"Nowhere else works like the cities": Liminality in *The City and the City*

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China Miéville's novel, *The City and the City* (2009) introduces a detective story in Beszél and its topolganger, Ul Qoma. The relationship between the two cities is a strange one: even though they occupy the same place physically, they work as two separate autonomous states. By following the main character's investigation of a young girl's murder, the reader also gets to inquire the true nature of the cities. The narrative was adapted to screen in 2018 (*The City and the City*, BBC2), and thanks to the difference between the two mediums, painted a different picture about the liminal nature of the two cities. In this paper, I am going to examine how these two platforms represent the liminal nature of Beszél and Ul Qoma, and how they depict Borlú's liminal transgression.

Keywords: liminality, The City and the City, Miéville, transgression

1 "Nowhere else works like the Cities…"[1]

China Miéville's *The City and the City* (2009) introduces an investigation into the murder of a young girl, Mahalia Geary, and the strange case of two cities, Beszél and Ul Qoma – two topolgangers[2] that still work as separate social and political areas. The exact details about how these two cities relate to each other are not revealed in the first half of the text, so their placement and their dimensions are up to the readers' imagination. While investigating the murder of the mysterious young woman, Mahalia Geary, Inspector Tyador Borlú delves into the secrets of the two cities, and faces situations that can even be called fantastic. Because of the strange combination of crime fiction and (seemingly) fantastical elements, the novel could be categorized as weird fiction, which the author himself describes as the following: "If considered at all, Weird Fiction is usually, roughly, conceived of as

[1] Tom Shankland, dir., *The City and The City*, Season 1, episode 1, "Beszel" (BBC2, 2018, DVD), 00:00:07.

[2] The word 'topolganger' is created from the combination of "topography" and "doppelganger". It means that the two cities "occupy broadly the same space, but remain separated by the inhabitants' mutual and conscious practice of 'unseeing' people, spaces and objects considered to be present in the other city" (Wilcock 2020, 2).

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a rather breathless and generically slippery macabre fiction, a dark fantastic ('horror' plus 'fantasy') often featuring nontraditional alien monsters (thus plus 'science fiction')" (Miéville 2009, 510). Even though adapting this captivating story for screen and keeping its mysterious atmosphere must have been a difficult task, nine years after the publication of the book, BBC2 introduced the television adaptation of the same name, directed by Tom Shankland, comprising four 56-minute-long episodes. Translating the text to the screen meant that the way the topolganger cities are depicted in the novel had to change: while consuming this story in a book form allows the reader to imagine this world as part of a fantastic universe, the television adaptation takes this uncanny element out of the equation, and translates the relationship visually on screen. However, even though the representation of Besźel and Ul Qoma must be different because of the different nature of the two media, liminality plays a crucial role in both of them.

The term 'liminality' derives from anthropological studies and is connected to ritual passages and the state of the in-between. In the former, it can refer to the phase where the initiands of a certain culture have to go through a series of acts in order to occupy a new status or role in their communities (Thomassen 2006, 322). However, the term 'liminal' can be used as an adjective as well. According to Victor Turner, liminal *personae* or "threshold people […] are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (1977, 95). Although the previously mentioned definitions focus on the ritual nature of the term, liminality has another aspect that concentrates on human perception. According to Sándor Klapcsik,

> the word goes back to "limen", which means threshold in Latin. In psychology, limen means a *limit* below which a stimulus ceases to be perceptible. Thus, these definitions indicate that liminality is strictly related to perception or the lack of it, and to limits as well as to the breach of limits, transgression. (2012, 7)

