

Spatial Readings and Linguistic Landscapes

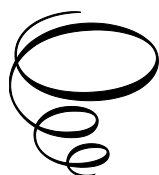
Spatial Readings and Linguistic Landscapes

Edited by

Alina Bako

Language Editor: Ana-Blanca Ciocoi-Pop

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CONTRIBUTORS

ALINA BAKO is an Assistant Professor of Romanian Literature at the Department of Romance Studies at the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Romania. She is the author of studies such as *Healing through Literature. Representations of Diseases and Disorders of the Socio-Political System in the Romanian Novel (1960-1980)* [Bucharest, Muzeul Literaturii Române Press, 2019, *Dynamics of the Poetic Imaginary. The Romanian Oneiric Group*, Cluj, Eikon, 2012, several anthologies, as well as numerous chapters in volumes and articles on the literature of the 20th century. She was a member of research project teams such as *Intellit (Romanian Literary Patrimony Preservation and Valorization by Using Intelligent Digital Solutions for Extracting and Systematization of Knowledge 2018- 2021)* and she completed her post-doctoral studies as part of the project *The Romanian Culture and European Cultural Models: Research, Synchronisation, Durability* (2014-2016) at the Romanian Academy.

ANA CARVALHO holds a degree in Design and Visual Communication from the ESAD – Matosinhos School of Art and Design (1994), a Master’s degree in Interactive Art and Design from University College Falmouth (2004) and a PhD in Information and Communication in Digital Platforms from FLUP (2013). She has lectured at University College Falmouth, the Fernando Pessoa University, the University of São Paulo and the ISMAI – the University Institute of Maia. She has devoted her scientific research – published in Portugal and abroad – to several fields: audio-visual, performance, composition and the relationship between the ephemeral and documentation. She is currently a member of both the CIAC – Centre for Research in Arts and Communication (University of Algarve) and the CITEI – Research Centre in Technologies and Intermedia Studies (ISMAI). She published books such as *Construction of Processes to Live Audiovisual Performance*. In Baker, Camille; Sicchio, Kate (Eds.) *Intersecting Art and Technology in Practice: Techne/Technique/Technology*. London: Routledge, 2016, *Possibilidades na documentação de performances audiovisuais ao vivo por meio de partituras*. In Moran, Patricia (Ed.) *Cinemas Transversais*. São Paulo: Iluminuras, 2016, Carvalho, Ana (2015) *Live Audiovisual Performance and Documentation*. Menotti, Gabriel; Crisp, Virginia Crisp (Eds.) Besides the

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ANA-BLANCA CIOCOI-POP has been a member of the Department of Anglo-American and German Studies at Sibiu's "Lucian Blaga" University since 2008, teaching modern and contemporary British and American literature, techniques of oral communication, media and communication, as well as British and American cultural studies. She holds a Ph.D. in philology, awarded for the thesis *Highlights of Constructive Scepticism: Franz Kafka, William Golding, Jeffrey Eugenides*. She has published extensively in the fields of literature(s) in English, feminism, as well as British and American canonical literature. Her research interests include contemporary literatures in English, feminist writing, and postcolonial literature.

IRINA DINCĂ graduated from the West University of Timișoara in Romania, where she now is a Teaching Assistant, teaching Romanian language intensive courses for foreign students. Her research activity focuses on methods, techniques and strategies of teaching, learning and assessing Romanian as a second language from an intercultural perspective, according to the newest European guidelines and standards. Her research is oriented towards the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competences, the integration of cross-cultural mediation in the teaching process, combining contrastive studies and error analysis methods in order to explore interlanguage development and the plurilingual repertoires of learners.

DIANA NECHIT is an Associate Professor at the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies of the Faculty of Letters and Arts, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. She holds a doctorate in French literature for a thesis on the drama of Bernard-Marie Koltès. Her areas of expertise include theatrical studies, the relationship between text and image, contemporary French drama, and French as a specialty language for the Performing Arts. She writes chronicles and studies on dramatic literature, theatre, and film in numerous academic publications in the country, but also in specialized magazines. She is a translator of contemporary French dramatic literature, already having several texts published in anthologies, but also translated texts for performances staged in theatres in Sibiu and in the country.

IOANA PETCU is a university lecturer and a Ph.D. with the Faculty of Theatrics of the "George Enescu" University of Arts in Iași, theatre critic and author of a volume on theatre and cinema theory: *Urmașii lui Thespis*

(*Thespi's Followers*) (2012), *Dialoguri imaginare cu filmul (Imaginary Dialogues with Movies)* (2015), *Istoria teatrului românesc - curs (A History of Romanian Theatre – Course-Book)* (2018), *Fragmentarium cu Shakespeare (A Shakespeare Fragmentarium)* (2019). She belongs to the prominent voices of Iași criticism (she is a member of the International Association of Theatre Critics), while also being active in the field of scientific research and local cultural projects. She authored various studies and articles in academic journals in Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Germany and the US.

ANDREI C. ȘERBAN is a University Lecturer at the Department of Drama and Theatre of the Faculty of Letters and Arts, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. He graduated PhD. studies with a thesis on poetry. He has published literary chronicles in specialized magazines, theatre, and film chronicles in the official magazine of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival and CA&D, being also a reviewer and member of the jury in at The Monthly Film Festival in Glasgow. He moderated, on the occasion of special screenings, meetings with directors and actors at the Este Film Festival (2015-2019) and TIFF Sibiu (2016-2018), being also responsible for the Neorealism and New Realism section, within the Astra Film Festival 2015. He authored the Romanian translation of several French contemporary plays.

CIPRIAN SUCIU Associate Professor Ciprian-Lucrețiu N. Suciu (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece – Romanian Language and Literature with an emphasis in Education and Culture) was born in Sibiu, Romania (1972). He is a graduate of the Pedagogical High School in Sibiu, “school masters” department, class of 1991, and bachelor of the Theology Faculty of Oradea, Pastoral Theology Department, class of 1996. He attended post-university courses as part of the master’s programme of the Theological Faculty of Athens University. In 2003 he was awarded the title of “Doctor of Philology” by the University of Craiova, Romania. He has been a professor of Romanian Language and Literature at the Balkan Studies Department of the University of Western Macedonia (Florina, Greece, 2001-2011), at the Faculty of Language, Philology and Culture of the Black Sea countries of the Democritus University of Thrace (Komotini, Greece, 2005-2011) and at the Faculty of Balkan, Slavic and Eastern Studies of the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015).

