

What Cities Enclose: A Geoliterary Approach to World Literature

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The word 'world' conceals

Eric Hayot

This article aims to follow the idea of *a consciousness of the world* in order to provide an alternative reading of two contemporary novels, *The Museum of Innocence* of Orhan Pamuk and *Jerusalém* of Gonçalo M. Tavares, by reflecting on world literature and geoliterary notions. For such purpose, the research takes urban space as a sample of global concerns, or else, as the *imago mundi* that reveals the functioning of humankind and the distribution of the factual world. The proposal starts with some notes around the applications of the “world”, in order to redirect the importance of geographical thinking in literary studies (world literature and space), and to evaluate how cities are formed. In sum, how can the consciousness of the world be read not only from the spatial but also from the epistemological core of contemporary societies?

Under the Global Embrace

The ‘world’ is in vogue, and it has been the case since the European core began to look at other cultures of the known geography during the 19th century. For the literary scope, this expansion has meant deep reformulations for both the compositional and the analytical sides of literary understanding. Yet the *consciousness of the world*, traced back to the times of Juan Andrés’s *ogni letteratura* (1782-1799), has taken various forms: from the well-known reflections of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the *littérature universelle* and the *literatura universal* by French and Spanish academies (see Domínguez),¹ to the emblematic transformations of the last *fin-de-siècle* by Franco Moretti (2000, 2003), David Damrosch (2003) and other scholars. This idea of embracing the literary phenomenon by following the impulse of “the world” has been present for some time; and world literature, nowadays, has become a well discussed alternative. Nevertheless, the implications of the term continue to be ungraspable.

A first difficulty lies on the aimed territory, the world, which according to scholars like Vilashini Cooppan and Eric Hayot, conceals different totalities according to the envisioned application. For instance, Cooppan considers that “[t]he ‘world’ in world literature for some critics carries the cosmopolitan infections of *Weltliteratur*’s founding problematic of texts that transcend geographic and temporal boundaries to resonate in contexts other than their own” (194). This affirmation leads to the plurality of meanings through a brief sketch of emblematic figures: “Pizer 2006; Dimock 2008; Lionet [Lionet and Shih 2005], and Apter 2006 as well as Jameson 1981 and Said 1993 in a previous generation, and Auerbach 1952 before that” (194). Even when Cooppan does not extend on the debate surrounding the ‘world’ *per se*, his guidelines resume the seasons of world literature’s history – establishing a difference between the initial phase from the comparatist front and the basis from the ongoing century.

Hayot, on the other hand, dedicates deeper observations arguing, for instance, that “the ‘world’ of ‘world literature’ is not the same as the ‘world’ of ‘world-systems’” treated by Pascale Casanova and Moretti (33); neither can it be limited to a geographic whole without a re-thinking of ‘literature’ itself. Hayot distinguishes “the gesture of worlding, the world-desire”

that enclose structures, relations, systems, the “metaphorical capture of totality”, from the factual world, which risks the thought of the word to a mere *marker of scale*. “To world is to enclose, but also to exclude. What falls in the ambit of those enclosures and exclusions will determine the political meaning of any given act of world-making, as it does so clearly in our debates on world literature” (ibid).

Therefore, the ‘world’ can continue to signify as much as human imagination desires, which is not reassuring. Beyond an abstract conception, the term will continue as a problematic axis for Literary Studies. For the time being: while ‘literature’ and ‘world’ are ontological dimensions linked under a unifying impulse, they are also intuitively imaginable and obliquely apprehensible.

A second problem relates to the sudden emergence of arguments (and mostly counter-arguments) triggered from what could be considered the corollary methods of *contemporary world literature* (distinguishing 21st century studies from former perspectives as Cooppan mentioned). Briefly: on the one hand, Moretti’s *distant reading* inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-system theory; on the other, Damrosch’s *close reading* of great works in global circulation. Even as pioneers, both positions face the limitations of their definition. While distant reading is not designed (as Moretti declared) for inner-analysis techniques, close reading takes the risk of depriving the text of extra-diegetic connections.

Apropos, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen considers that “there may be many good reasons for thinking of these [two dimensions] as domains that cannot be fully integrated, due to the complexity of the subject and the purposes of the different activities, yet they will also always influence one another” (20). Damrosch, on one side, offered an approximation to “prime texts”, from best-sellers to foundational works and masterpieces beyond European references.² Nonetheless, this method will find some difficulties to avoid the vacuum between the text and extra-literary motions, also definitive to perceive the role of the text in literary phenomenon.

