

Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies

# Literary Cartographies

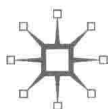
Spatiality, Representation,  
and Narrative

Edited by  
Robert T. Tally Jr.

LITERARY CARTOGRAPHIES  
SPATIALITY, REPRESENTATION,  
AND NARRATIVE

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## GEOCRITICISM AND SPATIAL LITERARY STUDIES

Series Editor: **ROBERT T. TALLY JR.**, Texas State University

*Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* is a new book series focusing on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship in recent years, and geocriticism, broadly conceived, has been among the more promising developments in spatially oriented literary studies. Whether focused on literary geography, cartography, geopoetics, or the spatial humanities more generally, geocritical approaches enable readers to reflect upon the representation of space and place, both in imaginary universes and in those zones where fiction meets reality. Titles in the series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series disclose, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

**ROBERT T. TALLY JR.** is an associate professor of English at Texas State University, USA. His work explores the relations among narrative, representation, and social space in American and world literature, criticism, and theory. Tally has been recognized as a leading figure in the emerging fields of geocriticism, spatiality studies, and the spatial humanities. Tally's books include *Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism*; *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique*; *Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World System*; *Spatiality*; *Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography*; and *Melville, Mapping and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American Baroque Writer*. The translator of Bertrand Westphal's *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, Tally is the editor of *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*, *Kurt Vonnegut: Critical Insights*, and *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*.

Titles to date:

*Cosmopolitanism and Place: Spatial Forms in Contemporary Anglophone Literature*

By Emily Johansen

*Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*  
Edited by Robert T. Tally Jr.

Also by Robert T. Tally Jr.

*Fredric Jameson: The Project of Dialectical Criticism*

*Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique  
Spatiality*

*Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World-System*

*Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural  
Studies* (editor)

*Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography*

*Kurt Vonnegut: Critical Insights* (editor)

*Melville, Mapping, and Globalization: Literary Cartography in the American  
Baroque Writer*

*For Durham,  
and its many stories*

## SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has occasioned an explosion of innovative, multidisciplinary scholarship. Spatially oriented literary studies, whether operating under the banner of literary geography, literary cartography, geophilosophy, geopoetics, geocriticism, or the spatial humanities more generally, have helped to reframe or to transform contemporary criticism by focusing attention, in various ways, on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature. Reflecting upon the representation of space and place, whether in the real world, in imaginary universes, or in those hybrid zones where fiction meets reality, scholars and critics working in spatial literary studies are helping to reorient literary criticism, history, and theory. *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* is a book series presenting new research in this burgeoning field of inquiry.

In exploring such matters as the representation of place in literary works, the relations between literature and geography, the historical transformation of literary and cartographic practices, and the role of space in critical theory, among many others, geocriticism and spatial literary studies have also developed interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary methods and practices, frequently making productive connections to architecture, art history, geography, history, philosophy, politics, social theory, and urban studies, to name but a few. Spatial criticism is not limited to the spaces of the so-called real world, and it sometimes calls into question any too facile distinction between real and imaginary places, as it frequently investigates what Edward Soja has referred to as the "real-and-imagined" places we experience in literature as in life. Indeed, although a great deal of important research has been devoted to the literary representation of certain identifiable and well-known places (e.g., Dickens's London, Baudelaire's Paris, or Joyce's Dublin), spatial critics have also explored the otherworldly spaces of literature, such as those to be found in myth, fantasy, science fiction, video games, and cyberspace. Similarly, such criticism is interested in the relationship between spatiality and such different media or genres as film or television, music, comics, computer programs, and

other forms that may supplement, compete with, and potentially problematize literary representation. Titles in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series include both monographs and collections of essays devoted to literary criticism, theory, and history, often in association with other arts and sciences. Drawing on diverse critical and theoretical traditions, books in the series reveal, analyze, and explore the significance of space, place, and mapping in literature and in the world.