In her essay "Seeing is Believing: Perception and Liminality in Miéville's *The City and the City*" Simone Wilcock talks about the liminal aspects of the novel, but instead of describing how the two cities relate to each other, and analysing how Borlú goes through a liminal phase in order to acquire a new identity, she points out that this liminality is shown in the hybrid genre of the novel, the setting, and the plot, "which depicts a rite of passage for the protagonist in identifying and overcoming the mechanisms of his selective perception" (2020, 3). Although she gives a detailed description of the genre and the setting, she does not elaborate on the journey that Borlú has to take in order to receive a new identity. In this paper, by using Turner's and Klapcsik's understanding of liminality, I am going to compare the ways in which the novel and the series depict the peculiar relationship of the

two cities: while in Miéville's text the focus moves from the fantastic to a realistic solution of the nature of Besźel and Ul Qoma, by adapting the story on screen, the television series gets rid of the fantastic portrayal of the two cities but adds another layer of fantasy to the storyline.

2 A Hybrid Genre

In her essay, Wilcock notes how different critics have described Miéville's novel as "unscience fiction," an "existential thriller" (Brown), surrealist "literary fiction" similar to the works of Kafka and Borges, and also "new weird" (2020, 1). Although one of the most plausible ways to categorize this novel would be to call it a case of detective fiction, all of the aforementioned genres seem relevant. Thus, it can be concluded that *The City and the City* has a hybrid genre: it is a police procedural with elements of thriller and fantasy. However, when analysing the genre of the novel, the hybridity of crime fiction itself should also be considered.

In her essay titled "Hybridisation", Heather Duerre Humann argues that "hybridisation has always been a feature of crime fiction" (2020, 57). As writers of crime fiction tend to bend the genre to suit their own needs, "these recent works of crime fiction demonstrate cross-cultural connections while also reflecting the postmodern tendencies toward rejecting boundaries between (so-called) high and low art forms and blurring, when not altogether dissolving, generic distinctions" (2020, 57). According to Humann, the reason why crime fiction tends to hybridise is that it has always been responsive to the changes in culture and society – although the focus is always on crime (social order becoming disordered) and detection (restoring social order), as the world changes, "these very notions (and the order/disorder nexus) are being called into question" (2020, 58). In the case of *The City and the City*, the social order is disrupted with the murder of Mahalia Geary, whose body was discovered in Besźel, although she was murdered in Ul Qoma. In the case of the two cities, social order means that the border between the two topolgangers is kept by a communal agreement: it is up to the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma, and the mysterious police force, Breach, to keep this strange relationship alive. Social order is also disrupted (or at least there is an attempt to do so) by the underground political group, the unificationists, who would like to merge the two cities. Although in the world of *The City and the City* order lies in keeping the two cities entirely separate, the idea of disorder becoming the new order (unifying the two cities) also plays a crucial part in the story. In the case of Besźel and Ul Qoma, "each city has its own national character: politically, Besźel is a democracy, while Ul Qoma is a one-

party nationalist state" (Wilcock 2020, 3). However, the very existence of Breach proves that living in the interstice is an option as well; although living in a place without borders means that the members of Breach " are all philosophers [… who] debate among many other things the question of where it is that we live" (Miéville 2011, 373). Thus, living in a place without borders could mean a loss of identity.

The appearance of Mahalia's body in Beszél could also be understood as a reference to locked room mysteries, as when finding the body, the Besź police does not understand how the body was transferred there without anyone noticing the breach. Locked room mysteries, based on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", are generally "characterized by the representation of crime as an intellectual puzzle, invoking the practice of scientism in clue solving and heralding the detective as a major literary figure" (Cook 2011, 1), while these stories also have a supernatural element to them, as the crimes seem mysterious and impossible. According to Joseph Kestner, "[t]he locked room […] allows the extension of narrative plot to cover or imply a range of additional significances: repression/return of the repressed, the unconscious, the mother's body (womb), the tomb and death, incest, death and resurrection, narcissism, solipsism, and existential alienation" (2000, 236). In the case of the novel, the return of the repressed plays an important role, as even though the citizens of the two cities are constantly trying to *unsee* and *unsense* the other city, a total *unsensation* is almost impossible.