Moretti, for another, focused on modern novels of Western traditions and cultural heirs in other continents from 1790 to 1930 due to his academic interest in world-systems; a research that led to some findings of common patterns between different literatures, although the lack of a traditional immersion has meant the questioning of his method. Later, he would respond in “More Conjectures” for *New Left Review*, specifying certain issues like the inequality of literary manifestations around the globe and his omission of the semi-peripheral areas in “Conjectures...”. But to dwell on such aspects would divert the main interest of the current article.

In both cases, world literature is presumed to contain more than what is known, voids and ambiguities included. The unmeasurable systemic sum of the Eurocentric canonical fraction with the unread literatures (Moretti) *versus* (because they were frequently confronted) the optimistic and deceptive gathering of all the literatures under the eye of analysis (Damrosch), are ventures for reaching, or at least figuring out the ‘world’ in/of world literature. The name in question functions in different ways, yet it is undeniable that both the dimensions, ‘world’ and ‘literature’ suggest a void to fulfil.

A third well-known problem is, insistently, its wideness. After its reemergence as an exceptional paradigm of Literary Studies in recent times, world literature has entered into an

ongoing meta-discursive cycle of redefinition, covering from the meaning of Goethe's proposal³ and other universal impulses of multicultural gatherings,⁴ canon integration,⁵ fields of impact on everyday public access (libraries, universities, book market)⁶ and politics,⁷ up to modern, postmodern and cosmopolitan frames⁸ as well as the inclusion of national and minor literatures⁹ in the flows of a globalized era.

In short, world literature today is far away from the geographical imaginary expressed by Goethe to Eckermann in 1827. Somehow, the emphasis on looking literary works beyond the immediate geopolitical frames of Europe, has evolved into worldwide debates concerning what literary phenomenon is, and who should be included. As shown, *world* is an epistemological inconvenience for the definition and subsequent application of World Literature Studies. The general tendency in the re-thinking of the name has been to procure the erasure of any misconception by upkeeping a previously (valid) pact of abstraction, which can be (and has been) misleading; pejorative, as well, when it comes to validate disciplinary basics like translated texts and "newness" of the reading methods.

For that reason, it might be beneficial to view from another direction. Not for avoiding an unachievable situation; on the contrary, the intention is to tackle a better understanding of the consciousness of the world in two different scales – the discipline and particular literary works – and, therefore, to widen the spectrum.

The Geo-Dimension of World Literature

From World Literature Studies, the geographical imaginary follows a distribution of the world map on three countable scales: 1) center/periphery, which, in general terms, translates as dominant languages in Western Europe and the US on one side, and the rest of the world on the other; 2) a geocultural division that either corresponds to a continental gathering (like Africa and Asia) or to a historical and cultural "affinity" (like Latin America); 3) and, under the words of Goethe on his first reflections over the subject (specifically in *Conversations with Goethe*): nation, as an obsolete yet necessary sub-division that has to be surpassed by translation and market fluency.

Thomsen, Theo D'Haen and Nirvana Tanoukhi have turned to the geographic dimension by developing, as well as Hayot, an intermediate method between close and distant reading. In 2008, Thomsen parted from central and peripheral focal points in his pursuit of sub-centers on the great scheme of things (in this case literature,¹⁰ specifically addressing Scandinavian literature, as well as Migrant and Cosmopolitan cultures.

In *Mapping World Literature* (2012), D'Haen evaluates the alternative of mapmaking of literary systems as a visual representation of the interconnections among literary entities, but also as a source of reading:

It remains to be seen, then, whether, and if so at which level of abstraction, sufficient similarities can be detected to also map not only the actual presence of a certain work, author, or literature in a number of foreign cultures but also the interpretation put on them in these cultures, or any commonality of purpose they might serve, for instance to explore how Shakespeare is used as a positive or a negative example to buttress elements already present in the receiving culture or to introduce "newness" (sic.) there. Gradually, then,

and on different levels of abstraction, maps could be construed of a work's, and author's or a literature's "global reach" as well as "impact". (416)

Even if the task of "mapmaking literature" is accomplished, it would certainly take more than a reader can manage (as Moretti pointed out throughout his reflections on modern novel, world literature and Geoliterary Studies), D'Haen's suggestion could allow two things: first, to map macro-intertextuality, and second, to decentralize the way of imagining literature. Distinctively, D'Haen recognizes the weakening of non-Western literatures as a fruitful field, which immediately amplifies the literary panorama on a global scale.