IULIA-MARIA TICĂRĂU is a Ph.D. candidate at the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu (ULBS). The title of her doctoral project is “The Microsystem of Jewish Literature in Romania in the First Half of the 20th

Century”. She is teaching Romanian as a foreign language at the Faculty of Letters and Arts. The titles of some of her publications are: “A Dual Identity”, published in the Transylvania Journal and “To Be Jewish, to Be Intellectual, to Be Romanian and Danubian. Zionism and Assimilation”, published in the “Lucian Blaga” Yearbook.

CÉLIA VIEIRA holds a degree in Modern Languages and Literatures from the University of Porto (1993), a master’s degree in Cultural History from the same University (1996) and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature also from the University of Porto (2004). She is a professor at the University Institute of Maia (Porto, Portugal) and a researcher at the CIAC (Centre for Research in Arts and Communication). She is specialized in the field of Comparative Literature, with the thesis *Theory of the Iberian Naturalist Novel and Its French Influence* (Faculty of Letters of Porto), and has authored several publications in the fields of comparative literature (Portuguese, French and Spanish), digital humanities and intermedial studies, including *Inter Media. Littérature, Cinéma, Intermédialité* (org) (Éditions L’Harmattan 2011) or *Dictionnaire des Naturalismes* (Champion, 2017).

INTRODUCTION

The present volume sets out to discuss a series of landmarks necessary for understanding the terms *spatial reading* and *linguistic landscape*, by means of a fruitful dialogue not only between different literatures, cultures, but also between disciplines, even more so as novel methods advance unique hypostases applied to an obvious interaction between literature and linguistics as well as other scientific disciplines, meant to add value to humanist research. The three important parts: *Spatial Readings*, *Linguistic landscapes*, *Performance Space* offer various hypostases, united, however, by spatially determined research, under multiple forms. From the unique letters of Zola, to the panorama of spatiality in the Romanian inter-war novel, spatial discourse, the oriental spaces of Salman Rushdie, Greek translations in the Romanian literary space, and the third space identified in the process of teaching Romanian to foreigners, to spatial coordinates, linguistic landscapes in the study of Romanian immigrants in Spain, or subjects from the world of cinema and theatre, the topics tackled by the authors of the studies included in this volume evince a heterogeneous character which is beneficial for understanding the manner in which the concept of *space* interacts with diverse literary and linguistic components. **Celia Vieira** analyses a corpus of letters, available on the Eman platform, sent from the Iberian-American area to Zola at the end of the 19th century. This corpus does not constitute a uniform object of analysis, given the diversity of letter-writers who take the liberty of writing to Zola during this period when the novelist and his work are already well known and had already been the target of numerous polemics on art and literature in the decade preceding the writing of these texts. From a theoretical point of view, this study is placed in the perspective of studies concerning the history and culture of celebrity, as well as studies concerning comparative literature and geocriticism. In the light of these achievements, the study is related to this corpus as an expression of an audience that reflects the image of Zola as a public figure and, at the same time, achieves a literary and cultural self-reflection. The methodologies used are issued from qualitative analysis applied to the content of the letters. **Alina Bako** presents in her study an inventory of the principal approaches in Romanian criticism regarding literary spaces, followed by a demonstration based on geocriticism, with examples from Romanian inter-war novels. By establishing a cartography

of Romanian spaces, with incursions into the geography of the city and the village, shaped by the experience of war (Camil Petrescu, Liviu Rebreanu), the author advances an interpretation of the most important spaces employed as a backdrop for the novels being analysed. Focusing on opposite such as urban/rural, traditional/modern, the study annuls certain prejudices related to Romanian canonical writers, such as Camil Petrescu, in the prose of whom the rural takes up a much more important place than previously thought. The second part of the chapter advances an approach to the literature of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and the manner in which space is shaped by femininity, with geofeminism and the periscope method becoming working instruments for a profound analysis of novels published in the same era as the ones of Virginia Woolf. The importance of the study lies in the development of intuitive approaches regarding a contemporary reading of Romanian inter-war novels, which results in a novel understanding of these prose works. **Ana-Blanca Ciocoi-Pop's** paper offers a close-up reading of Salman Rushdie's volume *East, West* through the lenses of geocriticism and literary geography, aiming to prove that Rushdie simultaneously creates and destroys imaginary spaces, drawing a profoundly fluid world, where imagery is the only reality attainable by the human mind. Published in 1994, Salman Rushdie's volume of stories perfectly thematizes, some twenty-two years before its publication, Sheila Hones' seminal work *Literary Geographies*. Rushdie's stories, as thematically diverse and challenging as their author, take the reader on a sometimes laid back, most often intellectually challenging, journey to the world of cultural spacelessness. Rushdie's characters, like the one who created them, obstinately refuse taking sides, or, in their own words, letting themselves be pulled mercilessly into the direction the "ropes" have chosen for them: "I too have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose." Throughout the entire story collection, the one idea that crystallizes itself most often is the one of the impossibility of cultural belonging in a spatial and emotional sense – instead the author allows himself, and his characters, to drift, insisting on our cultural complexity, refusing to choose between East and West. **Iulia-Maria Ticărau** analyses how Jews perceive time and space by revealing the overriding reason, namely: the interpretation of sacred texts in which space is not fixed, and time is a loose element anchored in an uninterrupted present. This perception of time and space was changed by the way Jews themselves related to the Jewish problem, more precisely by choosing one of the paths: Zionism or assimilation. Furthermore, the paper highlights the importance of space in the analysis of a literary text, starting from new theories regarding the geography of space. The concepts

