



Book review:

***Spaces of Longing and Belonging: Territoriality, Ideology and Creative Identity in Literature and Film.* Eds. Brigitte Le Juez and Bill Richardson, Brill Rodopi, 2019. [Пространства на копнеж и принадлежност: териториалност, идеология и творческа идентичност в литературата и киното]**

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The collection of articles *Spaces of Longing and Belonging, Territoriality, Ideology and Creative Identity in Literature and Film* centers on the topics of space and belonging, dealing with them both on a purely theoretical level and from the perspective of their various projections in literature and film. The list of names covered by it is very extensive, ranging from Edgar Allan Poe to Julio Cortazar, Oluwole Soyinka, Milan Kundera and Orhan Pamuk.

The introductory remarks to the book are as much a self-contained study of the theories of space as it is a general review of all the authors and ideas that can be captured in the texts included in it. It is hardly surprising that the first name that confronts the reader is that of Mikhail Bakhtin. Indeed, whenever the matter of space is raised, especially in a novel, his theory invariably ends up being both debated and applied. It is not by chance that space and time, with their various intersections and contradictions, are very important in the texts under review. What is more, that the unspoken history of the novel that emerges from the juxtapositions between them is also seen as the collected history of distinct chronotopes.

By referring to various authors – from Lothmann, Foucault, Lefevre; to post-colonial researchers such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, to historians dealing with sites of memory in the style of Pierre Nora – both the foreword and the theoretical frameworks of the individual studies raise questions about the difference between geographical concepts and their projections in the

world of art as figments of the artist's imagination, on the one hand, and about those spaces, the fruit of intertextual networks, of metaphors and symbols, that serve as the structural elements of parallel territories on the other. No less important are the spaces of otherness, more so in view of the idea of belonging, as well as the heterotopies that we associate with the idea of impossible belonging, and lastly, ghettoized topoi (in the style of Lefevre). Hence, if we try to sum it up, we could say that this collection – to use Wolfgang Iser's terminology – speaks about how literature does not have a purely reflexive, mimetic structure but rather studies the possibilities of new worlds. Thus, it doubles and trebles reality and in practice, we observe our own strange doppelgangers in it.

Seen from the perspective of the analyses in the collection, the space in the book also exists in its other dimensions. It looks as though it is regarded in the context of world literature, as this is the notion that the corpus of texts outlines. And also because in his article Bertrand Westphal involves both world literature and the idea of planetarity. Let us recall that already for Spivak the difference between global and planetary is recognized as a fundamental one. A little more figuratively, this is the way she describes the difference between the global and the planetary and what the latter may bring to comparative studies and hence to world literature. The globe, she says, is in our computers. No one lives there. Therefore, the globe does not allow us to believe that we could attain our goal and control it. The planet, however, is an alternative model belonging to another system from another type so what we could obtain from it is borrowed. So if we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, as planetary creators of sorts, otherness will be inseparable from us. And it is otherness that is the thread that guides all researches included in this volume.

It is a known fact that we can see the concept of world literature from several perspectives: time, language but also space. If we focus on the latter, we should unavoidably touch upon the different interrelations and mutual influences encountered between the center and the periphery, including within the framework of the same text. This is also why it seems so relevant to analyze the texts and authors featured in this collection from that perspective.

However, the preoccupation with this subject matter and its association with world literature is bound to push the reader of the collection in yet another direction, the one outlined by David Damrosch, who in his studies of world literature deals with the question of what strategies regarding space authors seeking public recognition in a globalized world strive to develop among other things. In his view, there are several such strategies, among them being the avoidance of territorial markers in their writing and getting rid of any references to domesticity. A trend that, by the way, started way back with authors like Kafka, Borges and Beckett. Another relates to the desire to proceed from the

local to raise global issues, with the space remaining glocal. And the third involves the idea of bringing the global directly home, as Orhan Pamuk does.

Insofar as belonging is concerned, the collection is extremely relevant with its variations on settling and homelessness, on nostalgia, memory, hopes, oppression and exile that it offers; and with the options of fitting in or alienation that it paints. It shows how humans can assimilate spaces and turn them into home but also how spaces can exclude the human. It also traces present-day turmoil, including modern terrorism and the forms of migration that are provoked. Because it focuses a strong inquisitive gaze on the present, on the radical forms of alienation that it begets but also on the cultural belonging that it offers, a belonging that gives rise to new submissions and new identities.