The concepts, practices, or theories implied by the title of this series are to be understood expansively. Although geocriticism and spatial literary studies represent a relatively new area of critical and scholarly investigation, the historical roots of spatial criticism extend well beyond the recent past, informing present and future work. Thanks to a growing critical awareness of spatiality, innovative research into the literary geography of real and imaginary places has helped to shape historical and cultural studies in ancient, medieval, early modern, and modernist literature, while a discourse of spatiality undergirds much of what is still understood as the postmodern condition. The suppression of distance by modern technology, transportation, and telecommunications has only enhanced the sense of place, and of displacement, in the age of globalization. Spatial criticism examines literary representations not only of places themselves, but also of the experience of place and of displacement, while exploring the interrelations between lived experience and a more abstract or unrepresentable spatial network that subtly or directly shapes it. In sum, the work being done in geocriticism and spatial literary studies, broadly conceived, is diverse and far reaching. Each volume in this series takes seriously the mutually impressive effects of space or place and artistic representation, particularly as these effects manifest themselves in works of literature. By bringing the spatial and geographical concerns to bear on their scholarship, books in the *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series seek to make possible different ways of seeing literary and cultural texts, to pose novel questions for criticism and theory, and to offer alternative approaches to literary and cultural studies. In short, the series aims to open up new spaces for critical inquiry.

Robert T. Tally Jr.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicated *Geocritical Explorations* to a place, still quite new to me, that had become very meaningful through its associations and its affective geography. *Literary Cartographies* is dedicated to another place, as old and familiar to me as a native land, and yet also the site of the most exhilarating and formative experiences, each a *sine qua non* in the development of my research, teaching, and life in general today. This book, which is partly intended to highlight the importance of space and place in the production of narratives, is dedicated to that special place: Durham, North Carolina, which is simultaneously (and paradoxically) a hometown and a foreign country, where so many of my own narratives found shape and significance.

This particular project began as a special session of the Modern Language Association's annual convention in 2013, and I am grateful to the panelists—among them, contributors Barbara E. Thornbury and Alice Tsay—whose presentations were stimulating and informative, and to the audience for their insightful questions and comments. I would like to thank all of the contributors for their excellent chapters, which cover a broad range of topics while also focusing carefully on discrete texts, writers, theories, and methods. I am also grateful to Brigitte Shull, editor extraordinaire at Palgrave Macmillan, for her steadfast support for and encouragement of geocritical and spatial literary studies. I completed this book while on developmental leave from teaching duties at Texas State University, and I am grateful to the Faculty Senate of that institution for their support of research and teaching. My colleagues at Texas State, especially Michael Hennessy and Daniel Lochman, have also been very supportive of this work.

At all stages of this project, Reiko Graham, not to mention Dusty and Windy Britches, have been there for me. Durham gets some credit for that, too, demonstrating once more how the places we have lived in so often contribute, frequently in unseen and lasting ways, to the quality of our lives.

# CONTENTS

Series Editor's Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction: Mapping Narratives <i>Robert T. Tally Jr.</i>	1
1 What Lies Between?: Thinking Through Medieval Narrative Spatiality <i>Robert Allen Rouse</i>	13
2 Plotting One's Position in <i>Don Quixote</i> : Literature and the Process of Cognitive Mapping <i>Jeanette E. Goddard</i>	31
3 "Eyes That Have Dwelt on the Past": Reading the Landscape of Memory in <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> <i>Alice Tsay</i>	47
4 Mapping Hardy and Brontë <i>Susan E. Cook</i>	61
5 "She Sought a Spiritual Heir": Cosmopolitanism and the Pre-Suburban in <i>Howards End</i> <i>Heather McNaugher</i>	75
6 The Space of Russia in Joseph Conrad's <i>Under Western Eyes</i> <i>John G. Peters</i>	89
7 "History, Mystery, Leisure, Pleasure": Evelyn Waugh, Bruno Latour, and the Ocean Liner <i>Shawna Ross</i>	111
8 To the South England, to the West Eternity: Mapping Boundlessness in Modern Scottish Fiction <i>Jenny Pyke</i>	127

