 20). Content produces form, but form also determines content, and a failure of form is attributable to a failure of

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<sup>27</sup> See Jameson's "The Politics of Utopia." In this essay he distinguishes between "two utopian perspectives, that of the root of all evil and that of the political and social arrangements. We should probably see each of them in two distinct ways: as wish-fulfillment and as construction" (40).

<sup>28</sup> For sustained discussion on the topic of capitalist appetite see Bartolovich's "Consumerism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Cannibalism."



content. History determines the relationship between form and content in literature: Terry Eagleton states that “forms are historically determined by the kind of ‘content’ they have to embody; they are changed, transformed, broken down and revolutionized as that content itself changes” (21). For instance, the stagnant bourgeoisie of the later nineteenth century produced naturalism out of a content devoted to superficial observations of society. However, realism is a “genuinely dialectical art-form” that “mediates between concrete and general, essence and existence, type and individual” (Eagleton 29). When a type of realism becomes reified, a new realism must critique what is stagnant, renewing the dynamism of literature. When the content of realism fails to represent experience, as it does in the differential circumstances of realism in the colonies, its form must change into something more experimental.

“Realism in the colony ... is never *quite* realism in the metropolises,” writes Ulka Anjaria (5; italics in original), who argues that disjunctures in the form and content of Indian realism represent the crisis of modernity. Realism, which Indian literature inherited, was sufficient to European bourgeois society. But this realism could not speak to the reality of uneven development in India, where authors had to consider “the stakes of representation itself” (Anjaria 4). The instability of realist form enabled it to resist dominant ideology and, Anjaria claims, “simultaneously show the *inability* of realism to capture the reality of social inequality” (8; italics in original). The new realism reveals its own construction, raising “the issue of realism as such within its own structure” (Jameson, “Antinomies” 478). Anjaria emphasizes that the representation of inequality through an uneven aesthetics, in which ‘magical’ aesthetics appear alongside realism, can be “all the more realist, even if *less realistic*” (10; italics in original). This renewal of realist content enabled Indian authors of the 1930s to let “disjunctures rupture their texts” in order to “represent precisely the crises surrounding modernity” (Anjaria 28). When

realist content did not fit its form, Indian realism sought to display this up front, through literary experimentation.

The impetus of this transformation—the adoption of a foreign European form and its imposition on local materials—must be understood in a way that transcends the Eurocentric conception of literary exchange. Fredric Jameson, Roberto Schwartz, and Meenakshi Mukherjee each observe the disjunctures between form and content in Japanese, Brazilian, and Indian literature respectively. Franco Moretti, consulting these studies, concludes that in peripheral, non-European literatures, “the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials” (58). Moretti conceives of world literature as a system structured not by difference but inequality (WReC 7). However, he treats the rise of the modern novel as a “wave that runs into the branches of local traditions” (Moretti 67), which presents the movement of literature as unidirectional from the core to the periphery, ignoring instances of peripheral works appropriated or translated by core authors (WReC 55-6). Furthermore, Moretti homogenizes Europe instead of recognizing the “multi-scalar” system in which peripheries and semi-peripheries exist even in the midst of the core countries (55). In order to understand the world literary system and the condition of global modernity, centre and periphery must be understood as not only structured according to an uneven hierarchy, but as a combined system with various directions of exchange.

Combined and uneven development is the “template” of modernity itself (WReC 11). The global centres and peripheries exist in a hierarchical relation in the global distribution of labour: Europe and North American largely consume; Asia, Africa, and South America largely produce. This direction of exchange influences the vectors of literary development from centre to

periphery and the aesthetic distance of the latter from the former (Casanova 12). This uneven and reciprocal relationship produces and joins centre and periphery in one worldwide system.

The world-system is defined by simultaneity and singularity. In the periphery, centres of industrial production will often coexist with agrarian subsistence farmers or pastoralist modes of production. This is what Jameson calls the “simultaneity” of modernity; the coexistence of central and peripheral times (WReC 12). The coexistence of different historical stages of development—or different modes of production—in the same society reveals not anomaly but systemic connection. Combined and uneven development becomes “a template for *any* consideration of modern culture, whether in the metropolises or at the peripheries of the world-system” (WReC 11; italics in original).<sup>29</sup> Modernity is also a singularity, “a globally dispersed ‘situation’” that spans the entire system; capitalism does not even out modernity so much as it produces unevenness “as a matter of course,” maintaining the hierarchy through the “development of underdevelopment, of maldevelopment and dependent development” (WReC 12-13). Since modernity across the globe follows this logic, literature spanning from India, South America, Europe, and North America can be read for how ‘combined unevenness’ inscribes itself into form and content.

But how does the modern world-system actually impress itself on literature? The answer to this question lies in the adaptable form of the novel. The Warwick Research Collective treats the novel “paradigmatically, not exemplarily, as a literary form in which combined and uneven development is manifested with particular salience” (16). Unevenness characterizes the form and content of the novel itself. Jameson observes that

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<sup>29</sup> This is Jameson’s argument in *A Singular Modernity* (2002), paraphrased by WReC.

the text as a synchronic unity of structurally contradictory or heterogenous elements, generic patterns and discourses (what might be called, following Ernst Bloch, the *Ungleichzeitigkeit* or synchronic ‘uneven development’ within a single textual structure) now suggests that even Frye’s notion of displacement can be rewritten as a conflict the older deep structural form and the contemporary materials and generic systems in which it seeks to inscribe and to reassert itself. (*Unconscious* 141)

In the European realism of Balzac, for instance, the text’s uneven development emerges from the disharmony of a deep romance structure organizing a rational narrative about modern society. Such novels exhibit the simultaneity of the modern and non-modern in their form and content, just as uneven development does on the socio-historical level. Realism mixed with experimental modes, and archaic forms given contemporary frames, “register a bifurcated or ruptured sensorium of the space-time of the (semi-)periphery” (WReC 16). Authors who stress this disjuncture demonstrate, each under their own singular circumstances, the paradox of the modernity of the non-modern.

Magic realism acquires its magical aesthetics by registering precisely this contradictions; a similar remark might be made of modern fantasy. Modern fantasy was not chosen by its first authors because it was more realist, but because it was “a making visible” (from Greek ‘phantasia’) (Prickett xvii) of other numinous realities that could tell “symbolic truths” through the “literal untruth” (Attebery, *Stories* 4). These truths are expressed in the symbolism of the older forms fantasy dialogizes with the novel—and in its realist techniques, which result in an uneven aesthetics. An increasingly sophisticated realism paints flesh and credibility upon characters who remain story functions, or actants. This is how fantasy became a truly modern form: “only with the adoption of literary realism did a form of fantasy literature become

distinctly *modern* fantasy” (Eilers 336; italics in original). A need to hide structure therefore coexists with the urge to expose it. Brian Attebery remarks that “one difference between fantasy and the genres of realism and naturalism is that fantasy typically displays and even celebrates its structure. If it were a shirt, the seams would be on the outside” (“Structuralism” 83). Being self-reflexive about its structure, fantasy can tell the truth about how we order experience. In its very use of form and content, it combines realism and symbolic narrative to reflect the simultaneity of residual and dominant cultural processes.

### The Emergence of Fantasy as Modernism

Novels that register the “simultaneity of the non-simultaneous” (WReC 12)<sup>30</sup> are constituted by the contradiction of the residual and dominant forms of culture. Raymond Williams defines the dominant as the hegemonic<sup>31</sup> culture of any one epoch, whether feudal, bourgeois, or socialist. The novel, which Jameson calls “as much a component of modernization as the importation of automobiles” (“Antinomies” 476), is *the* example of a dominant literary form. The residual, on the other hand, “has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (Williams, *Marxism* 122). On the other hand, Williams defines the archaic as a type of culture “wholly recognized as an element of the past” that does not participate in contemporary social processes (*Marxism* 122). Organized religion and rural community are examples of the residual since they are still active formations, but the Roman Emperor and King of France are archaic. In the literary field, chivalric romance is a residue of

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<sup>30</sup> Ernst Bloch’s term, *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* in German, which was originally developed in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935), or *Heritage of Our Times* (trans. 1991) (WReC 12, n.23).

<sup>31</sup> Gramsci calls hegemony “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (12).

the feudal epoch but is still active in literature today. Chivalric romance achieves simultaneity with the dominant form of the novel when it becomes deliberately incorporated, resulting in such forms as the fantasy novel.

It is crucial for the residual to maintain its active status as an alternative or an opposition to the dominant culture, in order for new forms of culture to emerge. Emergent culture refers to the continual creation of new meanings, values, practices and relationships in society (Williams, *Marxism* 123). Since “no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice,” a space for the emergent always exists amid complex social processes (*Marxism* 125; italics in original). An active residual culture, Williams implies, can open up space for the emergent, through its “alternate or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture” (*Marxism* 122). In order to maintain its opposition, the residual must resist incorporation by the dominant. The risks of incorporation are exemplified by the idea of the rural, which is “in some limited respects alternative or oppositional to urban industrial capitalism, though for the most part it is incorporated, as idealization or fantasy, or as an exotic” (Williams, *Marxism* 122). The commodification and reification of oppositional literature is another way the dominant culture stifles emergence. An emergent modernism can however revive the vital force of literary forms.

Modern fantasy is an emergent modernism. Brian Attebery engages with Williams’s definitions of the residual and emergent to claim that although much fantasy fails to oppose the dominant culture and falls prey to idealization and exoticism, there is nonetheless much fantasy that serves as a “check on the dominant consensus” (*Stories* 42). Thus, as a non-realist form, fantasy texts contain the potential for the emergent. Attebery speculates that since “the fantasy fad” has now posed “a serious challenge to realistic models of fiction ... the residual might turn out to be the emergent, or at least another face of the emergent” (42). Modern fantasy is not

altogether separate from the dominant, commodified capitalist order, which is significantly responsible for fantasy's endurance as a popular literature. But even popular forms, as commodified as they are, cannot be dismissed, no less since the division between high and low art has dissolved following "the completed triumph of cultural commodification everywhere" (WReC 16). Modern fantasy has indeed emerged as a formidable presence.

Fantasy texts register the experience of the modern world-system as a peripheral modernism. Following the Warwick Research Collective, one must move away from the definition of modernism as a "writerly technique (self-conscious, anti- or at least post-realist, etc) and as a Western European phenomenon" (18). Removing the Eurocentric bias enables one to consider "the full implications of the link between modernism, modernity, and modernisation" (WReC 18). This understanding of modernism departs significantly from dominant ones and focuses interest on modernist authors who inhabit peripheral or semi-peripheral locations away from the centres of capitalism.<sup>32</sup> Rather than treating these peripheral modernisms as 'alternative' modernisms, a postcolonialist argument that ironically accepts the premise of a European 'original' modernity, they must be understood as "coeval with other modernities" (WReC 14).<sup>33</sup> Modern fantasy must likewise be treated as a peripheral modernism coeval with the modernism of Eliot and Pound and the development of capitalism more generally.

Fantasy as a peripheral modernism posits a critical gesture of refusal towards modernity. Classic fantasy, which developed between 1880 and 1960, a period of "high modernism" (Suvin,

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<sup>32</sup> Such authors include "Pérez Galdós, Machado de Assis, José Rizal, Hristo Botev, Knut Hamsun and Xun Lun, for instance" (WReC 18). Brian Attebery likewise lists authors of fantasy who emerge from (semi-)peripheral areas, namely Nalo Hopkinson, Nnedi Okorafor, Karen Lord, Vikram Chandra, Amitav Ghosh, and Nega Mezlekia (*Stories* 172-3).

<sup>33</sup> A real 'alternative' modernity would imply the existence of a non-existent or not-yet-existent alternative to the world-system itself (WReC 15).

“Effusion” 217), emphasizes the non-modern through its romantic pastoralism, exemplified in Lord Dunsany’s *The King of Elfland’s Daughter* (1924). “On Fairy-Stories” by J.R.R. Tolkien likewise expresses the author of *The Lord of the Rings*’s revulsion for industrialization and utilitarianism and is often taken as exemplary of the aesthetic of fantasy in general, especially the ‘high’ fantasy of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series. Later developments of fantasy invert this pastoralism, such as China Miéville’s *Perdido Street Station*, becoming all the more modernist for their experimentation. John Crowley’s *Little, Big* (1981) and his *Ægypt Cycle* (1987-2007) re-work pastoral fantasy in a postmodern context to produce an aesthetic near to magic realism. If “modernism ought to be conceptualised as a cultural formation of resistance to the prevailing—indeed, the hegemonic—modes of capitalist modernisation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe,”<sup>34</sup> then modern fantasy, which arose precisely during this time period, may be declared a modernism in Adorno’s sense—as “the (modern) culture that says ‘no’ to modernity” (WReC 19).

Fantasy expresses its refusal of modernity as a critical irrealism. According to Michael Löwy, critical irrealism is not “an alternative, a substitute, or a rival to critical realism: it is simply a different form of literature and art, which does not attempt, in one way or another, to ‘reflect’ reality” (“Current”).<sup>35</sup> Critical realism is examined in the Indian context by Ulka Anjaria (though she does not speak about irrealism) who proposes that Indian critical realism exposes its own construction rather than simply reflecting reality.<sup>36</sup> In this respect, critical realism shares

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<sup>34</sup> A paraphrase of Theodore Adorno’s argument in “Extorted Reconciliation: On Georg Lukács’s *Realism in Our Time*.”

<sup>35</sup> Löwy takes an expansive definition of what counts as critical irrealism: “Irrealist works of art can take various forms: gothic novels, fairy tales, fantastic stories, oneiric narratives, utopian or dystopian novels, surrealist art, and many others” (“Current”).

<sup>36</sup> See Anjaria in *Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel: Colonial Difference and Literary Form*.



similarities with critical irrealism and thus fantasy and magic realism. Depending on the author, this opposition to realist aesthetics may be expressed indirectly or directly. Novels are usually mixtures of realist and irrealist technique. China Miéville's short story "Foundation," for example, depicts an otherwise realistically depicted house as an unhomely, animate carnivore, in order to literalize the metaphor of the commodity fetish.<sup>37</sup> This representation of a haunted house serves as a cogent Marxist critique made possible by a non-realist technique that presents the Real allegorically.<sup>38</sup> In Miéville's words, the fantastic "is *good to think with*" ("Editorial" 46; italics in original). Rather than merely reflecting reality, critical irrealism uses its techniques to think through social relations. In such texts, the coexistence of the fantastic and the realistic can more effectively represent social contradiction.

Irrealism becomes especially crucial in nations of the global periphery. The irrealist techniques of modernism must be understood "more broadly as the determinate formal registers of (semi-)peripherality in the world-literary system" (WReC 52). The adoption of non-realist modes or "indigenous traditional genres—oral and written—to address contemporary issues" can be conceived of as a postcolonial project (Ghazoul 127). It must be maintained, however, that "reclaiming realism was [in India] an act of self-determination—a refutation of the colonial project" (Anjaria 2). The British masters imposed realism on South Asia through an education system that affirmed European aesthetic values at the expense of 'absurd' Eastern narrative

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<sup>37</sup> Miéville provides what essentially amounts to a theorization of the aesthetic driving his own short story in his essay "The Conspiracy of Architecture."

<sup>38</sup> My understanding of the Real derives from what Fredric Jameson refers to as "the Althusserian notion of History or the Real as an 'absent cause'" (*Unconscious* 55) and from Michel de Certeau who describes the Real as "the waters of an invisible ocean" that leaves the "shores of the visible" as sign of its presence (*Practice* 187). It is a vanishing horizon that can never be reached, but forms the baseline of experience.

forms such as the Urdu *qissah* and *dastan*.<sup>39</sup> Although many (semi-)peripheral authors use a critical realism to distinguish their aesthetic from the literary centres, others returned to these discounted genres as critical irrealists devoted to the restoration of their native literature through the residues of precolonial forms.<sup>40</sup>

Exemplars of this movement are those authors who adopt “relevant formal properties of adjacent forms (often non-literary) within their local or regional cultural ecology” (WReC 52). Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* (1969) employs the Arabic oral storytelling mode of *hakawati*, which he uses to distort chronology (WReC 81-95). Radwa Ashour in *Siraaj* (2007) embeds folktales of the *Arabian Nights* into her postcolonial novella. Salman Rushdie’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) also presents a revival of the oral Urdu genres of *qissah* and *dastan* with references the Sanskrit *Kathāsaritsāgara* (*The Ocean of Stories*). Rushdie appropriates the fantastic content of *qissah* to repudiate the aesthetic framework of the global centres. Such novels adopt pre-modern forms and epistemologies “in order to signal registration of a (semi-)peripheral social space (and correspondent consciousness)” (WReC 52) and, in doing so, oppose drabness and cultural homogenization while finding a new set of aesthetic values.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to its ability to register the combined unevenness of the world-system, modern fantasy carries a political content intrinsic to its form. As a romance, fantasy can free literature from the reification of realism in late capitalism, which hints at its oppositional potential.

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<sup>39</sup> This is also true of the visual arts, where Europe had ‘art’ and the rest of the world had ‘craft.’

<sup>40</sup> One renewal of *qissah* comes from Pakistani Urdu author Intizar Husain in his novel *Basti* (1979).