3 The Depiction of Beszél and Ul Qoma in the Novel

The narrator of the novel is Tyador Borlú, senior detective of the Beszél Extreme Crime Squad, who is investigating the murder of a young girl, Mahalia Geary. As the plot is getting more and more complicated, the reader (alongside the inspector) gets to investigate not only the murder, but the mystery of the cities as well.

The relationship of the two cities is not explained at the beginning of the novel, thus readers could feel like this symbiotic connection between Beszél and Ul Qoma is something supernatural. The residents of each city are conditioned to only hear and see what is happening in their own city – once they react to anything that happens in the other place (e.g. they start talking to someone on the border, or even take a glance at an accident), they are committing breach. The two cities share the same geographical space, but they are divided in a way that they work as two autonomous states. Beszél is democratic and less modern than its topolganger, Ul Qoma, the rich and modern one-party nationalist state. Each of these places has its own colours, way of clothing, and architectural style, which enables the citizens to

quickly realise what they are allowed to see. The opposition between the two cities is so strong that the locals have to *unsee* everything that belongs to the other area, and even though they share the same physical space, the only legal way of crossing into the other state is by going through the building called Copula Hall, which works as a threshold between Besźel and Ul Qoma. The geographical area is divided into four different categories: total, alter, cross-hatch, and *dissensi*. A total area means that all of it belongs to the city from where it is observed, while from the other city it is an alter place, so it should be ignored. Cross-hatched areas are shared by both of the cities, so it is quite easy to breach – to see or even hear what is going on in the area that belongs to the other city. The *dissensi* are also called "disputed zones, places that Besźel thinks are Ul Qoma's and Ul Qoma Besźel's" (Miéville 2011, 61). The sensitive balance of the two cities is controlled by Breach, the authority that punishes those who engage with the other city.[3] This way, the first sign of liminality appears at the city borders: as the membrane between Besźel and Ul Qoma is only metaphorical in the cross-hatched areas, certain places do not belong to either of the states, because the citizens are afraid to go there in case they might breach.

The first sentence of the novel – "I could not see the street or much of the estate" (2011, 3) – may refer to a peculiar way of seeing in the two cities. The dead girl's body is found in GunterStrász, which (although it is mostly total i.e. belongs only to Besźel) has some crosshatched areas, so Borlú cannot see the buildings and the parts that belong to the other city, Ul Qoma. However, when the readers see this sentence for the first time, it may not occur to them that it describes the strange relationship between the two cities.

Although breach in Besźel and Ul Qoma is illegal, by following the narrator of the novel, readers can realize how impossible it is to follow this rule for the citizens of the two cities. Even before being taken away by the authorities, Borlú breaches several times: the first incident happens at the end of Chapter One, when he sees

> […] past the edges of the estate to the end of GunterStrász, between the dirty brick buildings. Trash moved in the wind. It might be anywhere. An elderly woman was walking slowly away from me in a shambling sway. […] With a hard start, I realised that she was not on GunterStrász at all, and that I should not have seen her.

[3] In the novel, Breach appears as a noun and as a verb as well. As a noun (with a capital B), it refers to an authority that polices the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma so that they do not interact with the other city without permission. In case a citizen breaches, he or she is taken to an area that is also called the Breach. By using expressions like "manifest" and "power", Miéville creates an uncanny atmosphere: in the first half of the novel, the reader is not sure whether this authority is a superhuman power or an organization made up of everyday people. Borlú sees a breaching accident for the first time when he is still a child: the organization is described here as an uncanny phenomenon, made up of shapes that are almost impossible to make out.(cf. 2011, 81).

> Immediately and flustered I looked away, and she did the same, with the same speed. I raised my head, towards an aircraft on its final descent. When after some seconds I looked back up, unnoticing the old woman stepping heavily away, I looked carefully instead of at her in her foreign street at the facades of the nearby and local GunterStrász, that depressed zone (Miéville 2011, 14).