9	Leaving the Landscape: Mapping Elsewhereness in Canadian City Literature <i>Myles Chilton</i>	145
10	Mapping Tokyo's "Empty Center" in Oyama's <i>A Man with No Talents</i> <i>Barbara E. Thornbury</i>	167
11	Mapping the Personal in Contemporary German Literature <i>Anne B. Wallen</i>	181
12	Charting the Extraordinary: Sentient and Transontological Spaces <i>Rhona Trauvitch</i>	199
13	On and Off the Map: Literary Narrative as Critique of Cartographic Reason <i>Derck Schilling</i>	215
	Notes on Contributors	229
	Index	233

## INTRODUCTION



### MAPPING NARRATIVES

*Robert T. Tally Jr.*

James Joyce once stated that his goal in writing *Ulysses* was “to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth, it could be reconstructed out of my book.”<sup>1</sup> I imagine that readers of *Ulysses*, even those with a strong background in geography or urban planning, would find it difficult to discern the blueprint of Dublin in the text of the modernist novel, but the cartographic impulse, broadly conceived, in Joyce’s fiction is certainly apparent. From the meticulous descriptions of recognizable locales to the more implicit, affective geography of the intellectual and emotional content of the narrative, a work like *Ulysses* provides readers a map of the diverse spaces represented in it. Indeed, although certain narratives may be more ostensibly cartographic than others, all may be said to constitute forms of literary cartography. In works of fiction, in which the imaginative faculty is perhaps most strongly connected to the verbal and descriptive, this mapmaking project becomes central to the aims and the effects of the narrative. In the words of J. Hillis Miller, “A novel is a figurative mapping.”<sup>2</sup>

Speaking figuratively, then, one could agree with Peter Turchi that every writer is also, in some ways, a cartographer—and vice-versa, perhaps. As Turchi puts it in his lovely little guide to creative writing, *Maps of the Imagination*, “We organize information on maps in order to see our knowledge in a new way. As a result, maps suggest explanations; and while explanations reassure us, they also inspire us to ask more questions, consider other possibilities.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, maps presuppose narratives, which in turn may function as maps.

The perceived tension between narration and description, like that between text and image or even between time and space, animates the form of narrative discourse, as the struggle between advancing the plot and satisfactorily sketching the scene plays itself out in a given literary work. Turchi refers to this in terms of the overlapping or entangled creative acts of *exploration* and *presentation*. For the writer or literary cartographer, the imperative to arrive at some resolution of the dilemma—or, at least, to maintain the tension in some sort of productive equipoise—must confront the fact that all spaces are necessarily embedded with narratives, just as all narratives must mobilize and organize spaces. For example, it is not enough for Joyce to describe in minute detail the physical features of Dublin, its landscapes, streets, alleys, and houses; to reconstruct Joyce's particular Dublin, we must discern in its unique spaces the narratives that make it a *place* worth taking note of in the first place, from Buck Mulligan's bowl of lather to Molly Bloom's yes I said yes I will Yes. In mapping a place, one also tells a story.

One of my favorite examples of the proposed but then resolved problem of spatial description and temporal narration comes from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. In admitting his inability to describe the city of Zaira, the narrator in fact produces an extremely evocative and meaningful picture:

In vain, great-hearted Kublai, shall I attempt to describe Zaira, city of high bastions. I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamppost to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the tilt of a guttering and a cat's progress along it as he slips into the same window; the firing range of a gunboat which has suddenly appeared beyond the cape and the bomb that destroys the guttering; the rips in the fish net and the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock.

As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like

the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lighting rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.<sup>4</sup>

Spatial description and historical storytelling thus merge and then emerge as part of a broader literary geography, which in turn becomes the ground for a writer's own literary cartography. As Yi-Fu Taun made clear in *Space and Place*, what makes a place a *place*, what distinguishes it from the undifferentiated sweep of scenery, is the pause, the resting of the eye, in which the viewer suddenly apprehends the discrete portion of space as something to be interpreted.<sup>5</sup> A place is suffused with meanings and is thus within the provenance of literary criticism.