<sup>41</sup> De Lint’s adoption of indigenous folklore is problematic, since it is not his own cultural legacy, but his sequel to Lord Dunsany’s *The Blessing of Pan* (1927), *Greenmantle* (1988), nonetheless performs the symbolic act of representing Canada as a (semi-)periphery, an ex-colony of Britain, by placing Celtic pagan rituals native to Wales (itself a semi-periphery) into the Gatineau Hills. De Lint blends a foreign, overseas culture to the local ecology, even going as far to fuse a Mafia subplot to his novel, a characteristic North American Italian-diasporic type of narrative.

Jameson claims that a “perfected narrative apparatus” in ‘high’ realism limits the narrative heterogeneity that made the work of Scott, Balzac, and Dreiser so valuable for representing historical process (*Unconscious* 104). Romance, however, holds the power to liberate narrative:

It is in the context of the gradual reification of realism in late capitalism that romance once again comes to be felt as the place of narrative heterogeneity and of freedom from that reality principle to which a now oppressive realistic representation is the hostage. Romance now again seems to offer the possibility of sensing other historical rhythms, and of demonic or Utopian transformations of a real now unshakeably set in place[.]  
(Jameson, *Unconscious* 104)

The fantastic as a mode intrinsically opposes blasé realism, but a cogent fantasy novel can offer critique as well. Furthermore, the vertical dimension of romance can span simultaneous, coexisting temporalities, inaccessible to a superficial realism, which may only present a horizontal axis across space. It is romance’s propensity to narrativize history that makes it equally useful to fantasy and magic realism (Jesus et al. 50).

But romance does more than enable literature to merely register combined unevenness: it is also a utopian form directed at the future. Romance is “a reexpression of Utopian longings” and can historicize the past and speculate about the future, offering dynamic representations of social processes (Jameson, *Unconscious* 105). Romance emerges to symbolically resolve historical contradiction and offer speculation on social destinies. Jameson claims that romance’s “ultimate condition of figuration . . . is to be found in a transitional moment in which two distinct modes of production, or moments of socioeconomic development, coexist” (*Unconscious* 148). Magic realism, which also employs romance, emerges under similar historical conditions. The preconditions for romance that Jameson lists could describe the bulk of high fantasy published

today: “the category of worldness, the ideologeme of good and evil felt as magical forces, [and] a salvational historicity” (148). When these categories become attributed to a novel, romance’s presence in the novel offers a utopian resolution. Even in realism, where romance is displaced and any traces of magic are rationalized, romance effects a utopian resolution. In fantasy, however, magic is not displaced. Instead, a magical novum<sup>42</sup> augments the utopianism of romance and presents magic as a symbol for unalienated human powers (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 66). Fantasy is thus utopian both in its form and in its content.

Modern fantasy bears in its romance and fairy tale forms a utopian ideological content, which enables even innocuous stories to be read for their politics. Although Brian Attebery advances an argument for fantasy as an anti-utopian mode on the basis that constructed literary utopias “arrange the lights so as to eliminate the shadows,” while fantasy never rests satisfied with constructed worlds, his argument fails to grasp that it is *precisely* this dynamic longing for a better world that makes fantasy utopian (“Anti-Utopian” 6). “In a fantasy, good is a goal never reached but always visible” (Attebery, “Anti-Utopian” 6), but its utopian power lies exactly in this “making visible,” or *phantasia*, of a better world (Prickett xvii). Fantasy opposes the stasis of constructed utopian totalities but inspires the *instinct* for utopian development by encouraging an active, dynamic, non-stagnant, and dialectical desire for change. Fantasy’s inspiration of a deeper, ongoing longing is compatible with the continuous drive needed to change a society: if fairy stories “awakened *desire*, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded,” Tolkien writes (40; italics in original). Every fantasy should leave desire whetted after the

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<sup>42</sup> Darko Suvin defines the novum as a tension that “estranges the empirical norm of the implied reader” (*Metamorphoses* 64). He derives the term from Ernst Bloch’s *The Principle of Hope* (1954-9) and *Experimentum Mundi* (1975).

reading of a tale—especially when that desire may be for social change. Attebery's own hesitance to attribute any stable political significance to fantasy accentuates the paradox "that utopia emerges at the moment of the suspension of the political" (Jameson, "Utopia" 43). Indeed, supposedly apolitical fairy tales can be read as a utopian form for precisely this refusal of political meaning.

In his essay "On Fairy-Stories" in *Tree and Leaf*, Tolkien's terminology of escape, recovery, and eucatastrophe to describe fantasy and its effect on the reader hints at its utopian potential. Jameson himself claims that "the content of Utopian form will emerge from that other form or genre which is the fairy tale" (*Archaeologies* 85). For Tolkien, fairy tales entail "Escape," which refuses the "inexorable" trajectory of modernity (60-2) and "Recovery" refreshes one's "clear view" of reality by changing one's perception of things, an act that opposes "appropriation" (57-8), instrumentality, and reification. "Eucatastrophe"—the happy ending—is "the true form of the fairy-tale" (68) that resolves historical contradictions, "denies ... universal final defeat," and echoes salvation, "Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" (68). These aesthetic values carry their own utopianism. They characterize fantasy as an opposition to modernization and the spread of capitalism. A fairy story, or a fantasy, can serve as an allegory for a utopian vision, however directly or indirectly expressed it is in the story itself.

Another related form that refuses modernity is the Gothic novel, an antecedent to modern fantasy that provides further evidence of fantasy's modernism. Its origin at the dawn of the industrial revolution with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was a key moment in

the formation of fantastic literature as a modern form (Miéville, “Gothic” 62).<sup>43</sup> Gothic resurged in the 1790s and 1890s during “the *fin de siècle*” and even into modern times during the “1780s/1990s, 1880s/1990s, [and the] 1950s” (Hogle 1; Shapiro 30).<sup>44</sup> Steven Shapiro historicizes the “uneven development of Gothic narratives,” observing that “these narrative devices seem particularly to sediment during the passage between two phases of long-wave capitalist accumulation” (31). Shapiro summarizes an argument made by Keith Thomas which claims that as new waves of capitalism impose themselves on older modes of production “supernaturalism” emerges “as a proto-political medium that registers the contradictions of social transformation” (32). Gothic literature, which “helped to shape the form and content of the modern fantasy novel” (Ordway 50), opposed industrialization, modernization, and its utilitarian ethics even as these forces produced the conditions of its formation.

Gothic adopts romance to the novel as a reaction against modernization. Walpole passed *The Castle of Otranto* off as a “counterfeit medieval tale” and described his novel in his 1765 preface as a blend of “the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern” (Hogle 1; qtd. in Hogle 1). Traces of the feudal mode of production appear in this novel, as an experiment countervailing the trend of neoclassicism. Romance’s feudal ideology contradicted bourgeois values, “two opposed and irreconcilable worldviews” (Monleón 6). Gothic literature’s opposition to the “utilitarianism and the rationalistic and mechanistic world-view” of the rising bourgeoisie

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<sup>43</sup> Miéville distinguishes the fantastic from modern fantasy as such. Jamie Williamson in *The Evolution of Modern Fantasy* (2015) likewise states that Gothic has more in common with “the later horror genre” than the type of modern fantasy exemplified by the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series (48). Nonetheless for the purposes of my study, Gothic has obvious applications to the revenant evil spirit Mal’ek’a in Charles de Lint’s *Moonheart*, so I prefer to stress the similarity of Gothic to modern fantasy while acknowledging there are stark differences between fantasy as such and the Gothic fantastic.

<sup>44</sup> Suvin’s periodization of fantasy also follows capitalism’s expansion and roughly aligns with Shapiro’s observation of Gothic resurgences. The periods run from “1764-1830, 1830-1880, 1880-1960 (the high modernist phase), and the contemporary, post-Tolkien moment” (“Effusion” 217).

denotes its utopian rationale (Burger 47). Gothic literature encodes the violence of capitalist transition. Opposing medieval beliefs to modern bourgeois precepts, “the Gothic was an artistic antinomy, a paradox at the level of representation that challenged the principles of modern art and, therefore, of modern society” (Monléon 6). Gothic’s uneven aesthetics enabled it, in the eighteenth century, to symbolically rupture the hegemony of the established bourgeoisie by violating its class aesthetics.

Gothic literature’s contradictory epistemology between the rational and the ‘magical’ not only registers social unevenness but a failure to cogitate the expanded system of capitalism. When capitalism expands, totality becomes impossible to cognitively map. This break opens a space for epistemologies other than rational positivism to articulate how the systems are experienced. Especially in the postmodern age, it is impossible to represent the “fundamental realities” of multinational capitalism, Jameson argues, since it is “inaccessible to any individual subject,” making these realities “somehow ultimately unrepresentable” (“Cognitive” 350). This dynamic existed in Walpole’s time as well as in late capitalism, an intensification of the same commodity structure of capitalism. Shapiro implies that the failure of cognitive mapping leads to the Gothic novel: “as the people of a relatively insulated region of provincialized commodity circulation are roughly integrated within long-distance markets, forms of catachrestic narrative emerge as a structure of feeling that attempts to make sense of this strongly felt but inchoately understood phagocytosis” (31). Incorporation within the dominating system of capitalism leads to a fear of being consumed by a system much larger than local, familiar markets. This fear of being consumed by a larger structure articulates itself through a Gothic vocabulary.

The fantastic elements of the Gothic novel try to make sense of capitalism. The fantastic may be understood as a form of catachresis, which signifies “the misapplication of a word” or “a

deliberate wresting of a term from its proper signification for effect” (“Catachresis”). Catachresis manifests the incongruity of modernity in its own form and denotes a misrecognition of capitalist forces; it is a deliberate foregrounding of the difficulty, or even impossibility, of recognition, rather than a simple failure of recognition. Fantastic images of bloodsucking vampires or ravenous cannibals substitute for a direct cognition of reality and have been used even by Marx to describe various kinds of capitalist appetite.<sup>45</sup> Rather than being “anti-cognitive” images, these figures of horror simply foreground the impossibility of cognition (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 9). Such images—as in Miéville’s “Foundation”—can even be realist, in the sense that they substitute for or symbolize the Real. In fact, one can *only* represent the social totality, or the Real, as a catachresis; what makes the Gothic fantastic remarkable, especially to the late capitalist present, is that, as an irrealist technique, it foregrounds the impossibility of representing totality and the unknowability of reality.

Fantasy responds to late capitalism and its cultural logic of postmodernism<sup>46</sup> by refusing it at the same time as it exhibits traits of postmodernism within itself. One of these refusals is of the crisis of historicity. The constitutive features of the postmodern for Jameson include “a new depthlessness” and “a consequent weakening of historicity” (*Postmodernism* 6). Postmodernism has replaced History with simulacra; “the historical novel,” writes Jameson, “can no longer set out to represent the historical past; it can only ‘represent’ our ideas and stereotypes about that past” (*Postmodernism* 6). History and the Real have become even farther separated from us, and

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<sup>45</sup> See Bartolovich for a deeper argument about vampirism, cannibalism, and capitalist appetite.

<sup>46</sup> The relationship between modernism and postmodernism, along with the question of whether the latter represents a break with the former, is a complex question. I treat postmodernism as a later development of modernism, since late capitalism brings an intensification in commoditization, rather than a break from a world-system into something else.



as a result, the possibility of revolution becomes nearly unthinkable. This “weakening of the sense of history and of the imagination of historical difference which characterizes postmodernity is, paradoxically, intertwined with the loss of that place beyond all history (or after its end) which we call utopia” (Jameson, “Utopia” 16). Fantasy can, however, show historical times that are different from our own and even bring contemporary characters into the past. It can allegorize historical events within a fictional totality, such as in the historical fantasies of Guy Gavriel Kay, which are set in secondary worlds reflective of historical eras such as Song Dynasty China in *River of Stars* (2013) or Islamic Andalusia in *The Lions of Al-Rassan* (1995). Fantasy can also historicize the present of “late capitalism, in which all the earlier modes of production in one way or another structurally coexist,” showing us how the past irrupts into the present day through either the uncanny, as a return of the repressed of history, or by literalizing the existence of folkloric creatures, spirits, and monsters (Jameson, *Unconscious* 100). Fantasy can reveal the archaeology of social residues that constitute modern experience.

Another way in which modern fantasy responds to late capitalism is by mimicking the absurdity of modernity. Capitalism is characterized by a “subjective reality predicated upon fetishized relationships to commodities and the reification of daily life” (Baker 444). Realism fails under capitalism because the ‘reality’ it purports to describe is contradictory and absurd; only an experimental modernism can represent the fragmented state of modernity. China Miéville claims that fantasy offers a reasonable alternative to realism, since “‘real’ life under capitalism is itself a fantasy, where economic relations are masked behind the universal commodity form: ‘realism,’ narrowly defined is therefore a ‘realistic’ depiction of ‘an absurdity which is true,’ but no less absurd for that” (“Editorial” 42). Fantasy can exaggerate the absurdity and grotesqueness of capitalism, which is a representation Miéville accomplishes in *Perdido*

*Street Station* and his other Bas-Lag novels. By creating secondary worlds, fictional totalities, fantasy achieves a “cognition effect” identical to science fiction, in which utopian alternatives to late capitalism can be imagined (Miéville, “Editorial” 45).<sup>47</sup> Given the monstrosity of capitalism itself—and Miéville’s ultra-capitalist, state-dominated city of New Crobuzon is nothing if not grotesque—fantasy becomes an entirely appropriate method of critique.<sup>48</sup>

Fantasy can also be ahistorical and deny any single ‘objective’ reality, in favour of merely different realities. Jameson observes that “art does not seem in our society to offer any direct access to reality, any possibility of unmediated representation or of what used to be called realism. ... only in the population explosion of the postmodern there have come to be too many ... private worldviews” (*Postmodernism* 150). This loss of a consensus is registered in Kathryn Hume’s theory of fantasy as a violation of “consensus” reality (xi), constructed in part by realist mimetic techniques. Fantasy, as mimesis’s dialectically oppositional mode, violates mimetic conventions of realism and breaks the seeming consensus. In “Uncle Dobbin’s Parrot Fair” de Lint himself expresses an idea of a “consensual reality” (10). A hegemonic mundane reality is shared in common, but since different subjects experience reality differently, an individual may occasionally experience a different, fantastic reality in an encounter with a ghost, spirit, or goblin. De Lint’s ‘consensual reality’ comes from the sense that reality is a contract between people. Hume’s ‘consensus’ comes from the vocabulary of democratic process. Minority politics have, however, exposed the illusion of consensus through its emphasis on difference, writes

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<sup>47</sup> Fantasy can mimic capitalism’s absurdity or speculate on what a utopia might resemble. Utopia in fact “has precisely the value of a fantasy” (Jameson, “Utopia” 50). Just like any fictitious world in a fantasy novel, it is a “phenomena whose concept is indistinguishable from its reality, whose ontology coincides with its representation” (Jameson, “Utopia” 35).

<sup>48</sup> Steve Shaviro argues in “Capitalist Monsters” that “monsters are intrinsic to the ordinary, everyday reality of capitalism itself” (281).

Linda Hutcheon (7; qtd. in Jameson *Postmodernism* 340). Minority politics have in fact become the rule. Fantasy, as an irrealism, opposes mundane, bourgeois realism, but under late capitalism, where difference is mainstream, it also risks relativizing the idea of reality itself, unless it reassesses its own relation to the Real.

Fantasy can oppose the postmodern production of the ‘real,’ with the aim of recuperating a sense of the Real that lies beyond. The Warwick Research Collective cites sociological studies that suggest that “literary realism in nineteenth-century Europe” arose owing to “the prior emergence of bureaucracies (state and para-state, public and private) charged with the task of collecting, sorting and disseminating ‘value-free’ and ‘objective’ data” (74). These institutions, producing information, also produced the preconditions for classic realism. Michel de Certeau provides a more contemporary example of the high level of mediation in postmodernity as constituting “a *narrated* society” where journalism, televised news, and information have “the strange and twofold power of changing sight into belief and of manufacturing reality out of simulacra,” resulting in fiction that “claims to presentify the real” (“Believing” 125; italics in original). However, social problems such as homelessness frequently evade bureaucracies’ ability to produce data,<sup>49</sup> implying how within all societies there are processes and experiences that evade analysis and quantification. A reality experienced and felt always lies beyond simulacra. Irrealism aims to expose such illusions by suggesting that the media cannot successfully represent totality.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A recent, concrete example of this exact problem is Montreal’s recent ‘point in time’ census of the homeless which counted 3,106 individuals but omitted the ‘hidden’ homeless, including couch surfers and slummers, which if added might have led to a figure closer to 15,000 individuals (Bruemmer A5).

<sup>50</sup> For a further discussion of the role of media in the production of reality see the discussion of de Lint’s short story “That Explains Poland” from *Dreams Underfoot* in Chapter 3.

One final, but by no means exhaustive way in which the postmodern logic of late capitalism influences modern fantasy is through the form's commoditization. Fantasy is "sold like cans of soup" (Attebery, *Stories* 97). This is a plain fact from the sheer multitude of paperbacks and ebooks that flood the market, a truth evident ever since fantasy's pulp magazine years in the early- to mid-twentieth century. The objection can be raised that commoditization undercuts the claims of politically radical, anti-capitalist fantasy novels. But any divisions between "mass, popular and elite cultures" have dissolved under late capitalism (WReC 16). The effects of commodification affect fantasy novels ranging from the Tolkien-derivative *Sword of Shannara* by Terry Brooks (1977) to China Miéville's Marxist-informed Bas-Lag novels. Commoditization is a hegemonic force, but that does not necessarily imply censorship of ideas.