The fantastic element of the text comes from the fact that it is never explicitly described how the two cities are related to each other, so readers might come up with their own different versions, thinking of an alternative reality where the two cities may exist in two completely different dimensions. This strange relationship is even more complicated when Borlú finds out that the dead girl was researching Orciny,

> […] the third city. It's between the other two. It's in the dissensi, disputed zones, places that Besźel thinks are Ul Qoma's and Ul Qoma Besźel's. When the old commune split, it didn't split into two, it split into three. Orciny's the secret city. It runs things. (2011, 61)[4]

Although only a few people believe in the existence of the third city, as the investigation continues, even Borlú and his associate detectives start to believe that Orciny is real – that it lies somewhere between Besźel and Ul Qoma, as a place that no one else can see, which adds an extra layer to the fantastic nature of the text. The supernatural element is further emphasised when Borlú describes his first encounter with Breach:

> In seconds, the Breach came. Shapes, figures, some of whom perhaps had been there but who nonetheless seemed to coalesce from spaces between smoke from the accident, moving too fast it seemed to be clearly seen, moving with authority and power so absolute that within seconds they had controlled, contained, the area of the intrusion. The powers were almost impossible, seemed almost impossible, to make out. At the edges of the crisis zone the Besź and, I could still not fail to see, Ul Qoman police were pushing away the curious in their own cities, taping off the area, closing out outsiders, sealing off a zone inside of which, their quick actions still visible though child-me so afraid to see them, Breach, organising, cauterising, restoring. (2011, 81)

The description of this powerful authority paints a superhuman picture about the members of Breach, so that readers cannot be sure whether these figures are actual people. The narrator uses the word 'manifest' several times in connection to the appearance of Breach, which also creates an uncanny atmosphere – it is only in the third section of the novel that we realize that Breach actually exists in the places in-between: since they do not behave as Besź or Ul Qoman citizens, they are able

[4] This definition of Orciny comes from Drodin, a Besź unificationist. Later in the story, it turns out that Orciny is just a legend and the third city does not exist.

to be everywhere and stay unseen by the people who are always afraid of engaging with the other city.

In the second half of the novel, after Borlú travels to Ul Qoma, readers get a clearer picture of the geographical dimensions of the cities. When Tyador is sitting with the Ul Qoman Senior Detective Dhatt in a coffee shop, which overlooks a Metro station, he glances at one of the posters that were hung in Besźel after Mahalia was murdered:

> Among the many posters on a nearby wall was one I saw then unsaw: I was not sure it was not the poster I had had printed, to identify Mahalia. I did not know if I was right, if the wall was alter to me now, total in Besźel, or crosshatched and a close patchwork of information from different cities.
> Ul Qomans emerged from below the street and gasped at the temperature, shrank into their fleeces. In Besźel, I knew – though I tried to unsee the Besź citizens doubtless descending from Yan-jelus Station of the overland transit, which was by chance a few scores of metres from the submerged Ul Qoman stop – people would be wearing furs (Miéville 2011, 187–88).

After the description of the cross-hatched area, it becomes obvious that the two cities are on the same land grosstopically, however, the existence of Breach and a certain 'membrane' that lies between them still gives the area a fantastic atmosphere. Later on, after Borlú kills Mahalia's friend's, Yolanda's murderer and is taken by Breach, the narrator and the reader realize that the authority is a police-like force made up of people instead of superhuman creatures – it is only their behaviour that distinguishes them from the population of the two cities. People of Breach are everyday citizens in a liminal space, who breached in one of the cities and now are unable to get back to their ordinary lives, because they cannot unsee the other city anymore. After breaching and living in both cities, Borlú cannot get back to his hometown: "But if you breach, even if it's not your fault, for more than the shortest time… you can't come back from that" (Miéville 2011, 370)..