Also from a geoliterary perspective, Tanoukhi uses the notion of distance in the cartographic sense. From her exercise in "The Scale of World Literature" (2008) emanates a postcolonial argument about the double signification of space and culture, as well as the tension between local construction of the writer and its significance inside the regional frame – in this case, peripheral. By putting over the table African Literature as an example of this debate, Tanoukhi introduces an interchange between literary and geographic concepts.

In this sense, the treatment of peripheral and semi-peripheral literatures by Thomsen, Tanoukhi and D'Haen *via* geoliterary conceptions can be considered a prolific overture to interdisciplinary results. Furthermore, with the extension of the spectrum, it is possible to contemplate literary works in terms of social realities, cultural profiles and global imaginaries.

A geopolitical dissection of literature automatically implies the idea of boundaries, as well as tensions between them and inside them. In addition to globalization, this particular word infers a negative connotation, mostly due to the solid habit of literature to grow over and above shores. At this point, nonetheless, it might be useful to consider such a noun, *boundary*, in progress of redefinition: not only as a limitation but as a point of departure. And, in this sense, when it comes to words and literature, the main boundary is language, a dimension on its own that deserves a specialized approach inside this field.

World literature behaves under a criterion adjusted to worldwide circulation, which immediately becomes a first filter in the selection of a corpus for analysis. Due to the international displacement, most of the works had been required to make a sacrifice (in the purist sense): to be translated. In a way, translation can be considered the *touchstone* of world literature: a native text and a correctly translated text own a grade of purity that legitimates interpretation.

Also, world literature is not conceived – and according to Lawrence Venutti, cannot be conceptualized – without translation, "for most readers, translated texts constitute world literature" (191). And, in Moretti's words: "Readers, not professors, make canons: academic decisions are mere echoes of a process that unfolds fundamentally outside the school: reluctant rubber-stamping, not much more" (67). It is a global reality that most readers interested in the world, read translated texts, hence the filial relationship between the discipline and the work, whether native or not.

Translation of the literary text favors international access, global or at least transnational circulation. A practice that far from diminishing foreignism constitutes an aesthetic interpretation of a specific reader profile with the ability and the license to habilitate a work of

art for other grounds. Yet, even in the dynamics of mediation, the translator inevitably reaffirms the distance between linguistics systems. Although a translated text respects the codes of the *prime* language (see Toury), still it is a recreation of the work of art. In a way, this *wholeness* consists the sum of the origin and the interpretation, a begotten version of the compositional doings.

To determine the locality and the *foreign-ness* in a literary whole is a task near impossible (Venutti 189). Fortunately, the text can include distinctive elements that transcend the limitations of language and social division, i.e. components of reality which are not exposed to linguistic or cultural transformations but rather to the activities of literature. To point a few: the ultimate purpose of the author (around which the translator's work must rotate), characters, plot; and, elements not dominated by the linguistic system neither free from it; for example, space.

One of the most questioned practices of world literature during 21st century debates is the validation of translated texts as source for critical analysis, which responds more to a disciplinary disagreement than to the content of the literary work. Goes without saying, this is justifiable under the assumption that writers, as visionary as they can be or decide to be or as involved with the academia as they could be, are not obliged to aesthetically represent literary theories. Neither is it expected to find a “made for literary critics” version where literary motions and transnational dynamics like translation and displacement are purposely included and examined.

But what if they do? What happens when authors like Yoko Tawada (German-Japanese writer and academic) and Andrés Neuman (Spanish-Argentine writer and columnist) incorporate those kind of motions and dynamics as part of their literary works? What if those elements become part of a novelist's imprint? What if a world author, like Orhan Pamuk, creates an inner-reality (diegetic reality) of a particular context, and this turns to be understandable to global readers? Or else, what if an author expands the range of the novel by framing human condition – beyond geocultural boundaries – in global events, like Gonçalo M. Tavares? How to read those decisions, and how can world literature measure this angle, without risking being disestablished?