Mass commoditization has led to variations in content, since "originality" becomes a way to distinguish one's novel "from the sword-and-sorcery pack" (Attebery, *Stories* 120). One consequence to content worth noting came in the 1970s and 1980s with fantasy novels that appropriated and/or exoticized indigenous, African-Caribbean, and Hindu mythological traditions, an event Attebery dubs "a sort of imaginative manifest destiny ... the great fantasy colonization of the 1980s" (*Stories* 127-38). Although not every work in this period idealized the 'primitive,' or necessarily exoticized (semi-)peripheral cultural traditions, many of them did.<sup>51</sup> This controversy dovetails with de Lint's defense of his art in his afterword to *Mulengro*, in which he defends his novel against charges of "cultural appropriation" (de Lint, "Afterword"

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<sup>51</sup> An insightful parallel can be drawn between the fantasy colonization of the 1980s and the New Age movement, which advocated for self-discovery through "identification with the 'goddess,' the 'shaman,' the Celt, the masculine 'Iron John,' the 'aboriginal,' the 'primitive' ... as ways of reclaiming our own natures, positing these figures as 'selves' that we have lost that we can regain. Thus, these figures are formulated only as extensions of the self, to prop up the identity of the Western subject and to patch in the gaps of the exhausted narratives of the Western subject" (Kuhling 143).

394). His representation of indigenes in *Moonheart* also flirts with stereotypes of the ‘magic Indian,’ although it resists essentializing by expressing that all cultures are “syncretic,” a combination of one or more cognitive blends (Bechtel 5). Learning from the experience of the 1980s, many authors—especially white authors who inhabit the metropolises—later adopted “a postmodern awareness of duplicity and interdependence” (Attebery, *Stories* 139). Fantasy’s status as popular literature and an industrial product led to imaginative accumulation that mimicked the spread of imperialism, but it also resulted in the growth of innovative fiction. Tapping into mass demand for realistic and ‘mainstream’ fiction, urban fantasy and contemporary fantasy are also products of commoditization.

Fantasy remains a form of experimentation, a modernism of the capitalist world-system that posits a gesture of refusal toward modernity. Contemporary and urban fantasy bear the ability to register this system with particular salience. In Canada, the combined and uneven relations between settler and colonized inscribe themselves into a centre-periphery dynamic that registers itself in de Lint’s novel *Moonheart*, the topic that is investigated in the following chapter.

## Chapter 2: Uneven Development in Canada: Multiculturalism and Colonialism in

### *Moonheart*

Charles de Lint's urban fantasy novel *Moonheart* seeks to resolve the social contradiction between colonizer and colonized, a hierarchy Canada cannot redress in practice. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act passed into law in 1988, following Pierre-Elliot Trudeau's 1971 introduction of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy (Dewing 16). This policy attempted to free the First Nations and other ethnic groups from prejudicial treatment, especially in the workplace, establishing a national self-image of Canada as a welcoming nation. Reflecting this new era, *Moonheart* represents an Ottawa where aspects of residual culture, such as indigenous magic, penetrate into a modern, urban milieu. Non-modern content contradicts, and yet becomes inalienable from, the novel's setting. This paradox of the synchronicity of the non-synchronous mimics the disjuncture in Canadian society between survivals from the First Nations' pre-capitalist mode of production, and capitalism, which was first imposed during colonization. De Lint's novel mediates this history in the multicultural present to achieve a "symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation" (Jameson, *Unconscious* 117). *Moonheart* symbolically resolves the historical contradictions of combined and uneven development in Canada through the ideological content of its uneven form, in which romance and realism become dialogized, and through the ideological structure of its content, which seeks to reconcile the semes of 'modernity' and 'community' in order to establish a multicultural utopia.

This chapter begins with a summary of *Moonheart*'s plot and then an analysis of the limits of multiculturalism. In the liberal multicultural present, the state cannot solve the issue of unevenness on reserves. Texts like *Moonheart* attempt to 'smoothen' unevenness. The hierarchical relations of colonialism continue to exist in late capitalism, within the same

multicultural policy that attempts to eradicate them; the persistence of colonialism into the multiculturalism of the present is a logical contradiction. Indeed, colonialism is embedded in the very structure of the relationship between the First Nations and the federal government, in which the reserves system functions as internal colonialism, a fact multiculturalism ignores. *Moonheart* performs a symbolic act, ideologically bolstering settler governments' attempts to smoothen relations with indigenous people through 'symbolic acts' of reconciliation.<sup>52</sup>

The next section examines *Moonheart's* registration of the conditions of combined and uneven development in Canada. De Lint's novel responds to the reality of uneven development in Canada by staging the defeat of colonialism as a Gothic spectre returning from the past. The human parallel to this ghost emerges in multinational, late capitalist forces that perpetrate the same capitalist system of exploitation. The discussion then develops into an analysis of *Moonheart's* ideology of form. Combining the residual form of romance with the novel, *Moonheart* allegorizes the simultaneity of previous modes of production in Canada. The pre-conditions for the existence of romance include "the category of worldness, the ideologeme of good and evil felt as magical forces, [and] a salvational historicity" (Jameson, *Unconscious* 148).

The first pre-condition manifests in the setting of the Otherworld, where the simultaneity of the non-modern and the modern is represented as an interaction of European culture with the indigenous culture of the manitou spirits who reside there. This world blends into modern Ottawa through the other significant chronotope of Tamson House, a protective home and portal

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<sup>52</sup> Kossew asks a directly related question in "Saying Sorry: The Politics of Apology in Recent Australian Fiction": "Can literary works, particularly those written by non-Indigenous writers, play a productive part in the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?" (174)

between worlds.<sup>53</sup> The ideologeme of good and evil functions to designate colonialism as what must be cured in society, but also in a more complex way, to identify the burden of colonialism lying upon the white, Anglo-Canadian protagonist, Sara. The narrative achieves utopian closure through a hope that Anglo-Canadians can defeat the legacy of colonialism within themselves, which however problematically excludes the agency of the First Nations.

The chapter finishes with an analysis of the ideological form of *Moonheart*'s content, in which the semes of 'modernity' and 'community' are mapped onto a Greimas semiotic rectangle in order to determine which characters or elements in the narrative embody the utopian social solution constructed by its narrative resolution. A rejection of late capitalist alienation strongly identified with the legacy of colonialism accompanies a valuation of residual modes of community, such as the tribe, which should be revived to cure alienation.

#### Plot of *Moonheart*

In *The Merry Dancers* Old Book and Antique Emporium in the Glebe district of Ottawa, Sara Kendell discovers a magic ring and brings it to Tamson House, her home, asking her uncle Jamie about its significance. The House is a large edifice, an architectural oddity owned up a whole city block that is owned by her uncle and acts as a refuge for various displaced bohemians. The apprentice druid Kieran Foy arrives in Ottawa to observe a foreboding evil presence hovering above Tamson House. A disciple of the Way, a magical path towards enlightenment that borrows from Daoism, Kieran is being tailed by the RCMP's Paranormal Research Branch for his association with his master, the druid Thomas Hengwyr, who is perceived as a terrorist

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<sup>53</sup> Bakhtin calls a chronotope (meaning 'time-space') "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84).



threat. The reality of magical powers frightens the police and one man, multinational business investor J. Hugh Walters, who controls the PRB's so-called Project Mindreach, an investigation into telepathic powers, wants to discover how Hengwyr has discovered the secret to immortality. When Sara encounters Kieran at a restaurant by accident and an officer draws his pistol to arrest him, the same evil presence that was over Tamson House—later revealed to be Mal'ek'a, the Dread-that-Walks-Nameless—transforms the cop into a monster that attacks Kieran, who kills it with a magic fireball just before a circle of benign drum-beating manitou rescue them by sending them to the Otherworld.

Sara awakens in a glade in a primeval Otherworld forest, a sort of parallel dimension. She meets Taliesin, a Welsh bard who has arrived at Percé Rock as an exile from across the ocean in his coracle. He teaches her the 'moonheart' tune on guitar, which awakens the magic that has been dormant within her ever since she picked up the magic ring. Hengwyr once banished Taliesin centuries ago owing to a long-standing feud.

Meanwhile, Mal'ek'a attacks Tamson House wanting to destroy Hengwyr, who has taken refuge therein. It transports the House from Ottawa's streets to a glade in the Otherworld, where its wolverine minions lay siege to it. Taliesin believes Mal'ek'a is Hengwyr while Hengwyr maintains the evil comes from Taliesin. However, the manitou know that Mal'ek'a is "the white man's curse" (366), in which Hengwyr's ill-spirited but potent curse against Taliesin is metonymic for the lies spoken by Europeans during the colonization of the New World. Jamie, Blue the biker, John Tucker the RCMP officer, and even Walters' malicious henchmen Chevier and Gannon, defend themselves against the common enemy. Sara learns to use the power of her ring and Kieran learns more about the Way as a shaman, discovering his raven totem and joining the manitou as a member of the tribe.

In the end, Sara returns to Tamson House to confront Mal'ek'a, following a prophecy that claims the manitou will regain their lands when she learns to control her magic power. Kieran brings his shaman allies to help defend the House against Mal'ek'a. Twisting Hengwyr's mind remotely, Mal'ek'a forces the druid to breach the self-repairing walls of the House from the inside, which gains its wolverine monsters entry and costs the druid his life. Jamie soon realizes that his father and grandfather are *genii loci* who inhabit the walls of Tamson House itself and are responsible for its upkeep and defense. Since he and Sara share blood with Hengwyr and only an ancestor of the druid can defeat Mal'ek'a, Jamie sacrifices himself to destroy Mal'ek'a, who is the dark half of Hengwyr's soul. Sara, surviving her uncle, must learn to deal with sharing family blood with Mal'ek'a, but the moonheart tune can help her retain inner peace—her *taw*, the stillness inside that is the source of all her magic.

#### *Moonheart* and The Limits of Multiculturalism

Liberal multiculturalism's ideological task is to smooth out uneven ethnic and cultural hierarchies into a merely horizontal set of differences. However, the First Nations are marginalized even in multicultural discourse: although “the notion of multiculturalism theoretically includes Aboriginal peoples, the emphasis of multiculturalism has predominantly related to new immigrant groups” (“Ethnic”). Himani Bannerji describes multiculturalism as “a central pillar in [Canada's] own ideological state apparatus,” which is necessary to a colony transitioning into a liberal democracy that “needs an ideology that can mediate fissures and ruptures more deep and profound than those of the usual capitalist nation state” (96). Joining Bannerji's chorus, Peter McLaren declares that liberal multiculturalism “too often [views] culture as a soothing balm [...] some mythical present where the irrationalities of historical conflict have been smoothed out” (55). Multicultural policy strives to paint a picture of an even

society, even though Canada's cities are built on unceded First Nations land. First Nations are continually excluded from "the nation-forming project," in such conflicts that include "the deployment of the Canadian Army against the Mohawk peoples [and] constant land claims and demands for self-government/self-determination" (Bannerji 92).<sup>54</sup> The state's management of the First Nations replicates the social relations that reproduce the very colonial dynamic between settlers and First Nations that the settlers claim to have overcome.

The reality of combined and uneven development in Canada indicates, despite the sweet balm of multiculturalism, that the First Nations' lack of equality has been produced by a system that replicates colonialism.<sup>55</sup> Poverty on reserves emerges in the lack of infrastructural development, poor drinking water, and elevated high school drop-out rate compared with the rest of Canada, among other issues.<sup>56</sup> This inequality emerges given the peripheral location of reserves in relation to the cities, which form the centres of capitalism. The system is also uneven owing to the First Nations' endurance as a residual culture, which fragments the spread of capitalism. Any perception of First Nations 'backwardness' is misguided, a sign rather of an unequal coexistence within modernity and an actively produced, unevenly developed system. From the first moment of colonial encounter, "the development of underdevelopment, of

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<sup>54</sup> First Nations also opposed the drive for national sovereignty in protests that dovetailed with Quebec separatism debates during the Meech Lake Accord, suggesting how First Nations are marginalized even when challenges to federalism are voiced. In 1990, Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis of the Huron-Wendat Nation commented, "Quebec cannot become a nation until it recognizes that it is built on land stolen from the First Nations and that its economy is based on resources stolen from the native people, and it is prepared to rectify past injustices" (Picard D1).

<sup>55</sup> A concrete example of colonialism's endurance is the Indian Act, which the federal government passed paternalistically without First Nations consent. Roger Obonsawin recently wrote in the *Globe & Mail* that the Indian Act "outlines the 'rights and guarantees' the Aboriginal people have. While the law affords some protection, it drastically dilutes the rights and powers recognized under the BNA Act and the Royal Proclamation, which allowed for the nation-to-nation negotiations that produced treaties between the Crown and a number of Aboriginal Nations" (A23).

<sup>56</sup> A high drop-out rate plagues "Canada's on-reserve schools" according to a recent article (Curtis A4).

maldevelopment and dependent development” (WReC 13) have replicated colonialist hierarchies, even into the present. Multicultural discourse seeks to even out such hierarchies, but all too often simply opts for the easier, less expensive course of denying them entirely.

Liberal multiculturalism’s emphasis on difference rather than hierarchy owes itself to postmodernism, which Fredric Jameson calls the cultural logic of late capitalism. Pierre-Elliot Trudeau-style multiculturalism may exhibit “liberal tolerance” of difference but Jameson also raises the question of “whether the toleration of difference, as a social fact, is not the result of social homogenization and standardization and the obliteration of genuine social difference in the first place” (*Postmodernism* 341). The intensification of capitalism around the globe has rendered societies around the world identical rather than different. Meanwhile, capital’s “dispersive and atomistic” logic produces postmodernism’s “logic of difference or differentiation” simultaneously (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 342-3). While the expanded market homogenizes identities, it also provokes the need for differentiation and therefore the toleration of such diversity in order to establish an even, competitive market. The economy renders cultures that were once distinct identical, yet it does so unevenly, establishing hierarchies where pre-existing social forms, such as the relations between settler-colonized, hold sway. Multiculturalism, identifying the problem of First Nations inequality simply as cultural and racial difference in order to establish the market’s apparent equality, lets determinate structures of exploitation persist.

Jon Cruz links the proliferation of difference to late capitalism as well, arguing that in the context of the United States, multiculturalism itself is “part of a *social logic* of late capitalism” (19; italics in original). Amid late capitalist patterns of globalized investment, race and social identity become increasingly reified and fetishized as a reaction to “*the deregulation of the*

*bourgeois-liberal social contract*” (Cruz 28; italics in original). Society as a result becomes increasingly differentiated, diversified, and fragmented. Cruz’s insight applied to Canada leads to the recognition that globalization, far from being “a tide lifting all boats” (WReC 22), leads to unevenness by encouraging transnational investment and discouraging state support for socially marginalized and racialized groups, such as First Nations. Since “multiculturalism now mediates capitalism and modern social identities” (Cruz 21), the egalitarianism of liberal multiculturalism serves as an ideology that disregards the material reality of uneven development in Canada, privileging difference over correcting the hierarchical power structures that produce inequality.

Due to the impotence—or unwillingness—of the Canadian state to actually uphold its egalitarian ideals, multiculturalism must perform a heavier symbolic labour to compensate for its incapacity to cure the inequality intrinsic to capitalism. Jon Cruz explains how late capitalism leaves the state “with symbols and sound bites for managing diversity as a rhetoric of moral consent, but backed (feebly) by state sanctions” (31). The state must express multicultural solidarity despite its actual inability to establish equality. *Moonheart*, a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical contradiction, performs the symbolic act of reconciling Canada’s colonial history to the multicultural present through its liberal pluralism.

The centre-periphery dynamic between settler and colonized in Canada denotes the nation’s uneven development, a concrete historical contradiction to which *Moonheart* responds. First Nations culture is not, to use Williams’s categories, archaic but residual, alive in the nation’s social and economic processes, especially in terms of indigenous influence over resource management. This creates the contradiction of the non-modern’s coexistence with the modern. Magic realism develops under such conditions, since it represents social “disjuncture,” caused by “a mode of production still locked in conflict with traces of the older mode” (Jameson,

*Visible* 138). European exploitation of the New World led to the absorption, although not to the complete destruction, of the First Nations' modes of production and the establishment of this social contradiction which continues to exist in contemporary Canada. Novels such as Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) produce a magic realism effect by representing simultaneity in its form and content—in this case, the simultaneity of the myth of Coyote with modern First Nations. This narrative strategy is similar to Salman Rushdie's magic realist and Tayeb Salih's irrealist use of local literary forms as peripheral aesthetics. *Moonheart*, although written by a white, Anglo-Canadian author whose postcolonial critique emerges from the central culture, nonetheless inscribes this simultaneity in its own form and content.