4 The Depiction of Besźel and Ul Qoma in the Series

Tom Shankland's adaptation of the novel – thanks to the change in the medium – paints a different picture about the liminal nature of the two cities. As I have previously discussed, the fantastic feature of the cities lies in the fact that it is never explicitly explained how Besźel and Ul Qoma relate to each other physically, which leaves everything to the readers' imagination, who might think of these two cities as strange places being in two different dimensions. However, putting the scenes on film meant

that this strange relationship between Besźel and Ul Qoma should be visualized in a way that it makes the audience wonder about the true nature of the places.

The city of Besźel is depicted as a Soviet state with old buildings, vintage cars, and brownish sepia colours, evoking the atmosphere of the 1970s, while Ul Qoma is shown as a modern metropolis, with its glaring lights and tall towers, using lots of clear blue and red tones (see fig. 1). The opening scene of each episode shows the two cities standing next to each other; however, Ul Qoma is blurred, as the audience sees the cities from the narrator's perspective (who is also Borlú, just like in the case of the novel).

The first episode also introduces the map of the two cities two times: first in the title sequence, and later on in Commissar Gadlem's office, when he is looking at the places where Besźel and Ul Qoma crosshatch (see figs. 2 and 3). By showing the maps and blurring out the alter areas, the adaptation takes away some of the fantastic elements, however, the creators added another component that corresponds to the uncanny feeling of the series. At the end of the second episode, when Borlú starts a private investigation at Bol Ye'an, the portrayal of the dig is much more fantastic than in the text, which introduces the place as a "wasteland":

> At the northern end of the park, where the ruins themselves were, what looked at first like a wasteland, was scrub punctuated with old stones of fallen temples, canvas-covered walkways linking marquees and prefab office buildings in some of which lights were still on. Ground showed the marks of digging: most of the excavation was hidden and protected by tough tents (2011, 173).

The adaptation paints a more mystical picture with the ancient symbols, emphasised with the clear blue light which is typical for Ul Qoma. At the end of the episode, when Borlú is caught by the guards, he falls into a small pit filled with water, which reflects the glaring blue light and an ancient symbol from the ceiling of the cave (see fig. 4). The scene is accompanied by a choir soundtrack which gives it a sacred atmosphere, and the audience may feel like Borlú is experiencing something spiritual, maybe even falling through a portal (which further emphasises the liminal nature of Orciny).

The true nature of the cities is explicitly shown at the end of the third episode, when Borlú breaches by killing Yolanda's murderer: first the picture of the Old Town is shown in a way that Besźel is blurred but Ul Qoma is not, but after Borlú realizes what he has done, the picture gets clear and we can see the two cities next to each other (see fig. 5). After the breach, the next episode starts with Borlú waking up from a dream about his wife, Katrynia. After Borlú becomes conscious, the mystical feature of Breach is shown by hazy closeups, a moving frame, and short shots, which creates an uncanny feeling in the audience (see fig. 6).

5 Liminality in *The City and the City*

As described previously, the setting of Miéville's fictional universe has a liminal nature: the two cities share a strange border that is taken up by the powerful and mysterious authority, Breach. In the novel, there are some hints that suggest that Borlú breaches several times: sometimes he sees into Ul Qoma in the cross-hatched areas; he takes the phone call from Jaris, even though he calls from the other city, and he sees Mahalia' poster (which is in Beszél) from an Ul Qoman café and he commits his final act of crime when he shoots Yolanda's murderer, so Breach finally takes him. Throughout the novel, as he gets to know more and more about the nature of Breach and Orciny, and he becomes an avatar of the secret organisation, he has to realize that he cannot go back to his previous life: he becomes a part of the in-between.

In the adaptation, Borlú's character development is further complicated with the introduction of a separate storyline about his wife, Katrynia Perla. He meets her in Ul Qoma and stops her from committing suicide after Professor David Bowden treats her badly. Katrynia is a fan of Bowden and a fellow researcher of the secret city in-between, and although she likes Tyador, she is not in love with him – years later, Katrynia meets the professor and then disappears in the *dissensi*. In the adaptation, one of the main reasons why Borlú does not want to stop investigating the case of Mahalia Geary is that he feels that the two cases are linked, and maybe by finding out what happened to the young girl, he could discover the truth behind the disappearance of his missing wife (who, as it turns out later, committed suicide). This romantic touch to the plot adds an extra layer to Tyador's character and gives another reason for him to dive deep into the history of Orciny, which his wife was a believer of, as it could help him find out the reason why his wife disappeared.