suggested by critics are applied in the case study of the novel *For Two Thousand Years* by Mihail Sebastian. The paper analyses by comparison two spaces projected at fictional level as perceived by the protagonist of Jewish origin: the city of Brăila (the hometown of the protagonist of the novel) and Bucharest (the city where the protagonist goes to university). Both Bucharest and Brăila are represented from the perspective of a marginalized person, and the reason of this marginalization is ethnicity itself. **Irina Dincă**'s paper aims to present some suggestions about the way in which *Third Places* of intercultural dialogue can be constructed inside multilingual and multicultural classrooms of Romanian as a second language. Firstly, the author synthetizes the theoretical premises of the concept of the *Third Place*, starting from the theory of the *semiosphere* developed by Yuri Lotman and the *dialogic principle* proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as the configuration of the *Third Space* in the *trialectics of spatiality* of Edward W. Soja or in the postcolonial cultural studies of Homi K. Bhabha. Furthermore, she discusses the pedagogical applications of *Thirdness*, with its main forms synthetized by Claire Kramsch – *Third Space*, *Third Culture* and *Third Place*. In the last sequence of the paper, the author offers some directions regarding the way in which these principles can be applied in order to develop the plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires of students from multilingual and multicultural classrooms of Romanian as a second language and to guide them in facilitating a *pluricultural space*. **Ioana Jieanu**'s paper aims to outline how Romanian migration integrated or adapted to the *linguistic landscape* in Spain and analyses a series of public inscriptions in the Romanian language existing in Spain. Similar public inscriptions have caught the attention of researchers who have dealt with the linguistic landscape of certain countries, cities or regions such as Laundry, Bouris (1997), Cenoz and Gorter (2008), Muñoz Carrobbles (2010, 2013), Castillo Lluch and Sáez Rivera (2011), Malinowski (2015), Pons Rodrigue (2012), Gómez-Pavón Durán and Quilis Merín (2021). They studied street signs, billboards, names of places and company names, official signs, graffiti, posters, shop windows, flags, T-shirts. In this article, the author focuses on the impact of the names of Romanian companies in Spain (shops, restaurants, associations) on the background of the multilingual linguistic landscape of Spain. The corpus under analysis consists of the names of Romanian shops and restaurants, taken from various sites and from advertisements in Romanian newspapers published in Spain. **Ciprian Suciu**'s study attempts to document the role played by translated literature in the process of Greek-Romanian intercultural exchanges and comparative cultural studies. The author proves that although there are many translations, Romanian literary texts that were

translated into Greek and Greek texts that were translated into Romanian, have a rich tradition and were neither hindered by the differences in the languages nor by the historical events of the last century in the Balkans and Europe. The research located and documented translated volumes which cover different aspects of Romanian literature. The intention was to provide answers to the question whether literature can really be a link among Balkan people for intercultural exchanges, constructive dialogue and communication, a motivation for cooperation and harmonious coexistence. The creation of this detailed bibliography will prove to be useful in assignment preparation and/or its application by researchers interested in this topic, who will thus have the possibility to get acquainted and freely use the titles offered, and therefore develop a personal relationship with the Romanian people and an enhanced knowledge of their culture. **Ana Carvalho** focuses on the story of *Solaris*, a philosophical exercise presented as a fictional text, and brings to our attention concerns about the radically different Other and human limitations in accepting difference as a part of diversity. *Solaris* (1961), by Stanislaw Lem, tells the story of a planet inhabited by a single alien, a scient ocean. Generations of scientists, called Solarists, have dedicated their lives to the study of this planet describing their research in endless compendiums without conclusive results. In Tarkovsky's adaptation of *Solaris* (1972), the ocean is both a landscape and a character. The otherness of the ocean in the film is constructed visually as a landscape-character by exploring cinematic visual language. By landscape we mean a framed environment seen from a specific point of view. In narrative cinema, landscape provides information fundamental to the understanding of the narrative, using means other than acting and speech. The Solaris Ocean, a landscape-as-entity, is never a background, neither juxtaposed nor superimposed with human characters. The narrative is constructed through the visual forms that express the ocean's changing moods: from the calm foggy ambient and the movement of a white texture (the foam) over a grey-blue colour. These are not an external expression of the actor's moods, but expressions of the ocean as a character. The freedom from anthropomorphically proportional character construction emphasizes landscapes as non-human agents of action, participating actively in the narrative. The actuality of landscapes that act as Others echoes ecological and social concerns. **Diana Nechit and Andrei C. Șerban** chose Romeo Castellucci, a creator inscribed in the aesthetics promoted by post-dramatic theatre, who is part of the category of those "stage writers" for whom the concept of "text theatre" is replaced by a visual or "image" theatre. Placing in the centre of their work the concept of "iconoclasm", meaning a theatre that refuses representation, the members of Societas Raffaello Sanzio create through their performances extreme visual

and sensory experiences that (following the tradition imposed by Antonin Artaud) reject the text as a primary source of expression. In the light of such aspects, a theatrical adaptation of a literary work implies a drastic change of paradigm, a new formula of visual dramaturgy. Part of a trilogy dedicated to the *Divine Comedy*, the show *Inferno* presented in 2008 at the Avignon Festival immerses us in a unique artistic vision that opens new ways to understand not only the connections between theatre and literature, but also the new mutations of contemporary theatrical space. **Ioana Petcu** asks herself: Does Great Will look smaller today, but brighter? Has he become a dramaturgical pretext today, a launching pad for current topics or for the obsessive thematic universe of authors? What are the procedures by which the myth is detached from the history book of the theatre and is brought into the public space today? She gathered three Romanian playwrights who revisited, each in style and in a certain period, the space-figure of the great and friendly Will. Three plays, three styles, three testimonies about the artist and the space of performance art, from the '80s until today, three decentralizing but also tangent visions. *Vărul Shakespeare (Cousin Shakespeare)* is one of Marin Sorescu's lesser-known and hardly-edited texts. Beyond the inter- and metatextual juggling, beyond the playful discourse and the theatrical effects, the Romanian writer emphasizes the encounter between the language of Elizabethan poetry and the local comic. Richard III visits director Vsevolod Meyerhold in *Richard al III-lea se interzice (Richard III Is Forbidden)* by Matei Vişniec. Like a self-portrait, perhaps, of the author slipped into Meyerhold's character, the play returns - through paradoxes, theatricality, intersections between times, cultures and authorial voices - to a message as clear as possible about the artist's freedom, a message that (proof being the current global situation) the aforementioned aspects are of a continuous topicality. Shakespeare wonders what she eats, but so does, of course, actress Olivia Negrean, the author of the text *FEAST (A Play in One Cooking)*. And she answers in her own manner of dramatic construction and by means of the project developed within the Romanian Cultural Institute (London), as part of which Philip Parr directs the show produced by the Parrabbola Theater Company (2019). Being one of the few authors in Romania who addresses the sphere of rewriting Shakespearean works, Negrean offers to the reader or viewer an intelligent exercise in which there is an obvious dose of feminism which is not at all accusing. The perpetual problematic, maybe taken up too often in the public space, regarding the misogyny of the Bard of Avon, is in this case recalibrated into a game of different voices, belonging to six female characters, who do not accuse him, but share Shakespeare (steaming), as in hot food, to the public. Shakespeare is cooked and eaten, therefore, with the audience.