*Moonheart's* combination of romance and the novel lends itself to a comparison with magic realism, but a fitter object of comparison is the Gothic novel. Mal'ek'a, "the essence of the lies the herok'a [Europeans] brought with them" (300), is an evil spirit that incarnates a return of the repressed. The multicultural present wishes to suppress the fact of capitalism's 'primitive' or originary accumulation of surplus value during the colonialization of the New World.<sup>57</sup> This previous stage of capitalism has revealed itself now to be unsustainable and inhumane, but Mal'ek'a as an embodiment of it returns to haunt the present. Eatough suggests that "Gothic form may mediate the violence communities experience when they are coopted into new capitalist regimes" (610). The way colonialism originally subsumed First Nations—and the way in which capitalism continues to subsume them—compares with how industrial capitalism subsumed English pre-capitalist formations during Horace Walpole's time. Since *Moonheart*

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<sup>57</sup> Marx defines primitive accumulation as "the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production" (364).

stages the defeat of this spectre, it can be surmised that de Lint, writing not in colonial times but in the era of multinational capitalism, views his age as a globalized, multicultural one where the past may be redeemed.

Understood in this way, *Moonheart* is not just a symbolic resolution of the continued presence of colonialism in Canada, but a response to capitalism at large, in which global unevenness endures. Multinational investor J. Hugh Walters's ambitions to appropriate Sara's magic ring parallel Mal'ek'a's lust for power. In fact, coincidences in the text associate the two figures: the moment Mal'ek'a renews its bombardment of Tamson House to capture Hengwyr is the same moment that Walters's agents Gannon and Chevier break into the house to "grab" the druid (313). Mal'ek'a and Walters are both greedy, use minions to carry out their work, and wish to steal an artefact of residual culture, Sara's powerful magic ring. This parallelism with the past invites readers to think about how history continues into the late capitalist present, an act of cognition that counters to the stability of the synchronic time the postmodern subject inhabits (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 16). Christine Mains claims that Walters is "made to bear the burden of imperial ambition, to represent the continuing corporate and political greed that oppresses the spiritual community of the underclass," implying that *Moonheart* identifies colonialism and late capitalism diachronically as part of the same world-system of exploitation and domination (248).

#### *Moonheart's* Ideology of Form as Utopian Resolution

A close reading of the ideological content of *Moonheart's* form can reveal its mode of response to combined and uneven development. Jameson defines "*the ideology of form*" as "the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems which are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production" (*Unconscious* 76; italics in original). For instance, the sign system of chivalric romance is a trace of the feudal mode of production,

which preceded the rise of the capitalist bourgeoisie. In Gothic literature and modern fantasy, the ideologies of feudalism persist into the modern structure of the novel.<sup>58</sup> These generic messages “all together [project] a formal conjuncture through which the ‘conjuncture’ of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated” (Jameson, *Unconscious* 99). In Gothic, traces of medieval romance in the novel allegorize the survival of feudal social hierarchies into a social world now dominated by the bourgeoisie. Modern fantasy performs a similar act in Lord Dunsany’s *The King of Elfland’s Daughter*, in which a fairy tale is novelized, to allegorize the persistence of agrarian modes of production into the industrialized present. Each of these formal conjunctures articulate ideology, which by definition “represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production [...] but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production” (Althusser 1353). Literary forms combine linguistic codes that indicate how social relations are imagined.

*Moonheart*’s form, in which European romance is at once imposed on indigenous content and yet provincialized as European, allegorizes the coexistence of the First Nations with modern society. Although romance can be treated as a worldwide form, much like the novel, *Moonheart* pauses to reflect on romance’s specifically European identity. De Lint’s novels before *Moonheart* were traditional fantasies set in medieval secondary worlds reflective of European romance traditions (Reid 51). In *Moonheart*, he self-consciously has Pukwudji, a puckish indigenous forest spirit, characterize Taliesin’s need to test himself against Mal’ek’a as a strange,

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<sup>58</sup> Romance has however in the context of magic realism shorn its aristocratic ideological content to become “an important agent of democratization” (Jesus et al. 58). Furthermore, many local forms bear comparison to or even identification with romance without being European, such as the Urdu genres of *qissah* and *dastan*.



European affectation: “Redhair’s people seem to set great store by personal challenges,” he says (355). The passage alludes to the emphasis placed on competition in romance’s antecedent form, the *chanson de geste*. Traces of *chanson de geste* in romance, according to Jameson, leave sharp divisions between good and evil, which is defined by what is “Other, alien, different, strange, unclean, and unfamiliar” (*Unconscious* 115). This ethical binary is inconsistent with “the ethics of non-interference” practiced by the Ojibwa and Cree, “which is a function of respect for the autonomy of the other” and is less likely to divide individuals into good or evil categories per se (McPherson and Rabb 5). Rather than imposing European romance on indigenous content de Lint uses Pukwudji to *provincialize* European romance’s ideology of competition. Even as the European form imposes itself, the relations between Europe and indigenous North America are radically re-imagined as one of mutual cultural exchange and harmony.

The full formal and ideological implications of this symbolic resolution may be determined by observing just how *Moonheart* fulfills each of Jameson’s preconditions for romance. These include “the category of worldness, the ideologeme of good and evil felt as magical forces, [and] a salvational historicity” (*Unconscious* 148). These structures outlive medieval romance and continue to endure in modern forms such as the novel. Even in realism, romance has merely endured “displacement,” what Frye calls “the adjusting of formulaic structures to a roughly more credible context” (36). Fantasy, on the other hand, “displays and even celebrates its structure” and has less need to rationalize romance’s magic elements (Attebery, “Structuralism” 83). The utopian structure of romance emerges all the more clearly.

Each of Jameson’s preconditions for romance structure the content of *Moonheart*. The romance world is the Otherworld, a chronotope in which “the transcendental horizon of our experience becomes visible in an inner-worldly sense (Jameson, *Unconscious* 112). That horizon

extends to our world, what the manitou call the World Beyond, which includes the space of modern Ottawa. Tamson House acts as a portal between our world and the other. These chronotopes contain the novel's social totality and connect the worlds of settler (Jamie and Sara) and colonized (the manitou) into one simultaneous, coexisting temporality. 'Evil' as a magical force, Jameson's second criterion, is embodied by Mal'ek'a, the "root of all evil" that must be expelled to produce utopia ("Utopia" 36). Lastly, since it is Sara's destiny, according to a prophecy, to defeat Mal'ek'a, *Moonheart* contains a salvational resolution suitable to a romance. Northrop Frye, in Jameson's words, treats this aspect of romance as "a wish-fulfillment or Utopian fantasy which aims at the transfiguration of the world of everyday life" (*Unconscious* 110), a designation sympathetic to Jameson's own project. *Moonheart's* utopia reflects the values and goals of multiculturalism within a postcolonial Canadian context.

De Lint represents combined unevenness by dividing his romance world into higher and lower realms, namely the Otherworld and Ottawa. Thomas Hengwyr proposes to Kieran that the residual is out of place in modern cities: "Can you see Pan walking the streets of New York? Diana leading her wild hunt through London? There is no more room for them in this world, Kier. When the last of the people we call primitive have been 'civilized' ... with the loss of that innocence, the last magics will disappear" (302-3).<sup>59</sup> Despite Hengwyr's stereotyping of the noble savage and his nostalgia, his identification of colonialism with the loss of magic links the

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<sup>59</sup> The question of how magic is defined in a combined, uneven world can be best answered with reference to my discussion of de Lint's theory of consensual reality in Chapter 3. Magic and fantasy can be thought of as simply "non-Western reality" (or 'non-Enlightenment reality,' since Western magical practice exists as well) as Brian Attebery suggests ("Politics" 10). The danger exists of viewing indigenous and 'peripheral' epistemologies as stereotypically 'magical,' but magic can be interpreted loosely as a non-Enlightenment epistemology or a set of ritual practices given real power. Such magic can serve subversive or reactionary purposes but magic itself contains a utopian instinct. Jameson describes magic in fantasy literature as a "figure for the enlargement of human powers and their passage to the limit, their actualization of everything latent and virtual in the stunted human organism of the present" (*Archaeologies* 66).

arrival of modernity with the forces of originary accumulation, the “original sin” that spoiled humanity’s innocence (Marx 363). Hengwyr valorizes the ‘primitive’ and expresses longing for its untouched authenticity, which is to say, its ‘backwardness’ from modernity.<sup>60</sup> In a combined and uneven capitalist world-system, there is no room for backwardness; all is instead simultaneous, the non-modern part of the modern. While Hengwyr remarks the impossibility of Pan being in New York, de Lint is interested in precisely such conjunctions. De Lint constructs the higher realm of the Otherworld to literalize the (inaccurate) perception among settlers that the First Nations live in another world or another time—demonstrating allochrony, or what Johannes Fabian calls the “denial of coevalness” (32)—but only to dramatize the joining of these worlds together through the magical devices of Tamson House and Sara’s magic ring.<sup>61</sup> The combined and uneven relationship between centre and periphery becomes allegorized as an interaction between high and low realms.

Tamson House, which was built by settlers on sacred indigenous land, acts as a bridge joining modern Ottawa to the manitou where one can ascend through the different worlds. Tamson House acts as a contact zone that reflects the nature of combined development. A distinct chronotope from the rest of Ottawa, the House refuses modernity by silencing “street traffic” even through open windows, implying that it is a different kind of space (32).<sup>62</sup> It was built on “a sacred island in the fens” that existed before European colonization, a place

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<sup>60</sup> Buried even within this misrecognition lies a utopian impulse consisting of a return to the past in order to project a better future. Ursula K. Le Guin states that, in her own work, looking back is not “reactionary” or “conservative” but “simply subversive” (84).

<sup>61</sup> For an exposition of allochrony, see Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*.

<sup>62</sup> The sense that Ottawa must remain a place of realism and not magic may owe itself partly to Ottawa’s bureaucratic centrality. Bureaucracies play a role producing the “objective” knowledge that contributed to the development of nineteenth-century European realism (WReC 74). In *Moonheart*, John Tucker, the leader of the RCMP’s Project Mindreach, remarks after talking with a colleague, “Here, in one of the bureaucratic centers of Ottawa, what they were discussing [the supernatural] had no place” (216).

“considered a gateway to the spiritworld” by the native inhabitants, who become separated from its power “when first Philemon Wright and then Braddish Billings brought settlers into the area in the early 1800s” (*Spiritwalk* 2). This space of colonial development, violently wrested from indigenes, nonetheless retains its magical significance of bridging modernity and the spiritworld in a contemporary present. Rather than going away, this magic remains behind, a residue that reveals the palimpsestic reality of the colony. The social relations between settler and colonized under which the House was first built endure into the present as well, since the modern owner of the House, Jamie, remains a settler on unceded land.

Since Tamson House and the Otherworld join the indigenous past with the settler dominated present, it enables the symbolic reconciliation of Canada’s First Nations periphery to the nation’s centre. Christine Mains describes the Otherworld as a “multicultural utopia” because it is “not so much historyless as it is beyond history, a place not without time but beyond time’s linearity ... an image of a utopian community not unmarked by the consequences of distance and history, but one able to transcend such consequences” (348; 345). A mythical space, the Otherworld is an “escape from Time” (Eliade 192) that refuses a modern setting in order to establish a new chronotope from which to comment upon modernity via allegory. It functions as an “‘accordionizing’ or ‘telescoping’ function of combined and uneven development as a form of [literalized] time travel within the same space, a spatial bridging of unlike times—in Lefebvre’s sense, the production of *untimely* space” (WReC 17; italics in original). A small change of space brings a big change in time; one scene in *Moonheart* shows Sara climbing from the street through the House’s window where she suddenly finds herself in the Otherworld, which is evocative of the distant pre-Columbian past (363). The joining of these periods in the untimely space of Tamson House represents unevenness in Canada through a space-time continuum that

shows the distance of the centre of the nation from the periphery at the same time as it unites them.

Romance's second pre-condition of formation is the ideologeme of 'good versus evil,' which appears in *Moonheart* as an indirect survival from *chanson de geste*. Mal'ek'a is the supernatural Other, an entity of absolute difference: the Other "is evil *because* he is Other" (Jameson, *Unconscious* 115; italics in original). Labelling Mal'ek'a as such constitutes an ideologeme, which may be defined as "a form of social praxis, that is, as a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation" (Jameson, *Unconscious* 117). Since de Lint describes Mal'ek'a as embodying "the essence of the lies that the herok'a [Europeans] brought with them" (300), the ideologeme asserts Mal'ek'a difference and rejects it as immoral, as an obstacle to the ideal society defined by multiculturalism. De Lint has 'Othered' colonialism and has displaced this evil from "interpersonal or inner-worldly relations" onto the supernatural realm, which "constitutes the semic organization of the 'world' of romance" (Jameson, *Unconscious* 119). Colonialism is displaced from history and transported to the 'higher' realm of symbolic narrative, a dreamlike spiritworld, an Otherworld where it is possible for such an idea to gain an independent body and a will of its own. However, once Mal'ek'a, whose Otherness is proclaimed by his title, "the Dread-That-Walks-Nameless" (198), is eventually named, its supernatural essence attains an all too human shape.

The naming of Mal'ek'a reveals the place the text imagines for Anglo-Canadians in the multicultural 1980s. Colonialism, disembodied from history into the spiritual shape of Mal'ek'a, becomes embodied again within the settler subject. Mal'ek'a tells Thomas Hengwyr directly, "*You are me!*" (366; italics in original). In fact, Mal'ek'a is only "one half of the druid's soul" (416), although it is the darker half, which has been "given a life of its own" (366). The second

half of Hengwyr, his true self, is not evil. However, if Mal'ek'a and Hengwyr are one, then he must bear the conscience of colonial history, as must his descendants, who are the hereditary owners of Tamson House, Jamie and Sara. Hengwyr's soul is split just as Canada is, into two inalienable parts. If the burdensome history of colonialism appears as a vague, immense entity, Mal'ek'a transforms it "from shapelessness" into not just a shape, but "an all too familiar shape" (160). In a moment of the uncanny, Othered colonialism becomes an aspect of white settler selfhood, despite Anglo-Canadian drives to repress the past. As Sara says, "The evil is still here ... in me" (423). Colonialism is not an archaic form or even residual, but an aspect of the dominant capitalism that still produces unevenness. With Mal'ek'a's naming, colonialism enters the human world again and the potential for a properly novelistic, rather than romantic, treatment of the issue opens up. The novel's projected multicultural utopia is only realizable if Anglo-Canadians can themselves overcome this colonial debt.

*Moonheart's* "salvational historicity", the final criterion for romance, emerges when Sara and Jamie, who represent the Anglo-Canadian majority, overcome Mal'ek'a (Jameson, *Unconscious* 148). A prophecy of salvation foretells the arrival of Sara into the Otherworld: "*When the stag's daughter bears the moon's horns...then will the quin'on'a regain their lost forests*" (299; italics in original). Sara, a descendent of Hengwyr (symbolized by the stag) can restore the land stolen by Mal'ek'a from the indigenous manitou spirits, if instructed by Taliesin (symbolized by the moon) to become a bard with magical power. Invoking a prophecy in which the manitou will regain their lost land enables de Lint to echo the desire for First Nations to claim back unceded territory from the Crown. *Moonheart* allegorically structures the history of Canada as a romance, in which the utopian goal of its protagonist corresponds to the First

Nations' re-gaining of lost traditional territory—although this supposedly postcolonial conclusion does reaffirm the status quo of Anglo-Canadian leadership in this project.

*Moonheart's* resolution relies on the inner harmony of the Anglo-Canadian subject as a remedy for social disharmony. This resolution reaffirms settler hegemony within the postcolonial closure of the novel. It is Sara's duty to ensure Mal'ek'a does not influence her subjectivity and by containing Mal'ek'a's presence in her, she may gain closure. Playing the "moonheart" tune on her guitar, Taliesin tells her, is the key to inner discipline, to "your own silences within, your own law" (132). Evenness of law suggests inner harmony and reconciliation. Ha'kan'ta, a wandering shaman, tells her, "See? ... There is no shame in sharing Mal'ek'a's blood. ... Show the world that Mal'ek'a's blood means nothing. That it is what is in here'—she touched her breast—'that counts. The silence within" (424). Sara's yogic self-discipline alone, however, cannot replace concrete social change. Whatever utopian impulse lies behind the moonheart tune, it cannot directly suggest a social program, only produce a tidy narrative resolution that awakens the *desire* to produce social change. *Moonheart's* subjectivist closure functions as a containment strategy to limit the social totality to a more manageable scale: the level of the individual.

*Moonheart's* resolution reveals how the utopian ending of romance always implies a certain ideology. The utopian horizon foretold by multiculturalism in the Trudeau era collapses when it is revealed to still cater to the values of dominant groups. According to Peter McLaren, liberal multiculturalism is predicated on the "natural equality" between all races that enables them "to compete equally in a capitalist society," a view that "often collapses into an ethnocentric and oppressively universalistic humanism" that identifies the norm of acceptability with "Anglo-American cultural-political communities" (51). *Moonheart's* multicultural ideology is more complex, but its symbolic resolution still attempts to resolve the uneven spread of

multicultural equality. Although *Moonheart*'s utopianism is progressive, Jameson's proposal that "the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily utopian" (*Unconscious* 286) lets us read its utopianism dialectically, as equally a text that assists the Canadian state to maintain the *illusion* of an even social reality.