At the end of the fourth episode, after Bowden has tried to kill Tyador by sticking a knife into his throat, Borlú sees a vision of his wife: Katrynia tells him to go with her, because he has been "invited". In the interpretation of the adaptation, Orciny is afterlife itself: after committing suicide, Katrynia has found the secret "third city", so she has found peace in her death. Although Borlú is also invited to Orciny, he decides to stay in Breach. By the end of the story, he acquires a new persona: he is not Inspector Tyador Borlú of the Beszél Extreme Crime Squad anymore. Now he is Tye, Breach manifest, whose task is to stay in the liminal and keep the order of the two cities (see fig. 7). His new name means that he receives a new type of identity, as his previous years of being a Besź citizen are over – as the member of Breach he will *tie* the two cities together in order to "maintain the skin that keeps law in place. Two laws in two places, in fact" (2011, 373). Although this change

of persona can be seen as character development, this new sense of identity also includes a sense of loss, as he is not allowed to say goodbye to his former friends and colleagues, and he also has to turn his back on his past life.

The novel and the film depict liminality differently: in both cases, liminality appears in the relationship of Besźel and Ul Qoma and in the transition that Tyador has to go through in order to find out the solution of the mystery and acquire a new identity. However, as the book and the screen are two different media platforms, the way they depict the narrative will be also very different. The most obvious difference can be found in how they represent Besźel and Ul Qoma. In both cases, according to Klapcsik's definition, the two cities are liminal in nature because there is a limit between them "below which a stimulus ceases to be perceptible" (2012, 7). Adapting the story on screen meant that the seemingly magical relationship between the two cities should be made visual, but it was impossible to copy the reader's experience on screen because of the ready-made visuality of television. Shakland came up with the solution of blurring out the *other* city: when Borlú is in Besźel, we can see the blurred Ul Qoma and vice versa. Without having read the novel, this solution can also create a "fantastic" understanding in the audience, who may think that there is peculiar membrane between the two cities that does not let the citizens to take a look at their neighbours' location. In both cases, the "limen" or the threshold is Breach itself: people are unable to see the individuals of this organization because they are walking in the in-between and they do not show any of the features of Ul Qoman or Besź citizens. The people of this border are also liminal: they are always in an in-between state, not belonging to either of the cities but still being able to enter any of them without committing a crime.

The only place in both narratives where people can be in Besźel and Ul Qoma at the same time is Copula Hall, the building that serves as the only legal border between the two cities – it is the only place in the story where travellers can legally enter the other state with a visa. Miéville describes the building as

> […] a patchwork of architecture defined by the Oversight Committee in its various historic incarnations. It sat across a considerable chunk of land in both cities. Its inside was complicated – corridors might start mostly total, Besźel or Ul Qoma, become progressively crosshatched along their length, with rooms in one or other city along them, and numbers also of those strange rooms and areas that were in neither or both cities, that were in *Copula Hall only*, and of which the Oversight Committee and its bodies were the only government. Legended diagrams of the buildings inside were pretty but daunting meshes of colours (2011, 157–58).

The building serves as a space of liminality, where people can cross the borders legally: before travelling to the other city, they have to go through a certain kind

of "initiation": a training where they are taught how to *unsee* the city they come from and how to *see* the city they would like to visit.