SPATIAL READINGS

“YOU SO GLORIOUS, ME SO OBSCURE”: LETTERS TO EMILE ZOLA

CELIA VIEIRA

In 1897, with his literary career already well established, Zola began a campaign in the French press in defence of the captain of the French army, the Jew Alfred Dreyfus, who had been unjustly convicted in 1894 for espionage and treason, and was imprisoned on Devil's Island in French Guiana. After Zola's involvement, Affaire Dreyfus took on international proportions and was accompanied by the world's press. On 13 January 1898, Zola published an open letter (*J'Accuse*) in the newspaper *L'Aurore* in which he accused high-ranking military and government figures of convicting Dreyfus. This accusation resulted in a libel suit against Zola, who was condemned and forced into exile. *J'Accuse* was a major step in the process of changing the opinion of the French and world population, who until then believed in Dreyfus' guilt. Other intellectuals had already initiated efforts to review the process, but without success. It was only when Emile Zola began his campaign in the press that the case took on a new direction, achieving the revision and, later, the absolution of Dreyfus. Aware of the symbolic capital that his name represented, Zola acted like a free man, using his celebrity to defend an innocent in the name of universal values. In any case, the Dreyfus episode constituted a break in French political life, placing each individual under the obligation to position himself in relation to a certain set of principles, accentuating political divisions and clarifying the confrontation of two world views and two visions of society.

The subject of this article is a corpus of international letters, sent by citizens, most of them unknown, to Zola during the Affaire Dreyfus, a process that had an extraordinary worldwide impact. From the publication of the famous article *J'accuse*, by Émile Zola, in *L'Aurore* on 13 January 1898, a courageous act to denounce the injustice committed against Captain Dreyfus, to the subsequent condemnation and exile of the naturalist writer, all the vicissitudes of the process were accompanied by the international press, almost in real time, unleashing a vivid emotion at the possibility that France, the beacon of civilisation and of the defence of human rights, may

finally be a nation mined by corruption, injustice and moral decadence. The national process becomes a worldwide process, in which France is judged, destroying herself in an ignoble internal struggle that opposes the “dreyfusards” to the “anti-dreyfusards”, making the hypothesis of an anti-Semitic and anti-republican France more and more obvious. The *corpus* therefore establishes a comparative and geocritical reflection, by reflecting the values of an entire foreign community which observes France and needs to speak in order to take part in this judgement, and thereby defines herself in comparison with the nation which until then had provided the reference for the construction of her own cultural identity.

The concept of otherness is based on spatiality, and the question is what elements underlie the boundaries of an area. In the case we are analysing, there is, on the one hand, a large geolinguistic area, Portuguese and Spanish, which includes the Iberian space and South American countries, and, on the other hand, France. The first space is the target of cultural reception, while the second has functioned, throughout the 19th century, as a reference for progress and all scientific, artistic and literary innovation. To speak of the Iberian-American space and of France means, in this century, to evoke a dialogue established above all in a single sense, even if there have been several communicating vessels, resulting from the mobility of writers and intellectuals and from the global circulation of newspapers and magazines.

In this context, at the end of the 19th century France corresponded to what Moretti defined as a central area, in a system which, like the economic system, is made up of a centre, a periphery and a semi-periphery which are developed in a relationship of progressive inequality¹. The dynamics of literary relations and evolution would be determined by the way cultures belonging to the periphery and semi-periphery of the literary system (in this case, the Iberian Peninsula and the entire region resulting from its colonial expansion in Central and South America) strike a balance between pressure from central areas (in this case, France) and their own local heritage.² Certainly, the socio-economic perspective on the transnational evolution of literary forms advocated by Moretti and Casanova,³ which focused on the asymmetry between dominant centres of influence and peripheries that assume a weak and passive role, has been criticised for neglecting “the polycentrism, plurilingualism, and multidirectionality of literary flows.”⁴ This conception of the literary system based on the history of capitalism underestimated the importance of intercultural processes and the role of peripheral areas in the overall literary semiosis. One of the points highlighted by these letters is that laws of literary evolution are much more complex. Therefore, it must be recognised that literature is a polysystem⁵

whose contours are variable because they integrate a multiplicity of inter- and intraliterary relationships,⁶ but also extraliterary.

Thus, when *Affaire Dreyfus* occurs, there is a drastic reversal of this flow, from the centre to the periphery: the example that comes from France is a bad model, a complete reversal of the image that had been built up until then, namely the image of a country that embodied the greatest advance in civilisation and symbolised the values of a modern state. Communication is reversed and it is this entire community that takes the initiative to come into contact with the space that had taken on the role of transmitter, to demand a clarification, a response, to judge it at a time when it seems to contradict the cultural model that it had built and spread worldwide. This *corpus* questions a process of reception and asymmetric interference in which the cultural area of the letter writers had assumed a role of target culture under the influence of a source culture that had completely ignored her.⁷

Corpus of analysis and methodology

This article is part of an international research project that aims to study a corpus of about 2400 letters sent from all parts of the globe to Zola between around 1880 and the end of the writer's life. All this epistolary material has already been digitised and coded on the E-man platform⁸, now lending itself to multiple approaches considering the sociological, historical, linguistic and cultural richness to which these letters are a testimony.