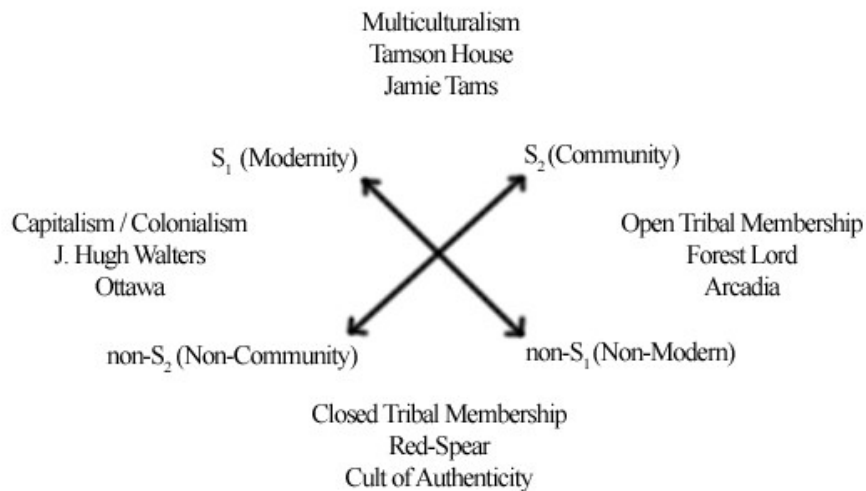
In addition to achieving a symbolic resolution through its form, *Moonheart* achieves a resolution through content. It narrativizes certain social values embodied by characters who act as foils for one another. Then most prominent characters tend to carry the most favoured values. For instance, Jamie, as proprietor of Tamson House, stands for a sense of home, belonging, and solidarity in the modern world, which is represented by Ottawa, a space that excludes the connectivity available to Otherworld denizens.<sup>63</sup> The antinomies suggested by Ottawa and Tamson House—not social contradictions precisely, but ideas that the reader must reconcile—can be termed "modernity" (S<sub>1</sub>) and "community" (S<sub>2</sub>). Combined, they produce the utopian goal of a modernity where everyone belongs, the goal of multicultural policy. Positioning these semes on a Greimas semiotic rectangle, they form contradictions with the non-modern or "pre-modern" (non-S<sub>1</sub>) and "alienation" (non-S<sub>2</sub>). In order to find release from ideological closure, the contradictions of these semes project themselves onto characters "that can embody and manifest such contradictions, which otherwise remain abstract and repressed" (Jameson, *Unconscious*

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<sup>63</sup> Pukwudji differentiates the connectivity of the Otherworld from the lack of connectivity in the modern world: "Here you can timewalk. Here the worlds are thin and close together. They overlap and time flows into time, world into world. It's not the same in the World Beyond, in your world. There the borders are thick and the pathways few that lead between" (195). The longing for connection implicit in time travel dovetails with certain New Age ideologies discussed in detail by Carmen Kuhling, including the New Age positioning of the "subject as a traveller who can potentially transcend the epistemological limitations of the body, and social location, through access to another dimension" (141).



254). In the symbolic realm, these dramatized contradictions ‘work through’ concrete historical situations, much as a dreamer’s unconscious ‘works through’ the happenings of the day.



“Modernity” and “community” form the complex term, *Moonheart*’s highest utopian aspiration: multiculturalism itself, which is realized in Tamson House and in the Otherworld. Moving counter-clockwise around the rectangle, the late capitalist mode of production, especially as embodied by J. Hugh Walters, embodies the element of non-community (i.e. alienation and selfish individualism) that exists in modernity. Next, opposite multiculturalism on the square, rests the cult of authenticity, an exclusive model of tribal membership that privileges ethnic purity. This model of identity is stagnant and unable to change, locked in a distant, pre-modern past. Finally, a more inclusive tribal membership defined the Forest Lord’s New Way forms the pre-modern companion to modern multiculturalism.

Tamson House provides shelter to those considered “different from the norm” (29) and expresses the ideal of multiculturalism. Although not a character exactly, the House shares its being with Jamie, its owner. Tamson House and Jamie are one, a metaphor literalized since

Jamie and his ancestors are *genii loci*, or spirits of a place. The House “was more than wood and stone, towers, roofs and rooms, cellars and gardens, miles of corridors. It housed the soul of his grandfather and his father. The House’s soul *was theirs*” (395; italics in original). As a *genius loci*, Jamie defends the House from Mal’ek’a. Evil stalks “through it like a spreading cancer” (295), but owing to his connection with the House, which is “alive” (368), Jamie can defend against it. Jamie maintains the House’s boundaries against the counter-colonizing force of Mal’ek’a, while allowing an open policy on any of the benign bohemian traffic that passes through its doors in order to “get away from the world outside for awhile” (29). Tamson House is a space of community in opposition to the alienation found in the rest of Ottawa and although it is situated within the modern present, its interior nonetheless sharply distinguishes itself apart from the city. It is a place that “didn’t seem to be a part of the world outside its walls” (29), a foreshadowing of how the House itself stands with one foot in the connective tissue of the Otherworld. Difference and diversity are privileged in the House, in keeping with a multicultural ethic. There is even social equality. “The House takes care of itself,” Jamie says, and all its inhabitants follow an “unspoken rule” (29) about contributing equally, each according to their capacity, towards its upkeep—a reference to the community’s nascent socialist practices.<sup>64</sup> Hierarchical class distinctions remain, however: Jamie remains the privileged, independently

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<sup>64</sup> The “fading Morris design” wallpaper in Tamson House in *Spiritwalk* (1992) could imply more than just a literary reference to one of the founders of modern fantasy (96). It could be an implicit comparison of the Tamson House community to the society described in William Morris’s utopian novel *News from Nowhere* (1890), where the dictum of distributive justice “To *every one* according to his needs, *from everyone* according to his capacities” is put in practice (Leopold x; italics in original).

wealthy lord of the manor and Sara the heir to the property, while its inhabitants are generally underprivileged.<sup>65</sup>

Contradiction endures behind the façade of this dwelling place. Tamson House is what China Miéville calls in “The Conspiracy of Architecture” an “*animate, alien building*” that blurs the boundary between “the organic and the built” (1-2; italics in original). Miéville argues that representations of haunted houses in recent fiction articulate a modern anxiety about how the commodity fetishism of architectural space produces a situation where “humans ... become the *means* to keep the house alive,” instead of the other way around (“Conspiracy” 2; italics in original). At the end of *Moonheart*, Jamie must sacrifice himself to keep the House intact. His own soul and those of his ancestors must sustain the House. Thus, although Tamson House is not a sinister building, but a protective, livable one, commodity capitalism is such that human beings must remain subordinate to it nonetheless. Tamson House is an ultimately alien entity, a commodity owned by Jamie built on unceded First Nations land. Since it reifies “anthropological place,” Tamson House stands as an implicit reminder of white settlers’ colonial debt to the First Nations (Carroll 312). Jamie does not own the House so much as the House owns him, for better or worse, with the result that the voices of his ancestors become a haunting presence demanding his servitude.

De Lint’s contradictory representation of Tamson House suggests that the Canadian state’s devotion to equality is severely compromised. The right to the city cannot extend to all

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<sup>65</sup> Kieran Foy never quite takes up residence at Tamson House, but he does act as a foil to Sara’s privilege once they find themselves in the Otherworld: “You’re in over your head here,” he says to her. “You’ve been very protected, living as you have at Tamson House. You and your uncle are rich. You can go slumming when you want, because if the going ever gets rough, you can just step away from any problems that might arise. Money does that. Well, in what you’re involved in now, money doesn’t mean shit” (118).

ethnic groups equally if the reserve system continues to alienate the First Nations from the centres of culture and economy. The House tolerates difference, but all under the aegis of a white, Anglo-Canadian leadership. Yet, this leadership is trapped by its own material interests. If the Canadian state ceded all its territory, it would cease to exist; therefore, it must retain unceded land in spite of its own professed ideals. Land ownership itself thwarts the multicultural project by making complete redress impossible. Multiculturalism can only ever compromise with the First Nations, however effective it might be at accommodating other ethnic groups.<sup>66</sup>

Moving counter-clockwise around the Greimas rectangle, the semes “modernity” (S<sub>1</sub>) and “non-community” (not-S<sub>2</sub>) are embodied by J. Hugh Walters, the multinational business magnate who dramatizes the endurance of colonialism into the present. Walters is a powerful man who had controlling stocks in a half dozen multi-national consortiums, who chaired a number of important advisory boards as a favor to friends in the Senate, who was on a first name basis with both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, whose actual political interests were of a far greater scope than simply the country of his birth and present residence, who when he traveled abroad was as welcome in the war-torn Middle East or in the Eastern Block as he was amongst the members of NATO. (139)

A transnational agent of globalization, Walters is at home in the world but this sense of belonging, a “suspicious” one indicating a “lack of loyalty to a community,” Carroll suggests, is tempered by a sense of his disloyalty and his “utter disregard for anyone but himself” (314; *Moonheart* 315). Walters’s world is the abstract space of late capitalist economic relations,

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<sup>66</sup> “Historian Henri Dorion has calculated that 85 per cent of Quebec was never signed away by natives. While native leaders do not pretend that they will regain dominion over their ancestral lands, they know legal ownership would serve as a formidable bargaining chip and they have not hesitated to use the courts to affirm their rights” (Picard D1).

which enables the neocolonial exploitation of the Third World. He not only produces conditions of alienation but is himself alienated from those who surround him.

A similar antagonism to a sense of community characterizes the vision of exclusive tribal membership embodied by the semic opposition between “non-community” (non-S<sub>2</sub>) and the “non-modern” (non-S<sub>1</sub>). This particular vision is a direct contradiction of what Tamson House stands for. The isolationism proposed by Red-Spear, a manitou war chief, in which the tribes will admit no foreign members, could lead to social fragmentation, racial reification, and a retreat into the past rather than a reformation of the present.<sup>67</sup> Kieran Foy wishes to enter Red-Spear’s tribe in order to learn the shaman’s Way and fight Mal’ek’a, but Red-Spear refuses to recognize that human and manitou all inhabit the same, modern present and that the active recognition of this coexistence is the key to overcome colonialism. Red-Spear wants to fight Mal’ek’a himself, alone, rather than allow Kieran or Sara to fight it, hoping that “the old ways might still be restored” (308). Speaking to the Forest Lord, he says of Kieran, “His acceptance into our Way is a mockery of all we hold true. Because of him and his people, the tribes are gone and we dwindle, forsaken by them. Will you have us whither away into memories?” (384) Red-Spear’s anti-colonialism reacts to the advance of modernity but contains no room for a healthy expansion of the boundaries of the tribe.<sup>68</sup>

The next opposition between the semes “community” (S<sub>2</sub>) and “non-modern” (non-S<sub>1</sub>) is embodied by the positive community of manitou tribes, a kind of Arcadia. These totemic

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<sup>67</sup> The debate between racial purity and the tolerance of bi-racial ancestry remains a current topic. In February 2016 the Canadian federal government “announced . . . it will amend sections of the Indian Act that discriminated against the descendants of bi-racial marriage” (Curtis A1)

<sup>68</sup> Red-Spear’s policy also bears similarity to left-liberal multiculturalism, which “tends to exoticize ‘otherness’ in a nativistic retreat that locates difference in a primeval past of cultural authenticity” (McLaren 51). However, it is better described as cultural conservatism.

societies engage in pre-modern, unalienated handicrafts: Sara observes a scene where “women were weaving on looms made of bound branches and one man was sewing a beadwork collar onto a buckskin tunic” (187). Their direct use of natural materials is accompanied by a mutual respect towards animals (183). Since they do not inhabit the human world, the manitou remain comparatively isolated in the Otherworld, retaining a roughly pre-Columbian social organization, although they are aware of the colonization of the indigenous humans in the World Beyond. Another effect of the idealization of these primitive tribes is that this undeveloped society of Others is “used to prop up the identity of the rationalized, civilized, usually male Western subject” (Kuhling 139). For example, Kieran is on the run from the police at the beginning of the novel, but finds a home and identity among the tribe. Kieran’s integration with the manitou emphasizes the notion of an essential identity that links the Western, modern self and primitive other, a vision sympathetic to multiculturalism, except for its grounding in the pre-modern.<sup>69</sup>

The Forest Lord’s new Way introduces a paradigm of tribal inclusion that joins the modern to the non-modern with a policy of social harmony reminiscent of Canadian multiculturalism. This new Way is the alternative to Red-Spear’s isolationism. Kieran and Red-Spear fight in single combat to resolve their dispute about tribal membership, but the Forest Lord intervenes and introduces a new law that reflects the multicultural policy of the Trudeau era: “I would have you accept a new Way. Truth wears many faces, Red-Spear. Many paths lead to one destination. It is the spirit that will not accept change that will dwindle and be lost. [...] There

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<sup>69</sup> The absence of First Nations characters in *Moonheart* leaves a staggering gap. “A young Ojibway brave” that John Tucker’s wife defended once in court is mentioned (148) but otherwise the representation of human (non-manitou) indigenes in Ottawa is scarce. Blue, an ex-biker living at Tamson House, once lived among Amerindians in New Mexico, but Blue’s own ethnicity is kept ambiguous. The absence of human indigenes is a sign of their peripheralization from Ottawa and from the field of representation.

can be no return to the old ways. Life goes on [...] If it were otherwise, life would be stagnant” (384). The Forest Lord denies a cult of authenticity that prevents First Nations from having “a living, changing culture” (Fee 243). Tribes are now permeable to outsiders and, implicitly, free to modernize. It is at this moment that the connection between humans and manitou becomes renewed after being severed during colonization; Kieran, a modern Anglo-Canadian (with some French and Irish background) becomes a member of the tribe, adopting manitou ways. Together, human and manitou, settler and colonized, form one modernity on nominally equal terms.

*Moonheart* symbolically resolves, through its form and content, what Canada cannot solve in practice. Its utopian content uses the salvational historicity of romance to produce a hope for a less alienated, more liveable modernity in which the residual indigenous and the dominant settler cultures can coexist in social harmony. The project of de Lint’s short story collection *Dreams Underfoot* and his novel *Mulengro*, the subjects of the next chapter, continue to register combined and uneven development. These works, however, emphasize the city itself, particularly de Lint’s fictitious city of Newford, as a fantastic locus represented as a sublime totality.

### Chapter 3: Underworld as Otherworld: Fantastic Totality and the Right to the City in *Mulengro* and *Dreams Underfoot*

In the middle of Charles de Lint's fictitious city of Newford, the district known as the Tombs "was the lost part of the city—a wilderness of urban decay stolen back from the neon and glitter," a strange underworld that might also be called a faerie otherworld, where "you almost expect some graffiti to say, 'Here be dragons'" ("The Sacred Fire" 139; "That Explains Poland" 108). Newford is emblematic of the "postmodern city," which Thomas Heise calls "a fractal of global social and geographic unevenness" (226). While in *Moonheart* the fantastic emerges from the Otherworld to invade the city, in de Lint's collection *Dreams Underfoot* and *Mulengro* the fantastic emerges within the unevenly developed spaces of the city itself. Non-modern phenomena—such as 'Gypsy' magic, ghosts, vampires, and *genii loci*—each inhabit de Lint's modern cities. Bringing modern fantasy into the urban, de Lint does not so much reject modern fantasy's bias towards pastoralism as seek "to negotiate a responsible, ethical place for ... urban culture *within* nature" (Ashton 108; italics in original). In fact, de Lint registers the truth that modernity consists of the urban, the rural, and the natural as all products of the same combined and uneven capitalist system. The transformation of underworld into Otherworld in de Lint's fiction produces an irrealist representation of urban space as a sublime totality in which residual forces, or the poor and homeless, can inhabit modernity and claim "*the right to the city*" (Lefebvre, *Cities* 158; italics in original).

This chapter opens with a discussion of the traces of classic fantasy's pastoralism in urban fantasy and how the idea of nature becomes reconceived as an environmental consciousness centred on the city itself. Henry Lefebvre's call for the right to the city is treated as a utopian social cause in which urban fantasy participates.



A treatment of this theme is instantiated in *Mulengro*, in which the Ottawa *kumpania* of Rom are denied the right to the city when murders and a police investigation threaten their community. The ghost, Mulengro, who devours the souls of the Rom he kills, commits these acts in order to purify the Rom, who have modernized from their pre-capitalist mode of production centres around handicrafts. The spectre's cannibalism also relates to types of catachrestic Gothic narrative, in which the vampire or the cannibal symbolize capitalist appetites.<sup>70</sup> Mulengro himself is an articulation of the anxiety the Rom feel for being incorporated into a system of abstract value rather than use value. He is in fact an allegorical embodiment of monstrous capitalism and urbanity itself, defined in opposition to the purity of the pastoral.

Following this, discussion turns to *Dreams Underfoot*, in which de Lint's fictitious city of Newford contains unevenly developed districts, such as the Tombs, where the homeless—and fantastic creatures such as the Sasquatch—appropriate space from the neocapitalist-dominated city. Newford but especially the Tombs is a modernist city—a wilderness, a space of ruins. The presence of the fantastic in unevenly developed areas accentuates the impression of the city as a sublime totality. The *genii loci* of Newford, such as Tallulah, the spirit of Newford itself, represent this totality. The presence of these *genii loci* are a sign of the inhabitability of a city, but their absence marks the rise of crime and urban decay.