Even though every character in the narrative (both in the novel and the series) who wants to cross the borders and has to go through an initiation ritual (the training), the biggest liminal transformation happens in Borlú's personality, when he becomes a member of Breach. In accordance with Turner's definition, the members of this organization can be understood as liminal "threshold people" who are in the in-between "by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner 1977, 95). They are the ones who police the citizens' behaviour and who keep the balance between the two cities – once people realize that the borders between Besźel and Ul Qoma are only in their minds and they are free to "cross" between the two, the arbitrary borders and the idea of the two, separate cities will cease to exist. By killing the murderer Yorjavic (who is in Besźel, while Borlú shoots from Ul Qoma) and drawing the attention of Breach to his crime, Tyador is unable to escape his fate and will become a member of the in-between. Although the ending of the novel and the series is the same (Borlú becomes a policeman in Breach), the adaptation ends on a more spiritual note: Borlú is invited by Orciny to join his wife in afterlife, but he does not accept the invitation – he still lives on with the idea that when the end of his life comes, he will become a citizen of Orciny, and he and his wife will be reunited.

6 Conclusion

Miéville's novel, *The City and the City* and its adaptation introduce liminality on two separate levels, firstly, by depicting the borders of the two cities as places of the in-between. As the citizens are afraid of Breach, this threshold becomes spiritual in nature: no one dares to go there in case they might commit a crime. Even though people in Besźel are physically able to see Ul Qoma and vice versa, they *decide* not to – and the only reason for that is fear of an organization that is above them. Copula Hall, the border between the two states also works as a liminal, sacred space: it is the only place where people can cross between Besźel and Ul Qoma legally after going through training that teaches them how to *unsee* the city where they came from and how to *see* the one they are about to enter – which serves as a modern initiation ritual.

By adapting Miéville's text on screen, the fantastic nature of the relationship of the two cities disappears; however, the series replaces this absence with the layer of the transcendental. Although the way Besźel and Ul Qoma work in relation to each other is explained, by choosing to understand Orciny as afterlife, instead of solving the *magical* in the story (like in the case of the text), the supernatural becomes the

ultimate fate of the main character – at the end of his life, Borlú will be able to enter Orciny, which thus becomes a symbolic space. In the novel, however, the third city is a lie, and the seemingly fantastic nature of Besźel and Ul Qoma is dissolved by Borlú's awakening.

Liminality is also introduced in the main character's transgression: when he is shooting Yolanda's murderer and thus breaches, he goes through an initiation and will never be able to *unsee* Besźel from Ul Qoma and vice versa. By committing a serious crime, he will be a member of the betwixt and between, someone who does not belong to either of the cities: his main task will be to police the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma, and to keep the self-justifying circle of the system.

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Appendix

Figure 1 Besźel and Ul Qoma in the opening scenes (Episode 1, 00:00:42)

Figure 2 The map in the title sequence (Episode 1, 00:00:58)

Figure 3 The map in Commissar Gadlem's office (Episode 1, 00:11:24)

Figure 4 Borlú's fall (Episode 2, 00:57:56)

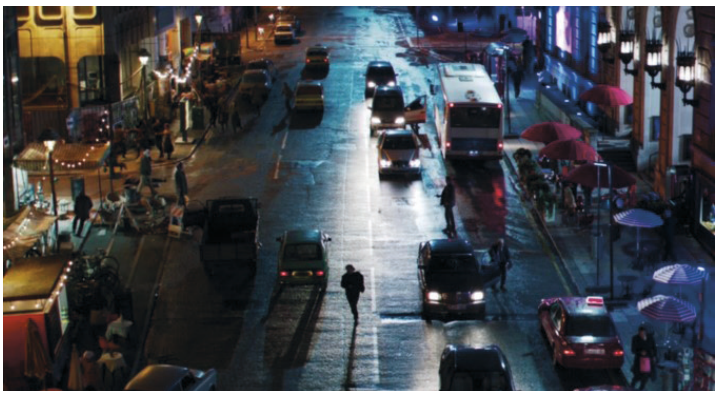

Figure 5 Beszél and Ul Qoma (Episode 3, 00:56:56)

Figure 6 Breach (Episode 4, 00:02:27)

Figure 7 Borlú in Breach (Episode 4, 00:58:18)