My use of the phrase "mapping narratives" as the title to this introduction is thus intended to give expression to a productive ambiguity. On one hand, consistent with my view of literary cartography as a fundamental aspect of storytelling, I mean to indicate that narratives are in some ways devices or methods used to map the real-and-imagined spaces of human experience. Narratives are, in a sense, mapping machines. On the other hand, narratives—like maps, for that matter—never come before us in some pristine, original form. They are always and already formed by their interpretations or by the interpretative frameworks in which we, as readers, situate them. Further, as readers, we cannot help but fit narratives or spatial representations into some sort of spatiotemporal context in which they make sense to us, thereby also becoming more or less useful to us, in our own attempts to give meaningful shape to the world in which we live. That is, these narratives, which are also maps, must be understood as themselves objects to be mapped. The senses of *mapping narratives* thus follow the trajectories of the subject and of the object; a narrative is simultaneously something that maps and something to be mapped. This dialectical tendency may not necessarily resolve itself in the unity of opposites à la Hegel but may maintain itself in dynamic tension, enabling new creative possibilities for both writing and reading.

The essays in this collection, in one way or another, respond to this dynamic of spatiality and narrative in considering aspects of literary cartography. In recent years, as part of what has been called the *spatial turn* in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, literary scholars have focused greater attention on the relations among space, place, or mapping and literature. A number of critics have drawn attention to the ways in which narratives produce maps of the real and imaginary places represented, in both the form and content of the narratives.<sup>6</sup>

The contributors to *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative* each address key aspects of narrative mapping while arguing for the significance of spatiality in general and comparative literary studies. *Literary Cartographies* surveys a broad expanse of literary historical territories, including romance and realism, modernism and imperialism, and the postmodern play of spaces in the era of globalization. As such, this collection also provides a representative sample of work being done in this area by spatially oriented critics across a range of periods, languages, and literatures. Drawing upon the resources of spatiality studies, historical criticism, and literary theory, this collection of essays explores the ways authors use both strictly mimetic and more fantastic means to figure forth what Edward Soja has called the “real-and-imagined” spaces of their respective worlds.<sup>7</sup> The essays in *Literary Cartographies* examine diverse texts and spaces, and the contributors demonstrate how a variety of romantic, realist, modernist, and postmodernist narratives use various means to represent the changing social spaces of the worlds depicted in their pages, in turn offering insightful perspectives on our own world system today.

The topic of space is timely. *Literary Cartographies* supplements and extends the sort of work presented in a previous collection, *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the latter was mainly conceived in terms of an approach to reading works of literature, using geocriticism as an interpretative and analytic method that focused attention on the spatial significance of the texts under consideration, the contributors to *Literary Cartographies* emphasize the degree to which the writing of literary texts is itself a cartographic endeavor. (Insofar as the two collections bring spatial criticism to bear on both the reading and writing of narratives, they might be considered as companion volumes.) *Literary Cartographies* addresses spatiality and world literature from the perspective of an interdisciplinary and comparative literary studies, even though many of the individual essays focus on a single author or text. The contributions represent a variety of national languages and literatures, while ranging geographically across different continents as well as among different types of social space, such as rural and urban, national and cosmopolitan, or domestic and foreign. The essays are ordered in an admittedly artificial or arbitrary way, roughly chronologically by subject, with the medieval romance and the quintessential early modern European novel (*Don Quijote*) setting the table for a feast of essays dealing with nineteenth- and twentieth-century realist and modernist narratives, before introducing several twenty-first-century narrative maps, and ending with a

fascinating theoretical essay on the relationship between literary narrative and cartographic reason. The result is, I hope, a book that will be a valuable resource for scholars in literature, cultural studies, and interdisciplinary research involving space, place, and mapping.