Finally, a discussion of de Lint's idea of consensual reality is framed in light of the theory of combined and uneven development. This theory, described in *Dreams Underfoot*, articulates the idea that multiple subjective realities coexist and overlap each other, even ones that

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<sup>70</sup> See Bartolovich for a sustain exposition on vampirism, cannibalism, and capitalist appetites.

include magic, monsters, and the unreal. Consensual reality may be thought of as a hegemonic reality imposed by general consent—a ‘reality’ produced largely by the media—set in opposition to other potentially oppositional, peripheral visions of reality. Irrealism articulates these visions as a gesture towards the existence of the Lacanian Real (understood, following Jameson, as History itself) that lies beyond the realm of representation and the visible.<sup>71</sup>

### Reclaiming the City in Urban Fantasy

Urban fantasy, especially when more or less directly inspired by classic fantasy, combines pastoral and urban content to allegorize the hierarchical but nonetheless shared relationship between the city and the country. This openness to blending the urban with the rural is a relatively recent phenomenon in modern fantasy. “Prior to the 1980s,” Cat Ashton writes, “virtually all fantasy fiction was set ... in a rural environment combining pastoral countryside and sublime wilderness” (108). Pastoralism values residual forms of country life threatened by industrialization and treasures oral literature preserved from such communities, such as fairy lore and folktales. As early as William Morris’s *The Well at World’s End* (1894), medieval or pseudomedieval settings have formed secondary worlds in fantasy, their appeal deriving in part from their pre-industrial setting. J.R.R. Tolkien’s pastoralism in *The Lord of the Rings* “set the standard for genre fantasy ... casting the forces of modernity and industry as a sublime evil” (Ashton 109). A utopian impulse for salvation from industrial pollution and labour may have motivated Morris and Tolkien, but this pastoralism ultimately misrecognizes the social production of wilderness and nature—an error urban fantasy can potentially correct.

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<sup>71</sup> For an exposition on the Lacanian Real, see Jameson’s chapter “On Interpretation” in *The Political Unconscious*.

The duality between city and country Tolkien established ignores capitalism's production of nature and the city's inextricable relation to the country. Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* (1973) offers the insight that the genres of Renaissance pastoral consisted of "an idealisation, based on a temporary situation and on a deeper desire for stability [that] served to cover and to evade the actual and bitter contradictions of the time" (45). The city and country form a contradiction since the former depends on the rural production of raw materials and goods and yet the latter is viewed as existing independently, pure of urban corruption. Neil Smith proposes that our "sacrosanct" (7) separation of the realms of nature and society are false, claiming that "uneven development is the concrete process and pattern of the production of nature under capitalism" (8). In North America, wilderness was produced from colonialism's originary accumulation of First Nations land. The segregation of indigenes onto reserves created "the myth of the wilderness as 'virgin'" (Cronon 79). In a world so constructed, in which wilderness, Cronon claims, "represents a flight from history" and thus from responsibility, a better paradigm must dissolve the strict dualism between nature and culture (79).

Given the hierarchical relationship between the city and nature, Henri Lefebvre proposes that the right to the city ought to replace the right to nature, a program urban fantasy can endorse. The right to the city does not mean abandoning our guardianship of nature, but recognizing that under contemporary capitalism, nature, the country, and the city exist in an uneven power relation. In this system, Lefebvre writes, "nature enters into exchange value and commodities, to be bought and sold" (*Cities* 158). 'Naturality' is produced to serve the colonizing leisure industry, with the result that "the urban ravages the countryside" (Lefebvre, *Cities* 158). The right to nature—the right to have that cabin by the lake—actually contradicts and destroys itself, while the escape it offers can only be fleeting. Lefebvre's answer is "a transformed and renewed

*right to urban life*” (*Cities* 158; italics in original) which he calls the right to the city, a revolution that will overturn dominant spaces and place “appropriation over domination, demand over command, and use over exchange” (*Space* 294). Being able to *use* the city will make it homely to human beings, rather than humans being *used* by it. The working classes can counteract the neocapitalist domination of the city by using urban spaces—that is, appropriating living space.

Lefebvre’s right to the city advocates for urban environmentalism. “Even more than in Marx’s time, nature is the source of all use value,” he says (*Space* 292). Using nature and natural spaces is tied to the project of making a better, more livable urban space. Cronon remarks that “calling a place home inevitably means that we will *use* the nature we find in it,” but in a city, this need not be a destructive act (89). Using nature in the city *preserves* nature in the country and increases the health of the urban ecology, which includes green spaces as much as developed land and city blocks. Victories of socialist space over neocapitalist space create a less alienated urban habitat.

De Lint’s fiction finds common cause with Lefebvre’s right to the city. Ashton remarks that the efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to set fantasy novels in North American cities “overlapped with political initiatives in Canada and the United States to increase green space, fund public transit, and provide space and resources for the arts in urban areas, suggesting that urban fantasy both fuelled and reflected a broader cultural drive to reclaim the city in North America” (117). Ordinary people appropriate space by enjoying parks, taking public transport, and finding ways to express creativity in public spaces, whether they present a painting in an art gallery or spray a

graffiti mural under an overpass.<sup>72</sup> De Lint's fiction is filled with art galleries, community volunteers, and even graffiti artists. In an uneven city, where yuppies, bohemians, and winos all share the same city block, the right to the city becomes a crucial issue. De Lint's urban fantasy fiction responds to these conditions through fantastic content that serves as a series of projections of utopian desire. The fantastic can, however, also achieve a more pessimistic effect by foregrounding the horror of alienation.

### Capitalism as Spectre in *Mulengro*

*Mulengro* is a ghost story about the Rom community of Ottawa. Janfri, a Rom fiddler, questions his identity when his home burns down and he finds the Romany symbol for *marhime*, meaning unclean, painted on his house.<sup>73</sup> Since the Rom are nomad, owning a home is a sign of ritual defilement, an unacceptable adoption of *Gaje* ways—or at least this is what the arsonist's gesture implies. Meanwhile, a series of gruesome “Gypsy” murders has left police officers Briggs and Will lost for any plausible explanation. As the killer murders more Rom, consuming their souls to gain more power, the elders of the Ottawa *kumpania* decide to flee the city. They know the culprit is a ghost named Mulengro, a survivor of the Nazi persecutions who has come to cleanse the Rom from their *Gaje* ways in the hopes of saving them in the eyes of God. Mulengro's motto is that “one was either Rom or *Gajo*. There was no in between” (15). Ola, a Rom who practices *draba*, or magic, flees her house after being attacked by local *Gaje* ruffians. She hides from Mulengro with Zach, a hippy living off the land in cabin country. Eventually, Janfri makes a final stand with Ola and the police against Mulengro and his feral wolf minions.

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<sup>72</sup> The article “Urban Cultures: Spatial Tactics” by Fran Tonkiss suggests how graffiti is a spatial practice.

<sup>73</sup> There are many different spellings for Romany words, which is chiefly an oral language infrequently written down. I follow de Lint's guide to Romany in the glossary at the back of his book and reflect his own usage.

The novel ends with Janfri burning Mulengro and himself to death in a cabin, which purges the ghost and restores peace to the lake cottage where Zach and Ola rebuild the cabin together.

*Mulengro* continues the Gothic themes de Lint explored a year earlier in *Moonheart*. The ghost, like Mal'ek'a, is an evil spirit who emerges from a troubled past to inflict vengeance on the present. Gothic narratives seem “particularly to sediment during the passage between two phases of long-wave capitalist accumulation” (Shapiro 31). In this case, de Lint adopts a Gothic vocabulary to communicate the process in which the impoverished Rom adopt their fairly isolated pre-capitalist mode of production centred on handicrafts to the capitalist present. The Rom are a modernized non-modern culture. By juxtaposing the residual Rom belief in *draba* with modern content, de Lint allegorizes this historical process.

Mulengro denies the Rom the right to the city. Despite the pluralism of de Lint's representation of an abject minority within the bureaucratic and governmental heart of a nation, the Rom cannot live in Ottawa once Mulengro starts killing.<sup>74</sup> Mulengro's murders target those Rom who live between worlds, who retain connection to the law of *marhime* and the community of the *kumpania*, but who also own live in the city. He targets the Rom who have modernized. The North American Rom in particular have modernized in distinct ways. Mulengro reflects: “The Rom here had forsaken their *vurdon* for metal *Gaje* vehicles, had forsaken the old ways for those of a society that had no use for them. ... Houses, when all a Rom needed was the sky above his head. Cars, when a horse-drawn *vurdon* moves as swiftly as any *phral* [a true Rom]

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<sup>74</sup> The Rom were an object of topical interest around the time of *Mulengro*'s publication. In 1991 an article in the *Globe and Mail* detailed Rom crime activity in Canada, including the claim that “the Ottawa area has reported a rash of Gypsy thefts in recent weeks” (Moon A1). The wars and revolutions in Eastern Europe, extending back into the 1980s, likely played a role in the influx of Rom finding their way to Canada: “Some [Rom] are well established in North American society, while others have arrived only recently, including a growing number who have come from Eastern Europe in the past 10 years and sought refugee status” (A1).

should rightfully wish to travel” (230-1). Mulengro’s burning of Janfri’s house accomplishes part of his purpose because it forces Janfri to forsake his home and adopt nomadic ways again.

Subsequently, all the Rom are forced to abandon the city and the structures and commodities that tie them to the *Gaje*. However, severing these ties is not enough for Mulengro, who is determined to murder the Rom he considers contaminated by modernity.

Those Rom positioned between worlds are also the most aware of unevenness. The Rom are traditionally an insular people. Will, a cop, remarks how “they never integrated with whatever society was on top—not even in this present day and age” (95). This might be true about social interactions between Rom and *Gaje*, but the reality apparent to Mulengro himself is that the Rom have blended too much with outsiders. They have endured into the present and yet resist modernity. A Rom woman, Pivli, states “we are poor, but by choice, and only in regard to worldly possessions” (329). Maintaining few ties to the *Gaje* economy, the Rom are a residual culture that does participate, however moderately, in capitalist relations. Mulengro hates this interaction, but Janfri practices it:

Ever since Yojo and I landed in Rommeville [New York City] ... I’ve not been the same, not been the Rom I was. I tried. When Pesha—my wife—when she was still alive. But when she died because I lacked the money needed for her medicine, I vowed never to be poor again. I stepped then into that half-world between *Gaje* ways and those of our own people, taking from each, giving to each, but never truly a part of either. (369)

Janfri occupies the interstitial space between Rom and *Gaje* and involves himself with both the residual and dominant culture. His mode of engagement is the way of the modernized Rom, a reaction against the experience of poverty and inequality.

The novel's resolution finds it favourable to live between the worlds of the residual and dominant culture. Janfri, in his interactions with *Gaje* musicians, and Ola, living with Zach, "were like mirrors of one another. Caught between two worlds" (370). They are both Rom who try to integrate with *Gaje* society. Although Janfri carries guilt about his position and questions whether Mulengro might be right about his cleansing mission, Ola's talking cat Boboko rebukes him for letting "Mulengro's lies think for [him]," and continues to tell him, "Customs and beliefs are important, but you both worry so much about what you are—Rom or *Gaje*, *marhime* or not—that you lose sight of what is important: who *you* are" (370; italics in original). Focusing the conflict of a dualistic conception of culture into a question of subjective identity, Boboko's resolution allows for conflicting social identities to coexist within the individual. Janfri and Ola's personal identities cannot be divided into Rom and *Gaje* aspects without losing a sense of the interrelatedness of those identities.

Inequality remains, however, since the Rom retain social relations with a settler society that disregards them. Briggs, Will's white partner in the police force, observes that "Ottawa's invisible Gypsy community had just packed up and disappeared, and no one, not even he, would have known the difference if he hadn't been out there looking for them himself" (150). The Rom may be aware constantly of the struggle for existence within a *Gaje* economy, but the *Gaje* are not aware of them. This replicates the hierarchical relations between master and slave, settler and colonized.<sup>75</sup> Briggs comments, "Just knowing they're Gypsies says it all. They're like Indians, Will, and that means they're trouble" (93). The police presume Janfri's guilt in the murders

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<sup>75</sup> For more on neocolonial social hierarchy, consult Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Globaletics*. This is discussed by Franz Fanon in the colonial context in *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*.



because, in the words of Frantz Fanon, “confronted with a world ruled by the settler, the native is always presumed guilty” (53). The police as an institution manage minority populations while their racial profiling of the abject ‘Gypsies’ criminalizes difference, in a way that echoes the criminalization of the First Nations and African-Canadians.

The hierarchical relationship between Rom and the police cause the Rom to flee the city. Although Rom culture may not be originally urban, the city is nonetheless denied to them when they need it. With a killer of Rom loose, the police suspect a Rom killer. Janfri, a circumstantial suspect, reflects, “If the police were looking for Yojo and Big George, it was a good time for all Rom to leave the city” (118). Their evacuation of Ottawa is evidence of their diasporic identity and of their exile within the rest of Canada. Although they use tactics<sup>76</sup> to appropriate space on the move when the Ottawa *kumpania* settles briefly on the farm owned by Earl Hollis, a well-meaning *Gajo* who allows them to park their cars on his land (310), the police maintain their control. Even before they flee the city, the Rom cannot be said to be at home. Recalling her years in the Toronto slums, Ola blames her mother’s illness on “her husband’s death and the weight of the city’s indifference” (136). Since they are an invisible minority in a world dominated by *Gaje*, the Rom struggle to appropriate their right to Ottawa.

The settler-colonized relations between the Rom and *Gaje* suggest that Mulengro’s violence represents the predatory nature of colonialism. Canada is not unique in subjecting the Rom to colonial master-slave relations. Will researches how the Rom were “enslaved in Hungary and Transylvania by the Magyars—he’d always thought Transylvania was something Stoker had

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<sup>76</sup> Michel de Certeau defines a tactic as “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus” and which “plays on and with a terrain imposed on it by the law of a foreign power” (*Practice* 37).

made up for his vampire novel. Butchered by the Nazis in the Second World War. It was little wonder they kept to themselves” (95). Mulengro emerges out of the Nazi persecutions, but he might easily have been a Transylvanian revenant who perished under the oppression of Vlad Dracula. The reference to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) makes this explicit, but does it make Mulengro a vampire? Karl Marx notably makes use of vampirism as a metaphor for capitalist appetite when referring to capitalism’s “vampire thirst for the living blood of labour” (159). Vampirism is a metaphor for capitalism, which “*must* be parasitic rather than cannibalistic” since capitalist accumulation is dependent on the reproduction of labour power, which ensures continual exploitation (Bartolovich 214; italics in original). Mulengro is therefore not precisely like Dracula, given his absolute, non-renewable *devouring* of the souls of his victims.

Cannibalism is the better metaphor. Mulengro “feeds on the ghosts of the Rom he kills” and thus feeds on his own kind (68). Old Lyuba, a Rom elder, warns Janfri that Mulengro “will swallow you up, just as it did Romano and Ingo—swallow up your soul until nothing remains but your bones and the skin holding them together” (68). Furthermore, once Mulengro has consumed Janfri, his *mulo*, or spirit, will become incorporated within Mulengro himself and serve him, contributing to his power—another level of master-slave relationship. Cannibalism, which unlike vampirism refers to an entire consumption, relates to originary accumulation, the initial stage of colonialism in which surplus value, not just surplus labour, must be extracted to provide capitalism’s start-up money (Bartolovich 226). The raiding of New World gold by the Conquistadores and the removal of indigenes from the land are classic examples of this originary accumulation, in which the producer becomes divorced from the means of production (Marx 364). Mulengro acquires surplus value from the Rom he devours—and surplus labour from the

souls who unwillingly serve him. In this way his methods parallel British and French colonists' exploitation of the First Nations.

In the end the particular relations established between the *Gaje* and Rom are best described not as either vampiric or cannibalistic, but partaking of both modes of accumulation. Mulengro represents a Rom anxiety about their relations with the *Gaje*, which has been one of exploitative labour, or slavery, at times—both under the Magyars and in the concentration camps, where the Nazis exploited and expended the bodies of labourers as part of their plan for mass genocide. The Rom were consumed for the value they produced and, in the present day, Mulengro has returned to consume them again. But, this time around, Mulengro is himself a Rom who perversely carries out his deeds against his own kin—or at least those who have entered into the capitalist economy. Vampiric capitalism has begun to exploit Rom victims, a necessary development out of originary 'cannibal' accumulation since consumption becomes impossible to sustain infinitely, necessitating the development of more sophisticated and enduring kinds of exploitation (Bartolovich 231-2). Whenever capital sucks the blood of one Rom, from Mulengro's perspective that *phral* becomes *marhime*—as if modernity was itself a disease, like lycanthropy. The Rom, integrated within late capitalism, experience their current relations with *Gaje* more as a form a vampirism, although the fear of total consumption also endures, as a secondary effect.

Mulengro represents the Rom's misunderstood anxiety of being incorporated into the modern world. Steven Shapiro in his writings on Gothic literature writes, "As the people of a relatively insulated region of provincialized commodity circulation are roughly integrated within long-distance markets, forms of catachrestic narrative emerge as a structure of feeling that attempts to make sense of this strongly felt but inchoately understood phagocytosis" (Shapiro

31). The Rom are *incorporated* into the world-system of capitalism, a totality that evades their cognition, through the real estate market. Capitalist relations of production, and the emerging dominance of exchange value, gradually supersede the Rom pre-capitalist mode of production, where the primacy of use value leads to the relative unimportance of worldly goods, or commodities. This results in alienation from the means of production, and poverty. The vocabulary and language used to describe this feeling of incorporation emerges from traditional Rom beliefs in ghosts, invisible, unseen forces, in which many modern Rom have ceased to believe.