For the present study, we have selected as a corpus only the letters sent from what can be referred to as the Hispanic area, considering the linguistic and cultural links that give unity to this area. The selected corpus consists of 178 letters, sent from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The letters are mostly written in French, which attests to the linguistic hegemony of France in this period, but there is also a considerable part of the letters written in Spanish and Portuguese, the mother tongue of the letter writers.

As for the identity of the letter writers, most of them are now unknown citizens, even if some of them have held important positions in the communities in which they were inserted, such as journalists, librarians, editors, translators, politicians or writers. From an intellectual point of view, the *corpus* reflects the affirmation of a republican, progressive and anti-Catholic mentality, as forces of political, social and scientific modernity. This *corpus* is also representative of the role that women writers are beginning to assume in society and of their progressive autonomy, since there are several letters written by women, many of them defining

themselves as writers and collaborators with journals. It is as a world-renowned writer that Zola also becomes the recipient of young writers who see in him the image of a modern and revolutionary writer and therefore with whom they could share their doubts and ambitions regarding the role they should play in a changing world. This is why a significant number of young people write to him asking for moral guidance in this context. As far as the training of letter writers is concerned, it is meaningful that some of them have a technical background, especially if we recognise that the affirmation of scientific and positivist thought in these countries was transmitted through the generation which attended the polytechnic academies.

Regarding the methodology used, we carried out a qualitative analysis after a close reading of all the documents under consideration, seeking to identify some markers as guidelines. The objective was, using basic elements of textual linguistics,⁹ to identify, in the process of epistolary enunciation, phenomena of *deixis* that refer to the configuration of a “self”, a “we”, one “here”, and to the way this subject of enunciation conceives an image of the recipient of enunciation, an “you”, Zola, in relation to a universe of common reference, “it”, the French country.

Questions of enunciation

How is the “self” that is expressed in these letters defined? Let us take as an example one of the letters of a writer, Angelina Vidal, who was one of the most combative women in Portuguese culture in the second half of the 19th century, a journalist, teacher, playwright, poet, who fought for the defence of women's rights and for the defence of workers' rights, having personally suffered the consequences of her political activity. She perceives in her and in Zola, a similar destiny and a deep knowledge of the paradoxes of the human soul. Beginning this long letter of 26 February 1898,¹⁰ with a sincere “Je pense à vous” (“I think of you”), the writer shows a humble complicity by comparing her life to Zola's life: “vous si illustre, moi si obscure, nous avons donné le plus saint, le plus tendre dévouement.... Maintes fois blessé ou renié par ces déplorables avilis, avec lesquels nous voudrions partager notre âme loyale. N'est-ce pas, Maître, qu'il y a toujours le mauvais larron sur le calvaire de chaque Messias?” [“You so illustrious, me so obscure, we have given the holiest, most tender devotion.... Many times wounded or denied by these deplorable debasements, with whom we would like to share our loyal soul. Isn't it, Master, that there is always the wrong thief on the Calvary of every Messiah?”]. Above all, the author sees in Zola's condemnation the evidence of a civilisational breakdown: “Nous avons beau éclairé l'ignorance, détruit les haines, descendu les mythes,

exhaussé le niveau intellectuel des multitudes... Il y aura toujours dans un peuple civilisé quelque chose de l'inconscience de la brute, et de la sauvagerie des ancêtres” [However much we have enlightened ignorance, destroyed hatred, brought down myths, raised the intellectual level of the multitudes... There will always be in civilised people something of the unconsciousness of the brute, and the savagery of the ancestors]. The writer expresses her profound adoration of the “Apôtre de la Justice souveraine, avocat de l’humanité souffrante” (“Apostle of Sovereign Justice, Advocate of Suffering Humanity”) and compares the present situation to that of the times of “social pathology” when clerical and antisemitic power prevailed, which preceded the proclamation of Human Rights and the revolution of 1789. Distressed to see Zola condemned, this woman, who has been considered the “Propagandist of Social Emancipation”, states: “Pour vous, Maître, la prison se change en Capitole” (“For you, Master, the prison turns into a Capitol”), and she believes that the aspirations of free thinkers will one day be redeemed, even if the social state is now reaching its final days. Indeed, the letter writers define themselves as part of a fraternity that faces the same obstacles as Zola in a world that seems hostile to truth and justice: they are unjust beings, victims of the ignorance of society, and therefore the “you” to whom they address is not just Zola the writer and warrior of naturalism.

The thousands of articles on Zola and Naturalism that circulated in the world press, highlighting the close relationship between literature and journalism, made him, especially from the 1880s onwards, a literary figure known worldwide. This image was promoted among his contemporaries, certainly through the dissemination of his works and articles, but also through the development of a biographical criticism that, in the early 1880s, was mainly intensified by comments on his novels, published in French magazines of large circulation, such as the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; or the information contained in works such as the *Dictionnaire Universel des Contemporains* de Vapereau;¹¹ Maupassant;¹² *Célébrités Contemporaines*, or two works from 1882 that functioned as a privileged source in the configuration of Zola's international image as a famous person: the volume of one of the writers of the *Soirées de Médan*, Paul Alexis, *Emile Zola. Notes d'un ami*, and Edmundo de Amicis's travel impressions, *Portraits littéraires*, who, by disclosing the writing processes and the daily life of the naturalist master, also reveals the backstage of the production of the naturalist novel. Thus, in the early 1880s, Zola's name already corresponded to that of a renowned author and naturalism was no longer a literary novelty, but a movement that was institutionalized both in literary criticism and in the creation of naturalistic works, after a whole decade of battles and

controversies in the world press. But, since the publication of *J'Accuse*, his image had gone beyond the artistic field to become universally a moral and political symbol in which the spirit of humanism and the essence of Human Rights converged.

