

The Spatial Turn in Literary Studies (Foreword)

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This thematic section of the journal *Primerjalna književnost*, titled “The Spatial Turn in Literary Studies,” features fifteen articles that explain the history, ideological, and cultural context, manifestations, and meanings of the “spatial turn” that occurred in the humanities and social sciences at the end of the 1980s and enthroned geography for the first time as a general exporter of ideas. Which new horizons—if any at all—has the spatial turn opened up for literary studies to date and what else does it promise? What relationship does spatial epistemology enter into with temporality and narrativity, which have provided traditional foundations for literary history? What can be discovered by mapping and analyzing the relations between the geographical spaces that literature socially lives in and extends into, and the spaces depicted in textual worlds? What does observation that selects a specific historically connected geographical area (i.e., a city, region, continent, or even entire world) as its main object contribute to literary history by discussing this area in all of the diversity, interconnections, and conflicting nature of its cultural languages? How can literary representations be used to explore the social experience of actual places and landscapes? How were older and modern cartographic techniques used in literary geography? Does it even make sense to map literature today?

This thematic section is largely connected with studies carried out as part of the project “The Space of Slovenian Literary Culture: Literary History and the GIS-Based Spatial Analysis.” In 2012, the project team published a Slovenian-English thematic issue of the journal *Slavistična revija* titled “Space in Literature and Literature in Space”, edited by Urška Perenič, which mainly features analyses of Slovenian material. In the journal *Primerjalna književnost*, the team has sought to continue its empirical spatial research on Slovenian literary culture and also more thoroughly reflect on the project’s methodological foundations and premises. Therefore, several recognized international experts in spatial literary studies were also invited to participate.

The section begins with three articles by the Slovenian authors (Marko Juvan, Bojan Baskar, and Jola Škulj), who reflect on the spatial turn and its implications for literary studies and other humanities disciplines. They express some degree of reservation about proclaiming the spatial turn the

fundamental epistemological turn of recent years. This is followed by a set of eight English articles by authors from other countries. Peter Hitchcock (U.S.) introduces the concept of the “space of time” and creatively tackles chronotopes and various aspects of the “crisis.” Andrei Terian (Romania) and Maro Kalantzopoulou (Greece) deal with the importance and consequences of the spatial turn for literary historiography, which is generally considered a traditional “temporal” discipline; these consequences are obviously evident at the level of both national and wider (regional and global) literary-history narratives. Ayşe Deniz Temiz (Turkey) discusses Deleuze’s articulation of intensive space in the arts and philosophy from the concept of “smooth space” to the concept of “fold.” Sonja Stojmenska-Elzesser (Macedonia) tackles the issue of the representation and production of the *genius loci* in literary texts. This is followed by discussions on the use of mapping in literary theory: they begin with an article by Robert Stockhammer (Germany), who is clearly skeptical about the option of mapping fictional texts. In contrast, his colleague Jörg Döring (Germany) demonstrates various mapping usages in order to show that this too can include both good and bad practices. The analysis of the “St. Petersburg Text” by Sarah J. Young and John Levin (UK) can definitely be classified among the former. The set on applying cartography to literary studies concludes with an article by Urška Perenič on mapping the biographies of Slovenian literary writers; her article and the next three by Slovenian authors are published in Slovenian. Marijan Dovič discusses the beginnings of establishing the network of Slovenian literary culture memorials, Mimi Urbanc deals with landscape in terms of rhetorical figures in texts describing Slovenian Istria, and Aleš Vaupotič and Narvika Bovcon reflect on the semiotic nature of new-media objects by examining the examples of experimental projects in the narrativization of virtual spaces.

As befits a volume with a spatial topic that relates to the use of mapping, this issue of the journal also contains a number of various (thematic) maps. The black-and-white maps are provided in the articles themselves, and twelve color illustrations (accompanying the articles by Jörg Döring, Sarah Young and John Levin, and Urška Perenič) are printed in a special appendix (with cross-references in the texts to the appropriate places). The issue is rounded off by two reviews and a report by Darko Dolinar on Slovenian comparative studies.