Mulengro is a catachrestic representation emerging from a structure of feeling of being caught between a pre-capitalist mode of production and capitalist modernity. Raymond Williams states that structures of feeling emerge where “a formation appears to break away from its class norms, though it retains substantial affiliation, and the tension is at once lived and articulated in radically new semantic figures” (*Marxism* 135). Rom such as Janfri retain strong patriarchal bonds with the *rom baro*, Big George, but nonetheless associate with outsiders. In between these interactions is the emergent identity of the modernized Rom. A structure of feeling emerges among the Rom who try to make sense of their contradictory identities. The new formation of the modernized Rom is in a state of pre-emergence, caught between the existing patriarchy and capitalism. Mulengro becomes a fantastic projection caused by the anxiety of this tension. Rather than two worlds, the Rom are coming to recognize there is only one world, one system, combined and uneven.

In fact, Mulengro’s identification with capitalism extends to even Zach’s perception, a *Gajo*. A participant in a residual culture who lives alone in a cabin in an effort to connect with ‘good vibes’ and feel closer to “the real world” (290), the hippy woodsman and guitar maker

Zach plays “at being a modern Thoreau of sorts” (289). Henry David Thoreau’s maxim “In Wildness is the preservation of the World” (qtd. in Cronon 69) defines Zach’s attitude towards nature. He equates Mulengro with the capitalist system he has sought to avoid: “Zach could *feel* him in the wind, in the dark ... just waiting. [...] Mulengro was going to pollute the good vibes so badly that the forest might as well be a parking lot” (289). Within this pregnant latency, Zach presages the arrival of infrastructural development, substituting Mulengro’s presence for that of the capitalism. He experiences Mulengro’s approach much as one experiences a structure of feeling as “unease, a stress, a displacement, a latency” (Williams, *Marxism* 130). More than just representing a Rom anxiety, Mulengro stands as a larger symbol of capitalist uneven development. De Lint’s novel expands the particularity of a Rom superstition into a diagnosis of the *general* conditions that haunt modern society.

Zach’s misrecognition—his misreading of these vibes—foregrounds the difficulty of fathoming the change capitalism brings. Zach experiences the structure of feeling of being a holdover from the hippy generation, with its utopian and New Age attitudes towards preserving nature and ecology and its quixotic opposition to the industrialist excesses of modernity. Although the times have changed, making Zach something of a cultural residue himself, he nonetheless *feels* the approach of Mulengro and the approach of the urban as the same sensation—one of horror. However this feeling does not overpower thought; his experience of this structure of feeling includes “thought as felt and feeling as thought” (Williams, *Marxism* 132). The object of Zach’s horror is Mulengro, but he has also identified the dominance of the capitalist social formations from which he has retreated. Capitalism and urbanization threaten his cabin by the lake and the livelihood of the Rom who take refuge in it. As Zach fears, “The world had found him. Found his space. And in the shape of Mulengro and his horrors, it was going to

steal it all away” (290). Zach imagines Mulengro to be a colonizing force setting out to exploit his retreat under a regime of primitive accumulation, but it could just as well describe the process of urbanization.

However, Zach’s retreat into nature also embraces a dualism that misrecognizes combined and uneven development and the production of nature.<sup>77</sup> The final image of the novel is Ola basking in the natural beauty of Zach’s property: “The water was still. The reeds on the far shore beyond which the herons nested were brown, but the trees on the hills above the marsh were a perfect shade of green” (391). De Lint here asserts the right to nature rather than the right to the city, giving Ola a glimpse of ‘perfect’ nature that sets the urban at bay. However, nature is never uncontaminated. Humans bring the city along with their cabins. De Lint finishes his novel with Ola’s rejection of the city. Perhaps the reason the Rom are never shown to have regained their right to the city is because of the enduring dualism between culture and nature—or perhaps it is an unconscious peripheralizing of the Rom, away from the centres of exchange. In either case, de Lint’s Newford fiction seeks to dissolve these easy binaries.

#### Right to the City in *Dreams Underfoot*

Newford is an unevenly developed North American city. On explaining to Edo van Belkom why he created Newford, de Lint responds, “I wanted to write about something that wasn’t Ottawa that was a big urban sprawl. Ottawa is a very pretty city, but I had stories I wanted to tell that would be set in Chicago or in the Bronx or East LA” (44). The Tombs is one

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<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the dualism inherent in normative conceptions of nature see Neil Smith in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*.

district of Newford that has more in common with the rundown neighbourhoods of postmodern American cities than with the tree-lined vistas of Ottawa. It is a set of late capitalist ruins:

[The Tombs] had once been a developer's bright dream. The old, tired blocks of tenements, office buildings and factories were to be transformed into a yuppie paradise and work had already begun on tearing down the existing structures when a sudden lack of backing had left the developer scrambling for solvency. All that remained now of the bright dream was block upon block of abandoned buildings and rubble-strewn lots. ("Pity the Monsters" 176-7)

Newford's old centres of industrial production have gentrified into a neighbourhood designed for young urban professionals, "yuppies" whom Jameson identifies as among the "familiar social consequences" of late capitalism (*Postmodernism* xix). However, economic failure produces a space that is neither a part of the developed city nor a part of the country. It is a wasteland, an urban 'wilderness,' and prime for appropriation by the underclass.

De Lint represents the Tombs as "a wilderness of urban decay" (139), a dangerous but nonetheless 'natural' space within the city. The narrator of "That Explains Poland," LaDonna, describes Gracie street as a line, "the *frontera*" (108), dividing the city from the wilderness. Looking north of Gracie into the Tombs is "like standing on the line of a map that divides civilization from no-man's-land. You almost expect some graffiti to say, 'Here there be dragons.'" (108). This sharp division between developed and undeveloped space suggests the fragmented state of the postmodern city. Dragons, which inhabit the margins of medieval maps away from known civilization, further suggest wilderness. Although there are human dragons in the Tombs—the Devil's Dragons biker gang for one—a genuine cryptozoological creature does exist in this environment: the Sasquatch. An article in Newford's *Daily Journal* reports that

“sightings of Bigfoot or the Sasquatch are usually relegated to wilderness areas, a description that doesn’t apply to Upper Foxville” (102; italics in original). Yet, by its association with the Sasquatch, the urban ruins it inhabits become more of a wilderness, accentuating the city’s fragmentation. LaDonna “playing Indian scout in the rubble” increases the sense of an urban frontier landscape (112). LaDonna discovers the Sasquatch, in fact, confirming the veracity of the gently parodied news report—an irrealist comment on how media cannot replace experience in our assessments of reality. De Lint uses a wilderness metaphor to convey the danger of the Tombs and its marginality from ‘civilization,’ building a sense of Newford’s uneven development and its sublime totality, which can contain human as well as abnormal races.<sup>78</sup>

The marginalized of Newford find refuge in the Tombs, appropriating space from the forces of domination. The Tombs, once an abstract space dominated by the forces of “capitalism and neocapitalism”, has fallen in disarray (Lefebvre, *Space* 287). This urban ‘wilderness’ remains an unsuitable place of habitation. However, the homeless men, winos, stray teenagers, and bag ladies who inhabit the Tombs live under such precarity that they must appropriate space using survival tactics on a “terrain imposed on it by the law of a foreign power” (de Certeau, *Practice* 37). The homeless within dominated space cannot control their space, but they can squat, a tactical appropriation in which not only the homeless but the marginalized more generally can use space. Nomadism functions likewise as a spatial tactic among the Rom. Since “nature is the source of all use value”, it fits that the homeless appropriate a space described as a wilderness, like settlers laying claim on a territory (Lefebvre, *Space* 292). While this is no real

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<sup>78</sup> The Sasquatch of the Tombs relates distantly to representations of the underground homeless as members of devolving human race, such as the ‘mole people’ of Jennifer Toth’s *The Mole People: Life in the Tunnels beneath New York City* (1993). See Thomas Heise’s *Urban Underworlds* (2011) for more details.



fulfillment of the right to the city, since the homeless inhabit a metaphoric wilderness, they can nonetheless produce use value out of this ‘natural’ space to make a contingent home for themselves.

The Tombs—like Tamson House in *Moonheart*—is a space of differences. As the narrator of “But for the Grace Go I” says, “I’ve seen [the Tombs] described in the papers as a blight, a disgrace, a breeding ground for criminals and racial strife, though we’ve got every color you can think of living here [...] those of us who actually live her just call it home” (322). Diverse, heterogeneous populations appropriate space in the Tombs, just as they do Tamson House. Rather than being a site of social pathology, the Tombs can be seen as a reflection of a multicultural community that escapes the management of the state. The right to the city means an end to capitalism’s “elimination of all differences” within an abstract space, an assertion of those differences that prevent spaces from being equivalent and interchangeable—or more easily bought and sold (Lefebvre, *Space* 287). The Tombs are a racialized space that evades commoditization, unlike more developed racialized spaces in Canada such as Dundas Square in Toronto (Teelucksingh 1). Since the Tombs has failed to produce surplus value through the production homogeneous yuppie apartments, it has become fractured like the buildings and sidewalks, turning it into a socialist space of differences—differences that in de Lint include the non-human, the magical, and the supernatural.

De Lint uses fantasy to highlight racialized uneven development. For instance, the Sasquatch in “The Explains Poland” could stand for a racially alienated individual forced to squat where the police cannot bother him. The words LaDonna uses to describe her sense of wonder at “looking straight into his hairy face ... don’t quite do justice to the *feeling* of the moment” (115). Her wonder is a partly a result of the encounter with the uncanny. The creature’s

face “was human, and it wasn’t. It was like an ape’s but it wasn’t” (15). Alien and yet familiar, other yet a self, Bigfoot invites LaDonna to examine her own difference as a Hispanic woman in an Anglo majority city and to acquire a firmer sense of self-identity. Bigfoot “was trying to figure out who he was and where he fit in. [...] Maybe he really was just this hairy *muchacho*, making do in the Tombs” (117). By refusing to photograph Bigfoot, LaDonna prevents the state apparatuses of control, represented by the police, from finding him, locking him up, and examining him. This counteracts spatial homogenization within “a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles” (Lefebvre, *Space* 293). Bigfoot’s non-human difference augments the sense of the Tombs as a space of multicultural and interracial diverse denizens and also suggests that only an unevenly developed space could house such a creature.

While “That Explains Poland” symbolizes the ways in which the marginalized are both denied and granted a home in the city, the presence of urban *genii loci* in de Lint’s other short stories more literally symbolize the city’s inhabitability. In “Winter was Hard,” the gemmin, who appear as “gangly teenagers” (154), are *genii loci*, “the spirits of a place, just like hobs are spirits of a house. They’re what make a place feel good and safeguard its positive memories. When they leave, that’s when a place gets a haunted feeling” (162).<sup>79</sup> Alienation follows the departure of the gemmin, while their presence reduces that feeling. They embody a certain presence of local knowledge and folklore of place. The gemmin make an area homelike, a place of dwelling—a trace of their legacy as house spirits. However, when they leave and a place becomes haunted, it

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<sup>79</sup> The gemmin are etymologically linked to the idea of community. Fredric Jameson notices an antinomy between the sociological concepts of *Gesellschaft* (society) and *Gemeinschaft* (community) when analyzing the utopian function of *The Godfather*, essentially claiming that the film is an instance where the Italian, white middle-class inhabiting larger society (*Gesellschaft*) experiences a nostalgic envy for the close-knit, ghettoized ‘community’ (*Gemeinschaft*) of ethnic minorities (“Reification” 146). The gemmin’s utopian function in *Dreams Underfoot* is likewise linked to *Gemeinschaft*.

is as if an evil spirit enters the streets to haunt it. If Miéville's concept of the haunted house as a building that exists for "*its own end*" were applied to such a haunted district, then that area of town could become an "animate, alien" neighbourhood ("Conspiracy" 1-2; italics in original) In this case human beings would exist for the sake of the city and not the other way around. By making the city more homelike through their power as spirits, the gemmin confirm the human right to urban space.

The gemmin increase the sense of the Tombs as wilderness since they are derived from a rural, folk culture that has blended with the urban. De Lint describes the gemmin as being "good neighbours" (158), which is at once an alternative name given to the fairies of Irish folklore and, more literally, a term that refers to a positive urban community. Even their songs, which record memories of the places they inhabit, are derived from a syncretic mix of "traditional ballad and rap" (164), encoding their simultaneity with modern urban subculture. Like any literary form, their songs are modern, yet derived from earlier forms and allegorizes their cultural derivation.

De Lint uses the gemmin to posit a Romantic resolution to the problem of urban alienation, invoking a complex binary between culture and nature. The gemmin finally part for lands "beyond the fields we know" (167), an allusion to *The King of Elfland's Daughter* by Lord Dunsany, which uses pastoralist imagery derived from Romantic convention.<sup>80</sup> The presence of the gemmin keep the Tombs 'alive,' turning the urban underworld into a faerie otherworld, but crime and neglect nevertheless leads to their abandonment of the uneven city. Frank Hodgers, an elderly man Jilly Coppercorn looks after who believes in the faerie folk, writes a letter to her

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<sup>80</sup> The phrase is also the title of a short story collection by Lord Dunsany published as part of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series and edited by Lin Carter in 1972.

saying that “if we learned to care again about the wild places from which we’d driven the magic away, then maybe it would return” (167). Sustaining green spaces is consummate with urban renewal, but Hodgers’ preference for the ‘wild’ over the urban implies a distinction between the two that nonetheless preserves traces of the Romantic abhorrence of the urban.

The problematic binary opposition between the urban to the rural suggests an articulation of a structure of feeling that involves a neoromantic but nonetheless utopian desire. What is at stake behind neoromanticism is the gemmins’ animism and thus naturalization of space, which is a fetishism of space.<sup>81</sup> Miéville says that “commodity fetishism is usually explained as being the absolute naturalization of the commodity form and its concomitant relations: the idea that value, for example, clearly a human function, inheres in the commodity itself *irrespective* of human agency” (“Conspiracy” 23; italics in original). The gemmin represent the value of human spaces as if value lay in ‘natural’ or, as it were, supernatural causes. This fetishism conceals the human agency in social problems. The nearly religious sense of awe with which Jilly Coppercorn regards the gemmin leads her to suppose that faith can bring them back. Human agency can, however, be recuperated, since preserving the memory of the gemmins’ goodness can *inspire* people to make a better community. Tolkien claims that fairy tales are “plainly not primarily concerned with possibility, but with desirability” (40). The untimely and misplaced ideas of the neoromantic legacy of classic fantasy runs into contradiction with the urban, late capitalist

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<sup>81</sup> “Animism, as applied to things, transcends their materiality by saying that the perception of the life of matter is only possible through an attribution of a derivative agency. In contrast, fetishism says things can be seen to communicate their own messages” (Pels 94).

setting, but de Lint reconciles this contradiction by turning it into a call for a better world, a first step towards social practice.<sup>82</sup>

### Irrealism and Sublime Totality

In “Tallulah,” the spirit of Newford itself appears, representing the social totality of Newford. Christy Riddell is de Lint’s fictitious stand-in, an author of urban legends and story collections who acts as spokesperson about de Lint’s own aesthetics. Tallulah, the spirit of Newford, is Riddell’s muse and briefly his lover in the closely-knit, Old World streets of the Lower Crowsea Market, Newford’s historical district. The breakup of muse and author happens for complex reasons:

‘It’s because of how the city is used,’ she said, ‘It’s because of hatred and spite and bigotry; it’s because of homelessness and drugs and crime; it’s because the green quiet places are so few while the dark terrors multiply; it’s because what’s old and comfortable and rounded must make way for what’s new and sharp and brittle; it’s because a mean spirit grips its streets and that meanness cuts inside me like a knife.

‘It’s changing me, Christy, and I don’t want you to see what I will become. You wouldn’t recognize me and I wouldn’t want you to.’ (456)

Although humans produce the darkness that threatens Tallulah, she remains a projection of alienated humanity’s desire for totality. The ‘mean spirit’ she refers to could refer to an actual evil spirit or to human malevolence—the language of fantasy allows for that—but benevolence can restore her, as it can restore the gemmin. Riddell hopes “that we can drive that mean spirit

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<sup>82</sup> More explicit representations of charity, such as Katherine Mully’s giving of her book sales to charity causes in de Lint’s *Memory and Dream* (1994) represent more concrete examples of social action. See Adam Guzkowski (2005) about the role of community in de Lint’s novels.

away and keep it at bay” (459). His chosen method to accomplish this is through his writing, a revelation about how de Lint might view his own project.

Riddell conceives his writing as a project for restoring a sense of the absent, unavailable totality through fantasy. If this reflects de Lint’s own vision for his aesthetic, then his urban fantasy becomes an allegory for the restoration of the fragmented, modernist city. Allegory functions as a “perpetual response to the human condition of being exiled from the truth”, which could imply Riddell’s stories are responses to Tallulah’s exile and his own exile from the knowledge she gives him (Cowan 114). Tallulah exposes Riddell to the history of Newford, guiding him “through the city’s night like a totem does a shaman through the Dreamtime. . . . I see a building and I know not only its shape and form, but its history. I can hear its breathing, I can almost read its thoughts” (“Tallulah” 441). When she leaves, owing to a worsening social crisis, her departure symbolizes the more general departure of knowledge, truth, and totality, which can no longer be gauged, owing to the general processes of alienation. Like meaning in an allegorical text, value in the commodity form is extrinsic to the object (Cowan 121). The city “no longer has its meaning, its deeper reason for being, within itself” and Tallulah’s departure represents this process, making necessary the use of allegorical language to speak of the city (Jameson, *Papers* 257). One mode of this allegorical language is fantasy, which Riddell and de Lint both use to restore a sense of totality.