Zola, according to one of the letter writers, “n’est pas le défenseur de la France – il n’est pas le défenseur de l’Europe – il n’est pas le défenseur du monde – il est plus que ça – il est le défenseur d’un évangile - Evangile qui, bien qu’il soit athée – embrasse celui du Christ” [is not the defender of France - he is not the defender of Europe - he is not the defender of the world - he is more than that - he is the defender of a Gospel - a Gospel which, although atheist - embraces that of Christ]. He is the “étendard de la liberté et de la justice” [a flag of freedom and justice],¹³ and that is why “tout ce qui est inhumain trouve en vous un défenseur” [all that is inhuman finds a defender in you].¹⁴ A collective subscriber, the Associação Luso-Americana Financial Beneficente,¹⁵ praises in Zola “o Salvador, o Redemptor, o restaurador dos valores das novas gerações, devotado apóstolo do Cristianismo” [the Saviour, the Redeemer, the restorer of the values of the new generations, devoted apostle of Christianity]. In this letter of 1898, the subscribers see in Zola's attitude a sociological thesis: it embodies the defence of Human Rights and Progress, against the medieval and clerical ghost; it corresponds to the foundation of a social state that must be based on the force of law and not on the law of force. Those who blame him have not understood the significance of *Germinal*, *Rome* or *Lourdes* either. As he became the “citoyen du monde, compatriote de tous les déshérités, qui souffrent faim et soif de Justice” [citizen of the world, compatriot of all the underprivileged, who suffer hunger and thirst for Justice], the future will fulfil a duty of gratitude to the “prisonnier sublime” [sublime prisoner] who will cross the “Capitole de l’Histoire” [Capitol of History]. He is acclaimed by those who describe themselves as “Les exploités du Portugal, révoltés dans ce milieu qui écrase les faibles” [the exploited of Portugal, revolted in this environment that crushes the weak], the “victimes du bourreau Capital” [victims of the executioner Capital].¹⁶ For them, the essential thing would be to be part of the universal voice that rises up in support of the “admirable apôtre” [admirable apostle]: “Qu’on ne dise que vous êtes seul à parler au nom de la Justice. De tous les coins du monde mille voix vous répondent” [Do not let it be said that you are the only one to speak in the name of Justice. From every corner of the world a thousand voices are answering you].

The “you” is systematically designated as the “Maître”, as a title corresponding to the admiration due to someone who has become a model as a writer and as a citizen, which is also corroborated using qualifying adjectives such as “great”, “glorious”, “noble”. That is why content analysis

indicates that Zola's name often relates to words belonging to positive instances of a domain of meaning that has to do with human rights and with a critical reflection on contemporaneity.

In correlation with the self and the “we” that enunciates, is the use of deictics that refer to one “here” and “now”, conceived by comparison with that other space in which Zola is located: France, placed in a process of revision of its present and past identity. The “here” to which the letter writers situated in Iberian-American space refer is “um abençoado torrão de solo americano” [a blessed clod of American soil], a place “onde ainda não se conhece o anti-semitismo” [where anti-Semitism is not yet known].¹⁷ The “here”, “these parts”, is a space implicitly opposed to France.¹⁸ Another letter writer talks about the fact that the antisemitic hate is unknown in his nation¹⁹ and another subscriber states that he lives in a place “où tous sont républicains, depuis le Président jusqu’aux paysans” [where everyone is a republican, from the President to the peasants].²⁰ The “here” is “a petit coin de l'univers” [a small corner of the universe], humble but still preserved from the corruption that damages France. This is why, in many letters, the subscribers invite Zola to receive him if he wants to leave France, offering their own home to welcome him and their country as a destination in exile.

The universe of reference is recurrently France and the questioning of the place that this nation occupies geoculturally. The letter writers wonder whether France is still “le cerveau du monde” [the brain of the world], unable to understand how such a process was possible in a liberal and cultivated country. This is the France which, for many, “dédit les vertus de sa tradition” [forsakes the virtues of her tradition].²¹ They regret Zola's condemnation, which is unacceptable in a Republican France that advocates the values of justice, equality, and freedom.

Looking for a lost world

These letters draw attention to the global tensions inherent in the process of reception-creation and highlight the literary legitimization strategies put in place by local cultures to circumvent the influences they receive from abroad. In this respect, we can refer to Mircea Martin's theory of cultural complexes, underlined by Andrei Terian, according to which inter-literary relations and influences act as complexes: “many of “cultural complexes” of various literatures operate similarly to the way individual complexes operate”; “a “complex”, whether it is individual or cultural, emerges from the comparison (constantly detrimental to the subject) with an Other.”²² According to Terian, this viewpoint would make it possible to highlight self-legitimation strategies developed by national literary systems in their

relation to world literature. Some of these strategies, which aim to affirm the value of a literary system in its relationship with the Other, are formulated as a comparison that favours national writers over foreign writers; or as a praise of the excellence of national literature, while underlining its innovative and pioneering role.

In fact, several of these letter writers value their countries as good examples of the implementation of the values which had been promoted by France and praise the promising character of their young republics of letters. One letter writer from Argentina informs that Zola's name is well known in Buenos Aires and that his aim is to draw attention to Argentina's literature, which promises to become one of the most original.²³ Thus, the collective self-expressed in these letters tends to value its example as the heir to the lesson of modernity and justice that France had spread throughout the world from 1789 to the present day.

But these letters also bear witness to the sunset of an ideal and reflect the imminence of a turning point in History. The moment of the Dreyfus Affair can then be designated as "the end of the disillusionment of reason."²⁴ From that moment on,

il est devenu impossible de se référer à la raison, au peuple, à un ensemble de valeurs établies, reconnues ou fondées, au Bien, au Juste ou au Vrai. Historiquement on est effectivement non pas "par delà le Bien et le Mal" comme le dit Nietzsche mais simplement en dehors du Bien et du Mal. Nous ne sommes pas dans un monde postmoderne mais dans ce que Baudelaire nomme "la modernité" : la société moderne a révélé son vrai visage. La mutation est irréversible et crée des conditions nouvelles, inédites et qu'on sait, rétrospectivement, infiniment dangereuses. L'affaire Dreyfus aura donc finalement permis la pleine reconnaissance des intellectuels comme un groupe social à part entière, disposant d'un pouvoir. Mais elle aura en même temps montré que ce groupe est divisé en deux camps irréductibles : les dreyfusards pour la justice et la vérité, les antidreyfusards pour la raison d'Etat et l'unité de la patrie qui transcende les destins individus.²⁵

In the letter addressed to President Loubet after the amnesty, while closing the case for good, Zola states that his mission is over: "I have fulfilled my role as honestly as I could. (...) I have no merit. The cause was so beautiful, so human. I walked for sure, which diminishes my courage." These are neither victorious nor falsely modest words, but rather the words of a man who recognises that a new stage of humanity has just begun, in which those who fight for just and universal ideas will find it difficult to make themselves heard.

