

***The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature***

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This book discusses various aspects of the fantasy genre, including its history, the different ways of reading the literature of the genre (thematic, political, psychoanalysis, etc.), and the various clusters of the genre (i.e. urban fantasy, historical fantasy, magical realism, etc.). It covers urban fantasy in chapter 17 with four main sections of the chapter. The first section describes what urban fantasy is and what originally meant. The genre apparently had evolved from just having heroic/pastoral fantasy set in an urban setting to basically referring to any fantasy work set in a city or another contemporary setting. The second section describes how the urban setting, the city, is transformed to fit the story and how the city might impact the story. The third section describes how characters in urban fantasy works might go into the 'metaphorical' underworld of the setting and then return with a prize at the end. This is seen with *Neverwhere* by Neal Gaiman, *The Anubis Gates* by Tim Powers, and *War for the Oaks* by Emma Bull. The fourth and final section goes into detail about how more contemporary works add some German Expressionism into urban fantasy works. Through this lens, the city can be portrayed as being either no better than the horrors of the natural world or being old if it is not portrayed as a waste land, either in its current incarnation or by being built upon the remains of older, previous cities. This book is interesting because it covers more than just urban fantasy, but more of an overall coverage of the fantasy genre, its history, and how it can be perceived by those reading it. As such, the book can provide valuable insight to those interested in the fantasy genre for various reasons, like prospective authors or academics wanting to understand the genre more.