Capitalism causes the loss of totality but art and literature can be a way of restoring that sense. For Lefebvre, the city is an *oeuvre*, a result of a public participation in city life “to overcome divisions and restore totality” (Kofman and Lebas 20). The *oeuvre* is a vision and form of practice in sympathy with which Riddell’s writing and de Lint’s fiction. However, “capitalism and modern statism” have unfortunately crushed the *oeuvre* (Kofman and Lebas 20). De Lint

continues to write just as Riddell does, in the hopes of restoring some knowledge of the urban totality through his fiction. He does this through the irrealist method of exposing the very impossibility of representing the urban.

De Lint's irrealism articulates itself in his theory of consensual reality, which fragments the definition of reality. University teacher and wizard Professor Bramley Dapple in "Uncle Dobbin's Parrot Fair" proposes that reality is really the product of what Antonio Gramsci might have called, under more Marxist terms, hegemony:

We live in a consensual reality where things exist because we want them to exist. ...

There is some semblance of order to things ... for if the world was simply everyone's different conceptual universe mixed up together, we'd have nothing but chaos. It all relies on will, you see—to observe the changes, at any rate. Or the differences. The anomalies ... The world as we have it ... is here mostly because of habit. (10)

Consensual reality's potential chaos recalls Jameson's designation of postmodernity as an age of schizophrenic art in which the reading of a text "proceeds by differentiation rather than by unification" (*Postmodernism* 31). But within the relatively stable hegemonic reality, within the "spontaneous consent" given to a certain way of seeing (Gramsci 12), anomalies appear, moments of fantastic encounter outside the hegemonic order of reality.

Combined and uneven development suggests that these anomalies are actually symptoms of social contradiction. They are signs that the dominant Enlightenment epistemologies of modernity have not spread across the globe evenly and that realism is insufficient to describe the differential singularity through which unevenness is experienced. Consensual reality justifies fantastic representation because of its acknowledgement of coeval modernities. These might appear in the surreal but desperate life of a homeless person ("The Sacred Fire") or in a

marginalized Rom woman's rediscovery of her heritage and her magic ("Romano Drom"). In de Lint's fiction, magic erupts as an 'anomaly' within the fabric of reality wherever unevenness is represented, even though unevenness is itself no anomaly but an intrinsic part of modernity. Unevenness calls for an irrealist method where consensus reality is violated as a way of communicating the fragmentation of modernity, especially in ways that illuminate how inequality is felt and perceived. The task of irrealism is to show that not everyone gives in to consensus, and that the idea of a consensus is totalizing. Fantastic anomalies are crystallizations of structures of feeling that exist outside any totalizing hegemony and can thus give rise to "counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony", a potentially subversive role (Williams, *Marxism* 113).

A representative example of how de Lint shows a marginalized point of view through 'anomalous' encounters with the fantastic occurs in "The Sacred Fire," in which the protagonist must transcend hegemonic reality in order to sympathize with and understand the paranoid perceptions of a homeless man. Nicky Straw is haunted by unnatural "freaks" that "feed on us, on our hopes and our dreams, on our vitality" (144), faceless vampires easily mistaken for ordinary human beings. Luann Somerson, who sympathizes with Nicky, believes his paranoia is a delusion. Even though these vampires symbolize the horror of exploitative capitalist appetites,<sup>83</sup> it could not justify in court Nicky's attack on an innocent person. Yet, he catachrestically interprets the society that has marginalized him as vampiric and insists that the freaks are only real. When Nicky predicts his own death in jail, possibly at the hands of the dreaded freaks, Luann questions her assumptions about their unreality. She begins to experience

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<sup>83</sup> See comments on Bartolovich earlier in this chapter.



the same paranoia, an intimation of the all too real vampiric exploitation that imposes itself on her as well as anyone else in a capitalist system.

The vampire freaks are profoundly real, representative of modern phenomena and symbolic of the capitalist forces that impoverish men like Nicky. Irrealism here acts as a path towards an uncanny realism. Nicky's plight allegorizes the real struggles of all homeless men. "They'll keep after you until they bleed you dry," he says of the freaks (144). Nicky's paranoia is symbolically a fear that capitalism, which continually drains surplus labour from workers to increase itself, could develop, more accurately, a cannibalistic appetite that will expend him. The fantastic in "The Sacred Fire" thus acts as a bridge towards the Real itself—a bridge that although it may never reach the receding horizon of the Real, nonetheless points to its existence. The Real creates the causes by which the invisible demons and spirits are felt. By violating the illusions of 'reality' that we all consent to without thinking, fantasy draws attention to the Real lying beyond the visible, even though neither fantasy nor realism can finally cogitate the Real. What the fantastic can do, however, is acknowledge upfront the insufficiency of realist representation to describe the Real.

In de Lint's urban fantasy fiction, the call for the right to the city is also a cry and demand for the fantastic, as part of residual culture, to find a place in modern literature. De Lint modernizes classic fantasy in *Dreams Underfoot* in his representation of a modernist, fragmented city. *Mulengro*, on the other hand, shows how the Rom are joined to their settler masters through the combined and uneven world-system. By paradox, the fantastic actually becomes a way of registering the reality of this inequality. The implications of fantasy's irrealist aesthetics for the representation of modern experience are further discussed in the conclusion.

## Conclusion

Modern fantasy crystallized into a literary form out of the structures of feeling that gave rise to it and it continues to emerge in new forms, renewing the vitality of literature and its ability to critique the social present and pave paths to utopia. Charges that modern fantasy is escapist have long been laid to rest and buried, but it may now be observed that defenders of the existent literary structures who so condemned fantasy had simply remarked upon the radical newness of this emergent form, though they miscomprehended it because it emerged from social formations still in process. Some fantasy was escapist, extravagant, and exorbitant in its excesses, true—but then again so was much ‘realist’ literature. This critique of ‘escapism’ does not apply to fantasy categorically. Fantasy stood as a mode of critique in the works of William Morris, who critiqued Victorian industrial capitalism. In more recent years, China Miéville has used the dilapidated, militia-controlled streets of New Crobuzon in *Perdido Street Station* to mount his allegories of a society that is predicated on proliferation of the commodity form and state domination. Charles de Lint’s fiction likewise uses folklore to allegorize North American colonizer-colonized relations. Modernism and fantasy are territories that overlap; a multitude of fantasies share modernism’s criticality, and even those that bear passive relations to their historical context inevitably register the conditions of modernity in one way or another. Fantasy has become a necessity that its critics never suspected, a form that lies outside the dialectic of modernism and realism as commonly understood, but which arises as a powerful response to

modernity. As capitalism grows impossible to account for as a totality, fantasy can restore a sense of the epic by constructing its own version of the social totality.<sup>84</sup>

Of all subgenres or modes of modern fantasy, those set within a contemporary frame stand to make the most cogent critiques of world capitalism as it exists. Miéville's works prove useful as allegories of capitalist domination, but in contemporary fantasy, social critique can be localized to particular geographies and social formations that exist in our common world. Retaining ties to both the classic fantasy of Lord Dunsany, J.R.R. Tolkien, and T.H. White, and to the fantastic modes of Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, E.T.A. Hoffman, and Nikolai Gogol, contemporary fantasy also comes closest to magic realism as a form. In fact, the line between magic realism and contemporary fantasy has become permeated within a literary landscape defined by genre crossovers. Furthermore, genre fiction emerging from the literary periphery will continue to sustain comparison to magic realism, even though genre fiction derives from a separate overall literary tradition. Fantasy has ceased to be a uniquely Anglo-American literary phenomenon, although Europe and North America remain the literary centres of world fantasy.

Fantasy fiction has become a global literary phenomenon, implicating the participation of various non-European epistemologies within the form. Contemporary fantasy in particular—and its related genres of urban fantasy, weird fiction, New Gothic, etc.—can register the modern capitalist world-system that has given shape to world literature and represent the realities of combined unevenness directly, dialogizing these mimetic realist representations with a magical

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<sup>84</sup> For more on the relationship between epic and totality see Georg Lukács's *Theory of the Novel*. For Lukács, the novel and epic give form to totality in distinct ways: "the epic gives form to a totality of life that is rounded from within; the novel seeks, by giving form, to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life" (56).

aesthetics derived from residual culture. In contemporary fantasy, the fantasy novel joins everyday life, a genuine novelization that portrays figures of epic and fairy-tale “on the level of contemporary reality,” rather than separate from us in an epic world (Bakhtin 22). Blending realism and fantasy, this form contains the potential to critique concrete social realities.

In the 1980s *Moonheart* by Charles de Lint produces a symbolic resolution of the history of colonialist reality in the context of Canada, a semi-peripheral nation in relation to the United States. While *Moonheart*'s realism enables it to confront issues of colonialism and multiculturalism, it also narrativizes these values in a secondary world—the Otherworld, a parallel world allegorically linked to our world, where indigenous manitou must fight the presence of the foreign evil, Mal'ek'a, who represents the trauma of originary capitalist accumulation practiced by European colonists. The ambivalent position of the novel effects a symbolic resolution reflective of the ambivalence of Canada's multicultural policy in general, which at once rejects inequality and continues to re-establish the centrality of the white, Anglo-Canadian settler subject. *Moonheart* registers this unevenness to further a postcolonial agenda, which is nonetheless compromised by its internalized ideology, making it an interesting and valuable cultural artefact despite the limits of its utopia.

Functioning at once as a containment strategy and as a chronotope for the representation of a multicultural society integrating white settlers and First Nations indigenes, the Otherworld in *Moonheart* demonstrates how fantasy can serve a utopian purpose that is simultaneously ideological. Despite the representation of indigenes in the Otherworld, few human First Nations people are represented in Ottawa, a sign of the chronological unevenness within Canada, in which First Nations are viewed as pre-modern although they are contemporary with modernity. But one can also read de Lint's representation of the manitou as an immanent critique of this

very same chronological unevenness. Fantasy has the potential to transcend the limits of concrete actuality in order to project such utopias and restore a sense of historicity into the eternal postmodern present—a feat impossible for traditional techniques of representation. By making us aware of the continued existence of the residual alongside modern society, fantasy can restore historical awareness in readers and, in the best scenario, a sense of the system itself, which combines and maintains an unequal hierarchy.

The fantastic can also articulate the brutality of unevenness and poverty in a way that realism simply cannot. Especially where non- or counter-Enlightenment epistemologies are involved, alienation can be expressed fantastically through metaphors and symbols. In *Mulengro*, the Rom must account for the unevenness produced within their insular society by capitalism's abstract value eliminating the importance of use value. In the commodity form, value is extrinsic to the object, just like truth is exterior to allegory.<sup>85</sup> *Mulengro* represents capitalism and this spectral sense of value. He allegorizes the anxiety the Rom feel about absent value, in a world they must wander in their diasporic state. In the tradition of Kafka, the fantastic here lends an psychological realism, even if the narrative itself is unrealistic by the standard of empiricism.

In addition to making us increasingly aware of residual culture, fantasy offers critiques of how both the urban and rural are being used. Fantasy as a genre and corpus of work historically has a great concern with the environment. Indeed, the form's initial emergence can be attributed to environmental consciousness. The urbanization of Great Britain inspired both Tolkien and Raymond Williams to adopt an environmental politics, although Tolkien's commitment

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<sup>85</sup> Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory observes that "the commodity fetish is itself allegorical, modern culture is intrinsically allegorical ... Allegory is no longer a stylistic choice, but a predicament" (Caygill 251).

manifested itself through his literature more than through direct political thought and engagement. De Lint's urban fantasy is a historical modification of the trend of Tolkienian classic fantasy, applying the value of environment to the city. Fantasy assists in the 'right to the city' project through its ability to represent the fractured, disjoined, sublime urban totality in a way inaccessible to realist literature. Whether through *genii loci* who represent the liveability and homeliness of the city itself or through fairies and other entities who represent that absent totality by being 'invisible minorities,' urban fantasy accounts for marginalized peoples within the urban totality who live hidden lives in spaces dominated by capitalism.

Modern fantasy can ultimately be called a utopian form which, even when it does not articulate a precise project for urban renewal or social revolution, nonetheless awakens the desire for social change in readers. Fantasy is an aspiration for a better world and, like utopia, it is a type of "phenomena whose concept is indistinguishable from its reality, whose ontology coincides with its representation" (Jameson, "Utopia" 35). It expresses dissatisfaction with the world as it is and the desire to change it. Whether this discontent is expressed through conservative, liberal, or socialist politics depends upon the author, but fantasy will frequently be subversive. Through its use of a novum, fantasy is a literary space where ideas can be tested, rather like science fiction, although without as precise a cognition factor. What emerges from such experiments may not be practicable in the same way as science fiction, but fantasy can nonetheless crystallize ideas, thoughts, and experiences that circulate together as structures of feeling. Since fantasy registers the utopian impulses buried between the cracks of social form, it cannot simply be dismissed as incorporating "anti-cognitive laws" (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 8). Even the element of escapism in some fantasy can be read against the grain as an unconscious utopian refusal of modernity that carries its own ideological content by what it omits.

Fantasy, as a critical irrealism, offers “an end to the standard old realism-modernism opposition in the name of something else” (Jameson, “Antinomies” 485). It is a peripheral modernism in how it represents a development of modernism outside the usual Anglo-American authors associated with the movement. By asserting the existence of a deeper, substructural, invisible reality that lies behind the reality we can see, fantasy hints at the existence of the world-system as a determining factor of a combined and uneven modernity. Through the assertion of the existence of what is not-real, fantasy can declare the existence of deeper realities.

Many questions remain unanswered that could provide avenues for further research questions. The first questions that come to mind when considering fantasy as world literature are ambitiously broad: could we provincialize the Eurocentric definition of ‘fantasy’ and ‘the fantastic’ with reference to how other pre- and post-colonial cultures have understood the concepts of the unexplained, the wondrous, the marvellous, the unreal, or the dreamlike? How has the concept of fantasy in Europe itself modified with the developments of capitalism over the course of the centuries? This question could be extended to ambitiously encompass the European Middle Ages as well as the era of industrial capitalism and modernization. There is also the ongoing project of recovering and reappraising the modernist roots of classic fantasy. The work of E.R. Eddison, Lord Dunsany, Kenneth Morris, and Charles Williams, among others, could be analyzed with a view to uncovering their politically conscious or unconscious reactions to modernity as a world-system. In the realm of genre analysis, it would also be beneficial to analyze genre crossovers, in order to account for the relationship between contemporary fantasy, urban fantasy, weird fiction, horror, and magic realism, among other forms, and to examine how their magical aesthetics register the conditions of combined unevenness. The work of John Crowley, particularly *Little, Big* and the *Ægypt* Cycle, are especially fascinating cases in this

regard—and there are many other authors worthy of analysis who write from non-Western backgrounds. This study lays out a wide field for further analysis of an extensive range of texts.

As a closing remark, I offer the following insight. Fantasy as an irrealism adopts an apophatic path towards determining truth. Apophatic reasoning is also known as the *via negativa*, which is how medieval scholastics achieved knowledge of God: according to David Williams, through “the negation of every possible affirmation about God” (4).<sup>86</sup> By representing what is-not, fantasy can discover what is. This method of negative theology is described in David Williams’s *Deformed Discourse* (1996), which links negative theology to aesthetics and representations of the medieval monster. “The more unwonted and bizarre the sign, it was thought,” he writes, “the less likely was the beholder to equate it with the reality it represented” (4). Since fantastic images do not correspond with reality—since the mimetic contract of a consensus reality is severed by bizarre, grotesque representations—the truth cannot reside in the existence of the fantastic thing *in itself*. Fantastic representation foregrounds the lack of connection between any representation and the Real. Fantastic images in modern literature can be read as the grotesque monsters in medieval marginalia were: not as real or truthful in themselves, but rather as *vehicles* to lead the mind towards a truth that is absent from the sign. Truth has left the art object itself, just as Tallulah leaves Christy Riddell, but the fantastic can hint at the continued existence of the truth, even though it is no longer present. The fantastic

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<sup>86</sup> The *via negativa* approach to knowledge corresponds with Adorno’s “‘negative dialectic,’ with its counter affirmation [about totality]—‘the whole is the untrue’—in which the classical dialectic seeks, by biting its own tail, to deconstruct itself” (Jameson, *Unconscious* 54). The Warwick Research Collective refers to Adorno’s celebration of modernism’s gesture of refusal, “an immanent negative critique . . . of the intensification of social misery in capitalist society” (WReC 58). This approach to critique through negative formulation corresponds with Jameson’s “root of all evil” mode of the utopian imagination (“Utopia” 25).



functions as an intrinsic allegory that seeks to define the Real—the ultimate horizon of truth—by that which is-not.

Modernism is founded on the realisation that naïve realism is no longer able to tell the truth about the human experience. Realism does not simply reflect reality in its content, after all: it re-presents it. Fragmented forms allegorize that truth has fled the art object. Fantasy's modernism arises from this recognition. It attempts to express the absent truth—not directly, in the facticity of its content, but through its mythologies.

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