In this way, the words of this anonymous letter writers in the Iberian-American space that supports Zola and calls on France not to disdain the

values of its democratic and revolutionary identity already sounds like a nostalgia for a lost time and space. Soon, the consolidation of industrial capitalism, the outbreak of the First World War and the rise of the United States of America as a new area of symbolic and cultural hegemony will confirm the end of the romantic role of the intellectual and the writer in the leadership of peoples.

Conclusion

In this article we analyse a corpus of 178 letters sent from Portugal and Spain and from the countries of Latin America to Zola between around 1880 and the end of the writer's life, most of them written as part of the reaction to Affaire Dreyfus. The close reading of this materials made it possible to identify the configuration of a self in solidarity with the values recommended by Zola, as well as a profile of this writer as an embodiment of the defence of human rights and of the basic principles of the French Republic. At the same time, these texts express the still utopian belief about the historical becoming of a France that no longer represents the victory of reason and justice. What is at stake, rather than the opposition between two spaces in asymmetrical cultural interference, is the opposition between two times, since these voices echo the birth of a new modernity and a new economic-political era.

References

¹ “International capitalism is a system that is simultaneously *one*, and *unequal*: with a core, and a periphery (and a semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality”. Franco Moretti in “Conjectures on World Literature”. *New Left Review* 1, January-February 2000, p.55.

² *Ibidem*, p.58.

³ Cf. Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres*, Paris, Seuil, coll. “Points”, 2008.

⁴ Marko Juvan. “Worlding Literatures between Dialogue and Hegemony”. In *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.5, 2013, p. 5, <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss5/10/>, acceded 09.05.2016.

⁵ Itamar Even-Zohar, “Laws of Cultural Interference”. In: *Papers in Culture Research*. Tel Aviv, Unit of Culture Research, Tel Aviv University, 2010, pp. 63–67.

⁶ Durišin, Dionýz, *Théorie du processus interlittéraire I*. Bratislava: Institut de Littérature Mondiale/ Académie Slovaque des Sciences, 1995, p. 12–13.

⁷ “A target literature is, more often than not, interfered with by a source literature which completely ignores it”. Even-Zohar, apud Franco Moretti, p.56.

⁸ See <http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/>

⁹ Émile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1966.

¹⁰ Lettre d'Angelina Vidal à Émile Zola, du 26 février 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6439>

¹¹ G. Vapereau, *Dictionnaire universel des contemporains...*, 5e édition, Paris, Hachette, 1880.

¹² Guy de Maupassant, *Célébrités contemporaines. Emile Zola*. Paris, A. Quantin, imprimeur-éditeur, 1883.

¹³ Lettre de Jayme da Costa Tavares, Julio César ***** de Araujo, Manuel ***** et ***** António Domingues à Émile Zola, du 5 septembre 1899,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6452>

¹⁴ Lettre de G. Verdier à Émile Zola du 31 juin 1901,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/411>

¹⁵ Lettre de J. A. Guimaraes à Émile Zola du 9 avril 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/1056>.

¹⁶ Lettre de La Union Communiste-Anarchiste de la Région du Sud à Émile Zola du 9 mars 1898, <http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6454>

¹⁷ Lettre de Antonio Augusto Marinho da Cunha à Émile Zola du 23 février 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/1054>

¹⁸ Lettre d'Alfredo Claudio da Silva à Émile Zola du 24 janvier 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/1038>.

¹⁹ Lettre de Tobias do Rêgo Monteiro à Émile Zola du 15 novembre 1901,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/1050>

²⁰ Lettre de Francisco Sanchez à Émile Zola du 28 février 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6313>

²¹ Lettre de Enrique *** et Justiniano Montoya à Émile Zola du 10 mai 1898,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6303>

²² Andrei Terian, "Constructing Transnational Identities: The Spatial Turn in Contemporary Literary Historiography" in *Primerjalnknjiževnost*, Ljubljana, 36.2, 2013, p. 4.

²³ Lettre de Juan A. Piaggio à Émile Zola du 14 juillet 1889,
<http://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/1065>

²⁴ Alain-Marc Rieu, "La fin en France du pacte "intellectuel/société"". In Jean-Max Gieu, *Intolérance et préjudice. L'affaire Dreyfus aujourd'hui*, Fischbacher, pp.135-152, 1999

²⁵[It became impossible to refer to reason, to people, to a set of established, recognised or founded values, to Good, Just or True. Historically, we are indeed not "beyond Good and Evil" as Nietzsche says, but simply outside Good and Evil. We are not in a postmodern world but in what Baudelaire calls "modernity": modern society has revealed its true face. The mutation is irreversible and creates new, unprecedented and, in retrospect, infinitely dangerous conditions. The Dreyfus affair has thus finally led to the full recognition of intellectuals as a fully-fledged social group with power. But at the same time it showed that this group is divided into two irreducible camps: the Dreyfusards for justice and truth, the anti-Dreyfusards for the reason of the state and the unity of the homeland which transcends individual destinies.] Alain-Marc, Rieu, op. cit., p.7.

THE ROMANIAN INTER-WAR NOVEL – A GEOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

ALINA BAKO

The present chapter advances an incursion into the world of the Romanian inter-war novel, by means of a relevant journey starting out from the first literary geography studies in Romania up to the most recent quantitative approaches. The focal point of our endeavour is to prove that this concept of “space”, applied to the narrative text, is not limited to the representation of a reality (a self-evident idea, especially in the case of geographical localizations which are easy to recognize), but becomes an efficient instrument for the study of the novel’s evolution and the creation of a spatial narrative typology, which should describe a culture, in our case the Romanian one, within the Eastern-European context, following a set of well-delimited axes, to which the inter-war novels belong. The spatial reading we applied was born out of “spatial cognition” and regards, beyond the identification of narrative places, the mode of functioning of spatial perception, how space is organized and used, the mental spatial models advanced by the novel’s texts. Promoting a dynamic process, built from several focal points, milestones necessary for the definition of space, this type of relating to the literary text represents a strategy of defining the specificity of the Romanian novel’s evolution.

