

LITERARY SPACES AND CRITICAL TERRITORIES

Towards an Approach to Literary Space: Geopoetics and Geocriticism Crossing the Frontiers of Knowledge

29, 30 June and 1 July 2017

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The theoretical reorientation of literary studies towards their renewed convergence with the “real”, later identified by some as the “spatial turn” (Soja, 1989), started to develop in the literary-theoretical landscape in the middle of the twentieth century, at the moment when key theoreticians in the field of structuralism paid significant attention to the relationship between “literature and reality”, with the aim of insistently denouncing any “referential illusion” (Barthes *et al.*, 1982) and of committing the space of literature to intratextual specularity (Dällenbach, 1977). It is undeniable, however, that the relationship between man and the world has always been a prevailing topic in the history of literature, stimulated, since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, by the voyages that marked the turn of modernity (Westphal, 2011), by the practices and writing of travelling authors themselves in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and by the ensuing rise of “travel literature” to the category of a literary genre.

Today we are witness to paradigm changes that point to new literary territories in which the borders between the real and fiction are questioned (Lavocat, 2016) and new forms of approach to literary space emerge. Paradigm changes which result from the practice of travelling, the anthropological motivations of which have thoroughly changed (Debaene, 2010), with particular impact in the field of literature, where possible “worlds” and “texts” (Lavocat, 2010; Escola (éd.) 2012) conjecture new territories to be explored beyond the “letter” of the text, in which a “plausible world” may be charted beyond the cartographic Eurocentric vision of the world (Westphal, 2011), in which new practices of mobility call forth new forms of writing and other media, as well as new ways of reading, founded on a particular human as well as physical geography (Bouvet, 2015). Today we picture literary production in a global context and global approaches, unsusceptible of being delimited, marked by the triumph of translation (Damrosch, 2003). Whether more directly focused on the observer, determining an egocentred perception of the world, or valuing the depicted space by means of multifocused and geocentred approaches, the study of literature at present calls for other conceptual tools for the understanding of its

relation to reality. A wide field is therefore opened to the inquiries of a Geopoetics which it becomes necessary to question, in order to bring forward its main theoretical orientations and current methodological proposals. Both in the strict sense of the term, advocated by Kenneth White from the late 1970s to express the awareness of the world underlying poetic creation, and in the wider sense, encompassing the theoretical reflection elicited by the attention paid by literature to the relationship between man and space, Geopoetics presents itself as a field of research which once again challenges the theoretical assumptions of spatial referentiality and literary creation in the context of post-modernity, in which the spaces of frontier, of passage, or the territorial configurations resulting from new cartographies of human spaces, taking new mobilities into account, become fundamental values.

In the face of the diversity and complexity of issues posed by the literary text, the contributions of Geopoetics benefit from a dialogue with other reflections and conceptual tools such as those put forward by Yi-Fu Tuan and Wolfgang Welsch. Indeed, the concepts of “topophilia” and “topophobia” evince today, in a transdisciplinary context, the affective ties linking man and space. Space is demarcated by the subject who observes it, by either an open or closed outlook on cultural identity, and justifies the politics of inclusion or exclusion of the other. The perception of a space conditions the attitudes, the values and the language of those who inhabit, traverse or imagine it. To perceive a space thus requires a dialogue between poetics, rhetorics, ethics and geography. The concept of “transculturality” too, based on the euphoric premise of mobility and porosity between frontiers, founded on a democratic reorganization of the asymmetries of power, asks for a new look on space, which is understood to be dynamic in its political and social dimensions as well as in its cultural and literary aspects.

Thus, under the abovementioned theoretical paradigms, we invite all interested scholars to propose contributions around the following thematic axes:

- Geopoetics and geocriticism: issues of transdisciplinarity
- *Spatial turn* and the new literary territories
- Liminalities and transfrontiers
- Geopoetics and the perception of space through literature
- Geopoetics: fiction and referentiality
- Geopoetics: *topophilia* and *topophobia*
- Geopoetics: space and transculturalities

Works cited

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- Debaene, V., *L'adieu au voyage: l'ethnologie française entre science et littérature*, Paris, Gallimard, 2010.
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LANGUAGES OF COMMUNICATION

Languages for the presentation of papers are Portuguese, Spanish, French and English.

CALENDAR

31 January 2017: deadline for paper proposals

28 February 2017: deadline for notification of acceptance by the organizing committee

8 to 15 May 2017: conference registration

1 June 2017: publication of conference programme

ORGANIZATION

Ana Paula Coutinho

Gonçalo Vilas Boas

Jorge Bastos da Silva

José Domingues de Almeida

Maria de Fátima Outeirinho

Maria Hermínia Amado Laurel

Maria Luísa Malato

Maria Teresa Oliveira

SUBMISSION OF PAPER PROPOSALS

Paper proposals will be submitted to assessment by the conference Scientific Committee. Authors are requested to specify the thematic axis of their choice. Accepted papers should be no longer than 20 minutes.

Submission of proposals (abstract of 250 to 300 words), together with a short CV, should be made to the following address: geopoeticas2017@gmail.com

REGISTRATION FEE

100.00€ (the amount covers registration, folder, certificate, coffee-breaks and conference lunches).

120.00€ (from 16 May to 31 May 2017)

A conference dinner is planned as a ticketed even.

FORM OF PAYMENT

Please go to: <https://www.lettras.up.pt/gi/por/eventos.asp>

Nota bene: Papers will be published following assessment by a committee of reviewers, and with the understanding that texts will be sent in accordance with publication rules (to be specified).

ORGANIZING INSTITUTION:

ILC Margarida Losa

REFERENCE URL

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