In the first chapter, "What Lies Between?: Thinking Through Medieval Narrative Spatiality," Robert Allen Rouse takes issue with the perceived homogeneity of medieval spatiality, arguing that the misperception is largely rooted in a modernist or postmodernist bias among many spatially oriented critics, which has resulted in a gross oversimplification of the dynamic spatial relations within medieval texts and societies. In *Geocriticism*, for instance, Bertrand Westphal observes that "on the spatial plane, postmodern transgressivity corresponds to the creative chaos of the Greeks." In common with much poststructuralist thought, Westphal figures the premodern broadly, collapsing much that lies before the cartographic revolution of the late fifteenth century into a homogeneous modal imaginary that "privileged the sensuous qualities of the human (and divine) environment" in contrast to the "rational."<sup>9</sup> But by examining medieval modes of spatial narrative in the context of the postmodern turn toward space and time, Rouse seeks to illuminate medieval narrative spatial practices in comparison to both modern and classical modes of geographical narrative. Through such an overview of medieval spatial modes, Rouse provides historical context for understanding how textual narratives operated as the dominant form of geographical representation in medieval Europe. Finally, taking as his textual matter the popular romances of fourteenth-century England, Rouse goes on to examine how medieval literature narrates multiple spatial realities for its diverse audiences.

A similar revisionary program animates Jeanette Goddard's chapter, "Plotting One's Position in *Don Quijote*: Literature and the Process of Cognitive Mapping," which looks at the ways that *Don Quijote* produces competing "maps" of early modern Spain. As Goddard interprets Cervantes's famous novel, the adventures of Don Quijote create a map of La Mancha for the reader, but one whose markings and signposts are already subject to misinterpretation and ambiguity. Not only does Don Quijote himself frequently substitute one sign for another, such as windmills for giants or inns for castles, but, making things even more confusing, the multiple texts or "maps" that constitute the novel engender further misunderstandings. Between the first part of *Don Quijote* (1605) and the second part (1615), Avellaneda published a sequel (1614) to which Cervantes responds. For example, when Cervantes's Quijote hears that Avellaneda's Quijote has gone

to Zaragoza, he goes to Barcelona instead in order to disprove the authenticity of Avellaneda's Quijote. Following Jameson's conception of cognitive mapping as "a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster [...] ensemble of society's structures as a whole,"<sup>10</sup> Goddard argues that Quijote's attempt to map himself as "real" and Avellaneda's Quijote as "fake" is an attempt to legitimate his own cognitive cartography in the contexts of an entire Spanish literary and geographic system.

The attempt to grasp a sort of authentic or "real" identity amid the radical transformations of modern social relations finds a different manifestation in the nineteenth-century novel, with the advent of narrative realism and a historical consciousness increasingly fixated on national identity. In "'Eyes that have dwelt on the past': Reading the Landscape of Memory in *The Mill on the Floss*," Alice Tsay examines George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, a novel written during the apex of the British imperial century, as a document of expansive ambitions. Its aspirations, however, are for domestic attentions to be scaled down and turned inward, at both the national and individual level. As scholars have noted, the setting of the novel can be mapped onto the actual landscape of the East Midlands: the River Trent becomes the River Floss, while St. Ogg's is likely based on the town of Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. This overlaying of fictional names onto a recognizable geography renders the setting both specific and encompassing, an effect that for Eliot is a conscious narrative strategy rather than a matter of course. Borrowing Pierre Nora's concept of *le lieu de mémoire*, Tsay contends that *The Mill on the Floss* employs various types of double mapping—of the fictional upon the real, the personal on the geographical, and the past on the present—in order to fashion its heroine's story as a place of memory within the reader's experience.

In a fairly straightforward way, novels always involve a cartographic project, as novelists attempt to represent "real" places in their fiction or create imaginary locations for otherwise "realistic" novels. But, as Susan E. Cook argues in "Mapping Hardy and Brontë," Thomas Hardy's 1891 novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and Charlotte Brontë's 1853 *Villette* take factual locations and fictionalize them with specific attention to geography as well as to the isolation of their protagonists within that geography. The two nineteenth-century novelists superimpose fictional names on factual geographies quite independently of one another, but each is commenting on British geopolitical expansion. When Hardy and Brontë rename places, they are mimicking imperialism but doing so subversively; both novelists draw attention to the politics of territorial expansion and then undermine this process.