Context

The first attempts at analysing Romanian prose from the point of view of literary geography are extensively descriptive, such as the volume authored by Gh. Macarie in 1980, *Geografie literară. Orizonturi spirituale în proza românească / Literary Geography. Spiritual Horizons in Romanian Prose*, which establishes in its six chapters (“Physical Landscape – The Meadow, Hills-Valleys, Mountains, Forests, Streams, Flowers”, “The Passing of Time, Aspects and Visions in Landscape Reception”, “The Communion of Man and Nature”, “The Escape into Nature”, “The Feeling of Time”, “The Man-Demiurge”) the geographical landmarks as rightful

constituents of a vision standing under the sign of “a feeling of nature” (IX). What the critic employing naive instruments observes is that “the Romanian prose of the 19th century focuses on (...) elements of the natural landscape – mountains, meadows, hills, streams of water in their vast diversity, its climate hypostases, natural phenomena, moments of temporal succession, the passing of days and nights or of seasons, biogeographical formations (the forests, meadows, etc.).”¹ What is in fact analysed is only reflection by introspection (*Einfühlung*) of nature and its inclusion in literature. Apart from canonical writers such as Mihail Sadoveanu, women writers are also brought up: Bucura Dumbravă’s *Închinare / Prostration* (1920) in the chapter “Cartea munților” / “The Book of the Mountains”, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu’s *Dorința / Desire* (1913) (where the author identifies spaces such as the forest, associated with the feeling of integration, of identification with nature), *Marea / The Sea* 1913-1914, or the prose text *Amurg / Dusk* by Georgeta Mircea Cancicov. Still another approach can be found with Valeriu Cristea who, in 1973, in his work *Spațiul în literatură – formă și semnificații / Space in Literature – Form and Significance*² identifies two paradigms as part of which space in literature functions: open and closed, with the character thus establishing a relationship of social acceptance or rejection, of escape, of living in solitude, etc. Yet another approach is advanced by Cornel Ungureanu,³ who in the two volumes⁴ attempts a classification according to regions of literary sensitivity as present in literary works. The idea is taken up again in *Geografie literară. Studii / Literary Geography. Studies*, Timișoara, West University Press, 2002, and *Geografia literară a României, vol. I, Muntenia, vol. III, Ardealul, vol. IV, Banatul / Romania’s Literary Geography, vol. I, Wallachia, vol. III Transylvania, vol. IV The Banat*, Pitești, Paralela 45 Press, 2003–2006, where emphasis is placed on the association with the regions writers belong to. He brings up, in an attempt at establishing a hyper canon, to make use of Damrosch’s terminology, the classics: Eminescu, seen as a centre and a pathway towards it, Slavici, Caragiale, Mateiu Caragiale, Paul Georgescu. He then takes up V. Voiculescu, Eliade, Sebastian, Vintilă Horia, Valeriu Anania, Geo Bogza, Marin Preda, Ștefan Bănuțescu, Petre Pandrea, Marin Sorescu, Mircea Ciobanu, Gabriela Adameșteanu, Mircea Cărtărescu and their relationships with the geographic spaces they belong to. In fact, the endeavour is one of geographic placement and less so one of geocritical analysis of prose.

An interesting intuition process can be observed in Edgar Papu’s 1977 study entitled *Din clasicii noștri / From Our Classics*, in *Camil Petrescu și spiritul Bucureștiului / Camil Petrescu and the Spirit of Bucharest*⁵ where he associates Bucharest’s anarchic spirit with the “astylistic” type of novels

written by Camil Petrescu. “The novel does not feature a plan, a map of its own, leaving one under the impression that it was written haphazardly, just like Bucharest’s ancient mansions, dispersed carelessly, and according to their owners’ whims, without any exigence of urban geometry” because “a characteristic feature is immediately apparent for any foreigner, namely the ancient contrast between winding, insalubrious, unpaved streets on the one hand and clean, paved yards, geometrically embellished with flower beds and kiosks covered in ivy, on the other hand.”⁶ It is also him who associates the structure of *Patul lui Procrust / Procrustes’s Bed* with the urban blueprint of Bucharest and the general architectural impression: “One would come across houses which were advancing isolated until the middle of the street and choked the road like some sort of giant stone and brick fingers, leaving only a tiny space where vehicles gave off the impression of morsels of food which cannot be swallowed by a too tight throat. One would step with much difficulty across sidewalks eaten up by yards and noble facades, leaving only a thin strip meant to be walked on. Heaps of houses would appear out of the blue in large squares, normally meant to harbour impressive facades of architectonic monuments.”⁷ We will speak about Bucharest and urbanism in the present study, in connection with the novels of Camil Petrescu and Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu.

Going one step further in the geocritical analysis, Andreea Răsuceanu presents a Bucharest of Mircea Eliade, advancing a solid approach full of literary landmarks of the described spaces. From the point of view of quantitative studies, we should mention the initiative of inventorying spaces where the plot unfolds in Romanian novels in critical essays such as the one authored by Ștefan Baghiu et al.,⁸ but also approaches based on manuscript maps, created by writers in order to aid their documentation work for writing the novel, such as *Geocritical Readings of Romanian Literature: Maps and Cartography in Rebreanu's Canonical Fiction*⁹ by Alina Bako.

Mentioning the above studies is meant to bring together research directions from the domain of literary geography / geocriticism in order to accurately map the situation of the Romanian novel. In what follows, we will devote our attention to two elements of originality which, we hold, are essential for the inter-war Romanian novel and simultaneously represent a method of relating to the European space: the use of literary cartography created by writers and the presentation of geofeminism, proven by means of an analysis of the Romanian novel.

Recently, geocritical studies have focused on the one hand on spatial occurrences identified in novels and their quantitative analysis, and on the other hand on resorting to the analysis of imaginary or real maps created by writers in juxtaposition with the writing process itself. The essential idea we