Far from probing the “requirements” of world reader and world author profiles, it could be interesting to seize the consciousness of the ‘world’ in the microcosm of texts from a period close to the times of re-inauguration of the former analytical paradigm, i. e. 21st century globalization. Keeping in mind the spirit of a transversal outlook from both the discipline and the literary work, and as an attempt to anchor such spirit to the tangible reality (literally and metaphorically), it is necessary to take also a transversal element, “global enough” to work as a sample. By this – “global enough” – should be fathomed as a component of the literary text, not only subjected to language and translation; in a way, it must “escape” the risks and sacrifices of it, and establish its own strength. Hence the city.

Urban Space and World Literature

The constancy of urban spaces in literary works highlights its prominence and relevance in the global imaginary across diverse cultures. More distinctively, cities are not subjected to transformations of any particular language, nor do they need linguistic translations to be perceived and interpreted on a regular basis. But before introducing such a unit of analysis, it

becomes inevitable to address the issue without taking into consideration, the imminent ascendance of the geoliterary approach.

Amongst the formation of a consciousness of the world and the reconstruction of immediate realities, space has become an anchor for human development. Furthermore, there is no perception or dynamic that can be effectuate without spatial reference.

The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (Foucault 1)

These were the inaugural thoughts of Michel Foucault about present-day polemics in the conference *Des espaces autres. Hétérotopies* (1967). Soon after, the reflection became part of the humanistic reasoning of experienced space. The prominence of space, place and spatiality has centralized interdisciplinary concerns of 20th century. Among the plurality of formulations, the highlights on Henri Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* and Edward W. Soja's *spatial turn* have opened such a broad field of reflection that literary techniques have been able to gather urban space representations enclosed on fictions, with "space-oriented earth sciences" (Hess-Lüttich 2). As expressed by Fernando Cabo Aseguinolaza, "space seems to have gained the prominence stolen from temporality and other close categories" [el espacio parece haber cobrado el protagonismo que se le hurta a la temporalidad y a otras categorías vecinas] (my translation; 27). From research projects of continental range as *Atlante del Romanzo Europeo 1800-1900* of Moretti and *A Literary Atlas of Europe* (in course) of Lorenz Hurni and Barbara Piatti; up until methodological proposals circumscribed to smaller landscapes such as "La proyección del lugar: Compostela en su imaginario geoliterario (1844-1926). Sistemas de Información Geográfica y Humanidades Espaciales", a project directed by Cabo Aseguinolaza in the University of Santiago de Compostela; to the tracking of urban development of Lisbon in the literary production between 1852 and 2009, by the historians Daniel Alves and Ana Isabel Queiroz¹¹ from Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

The extension of geoliterary techniques is imminent, and far from considering it as a serendipitous aisled event, it is rather a response of holistic and recent reconsiderations that lead to interpreting any local environment as part of an ultimate totality. In this case, world literature can relate, but, as mentioned above, it is important to delimit a unit of analysis, "global enough" for interdisciplinary connection.

For this purpose, urban space can be taken as a common denominator, not only between theoretical approaches but also in relation to contemporary literatures and societies: "Before the city is a construct, literary or cultural, it is a physical reality with a dynamic of its own", according to Richard Lehan, where it is possible to "confirm our sense of reality, validate experience, and suggest coherence in the face of chaos" (291). In general terms, it can be said, and keeping in mind geocultural diversities, Euro-american influences and non-centric heritages (peripheral and semi-peripheral frames), cities are a world reality. Which, in this case, is not a prelude to introduce the current analysis into the paths of Saskia Sassen's conceptualization of *global city* (1991), derived from the macroeconomical developments of the last *fin de siècle*.

Instead, the emphasis relies on a relative homogeneity of spatial conformation and imaginary transferred to the text.

Primarily in contemporary literature, cities as *imago mundi* function as a whole. “The history of the city in literature is as lengthy and rich as the histories of literature and cities themselves” (McNamara 1); yet 21st century perspectives are (adapting Foucault’s description) marked by juxtaposition, closeness and distance, dispersion, simultaneity, all of it enclosed in the margins of proximity. That is the immediate space. For a better understanding, it seems necessary to observe two literary works as a sample of semi-peripheral narratives, created by authors familiar to world literature studies. On the one hand, there is Orhan Pamuk, who from a disciplinary perspective can hardly be considered as a non-centric author; on the other, Gonçalo M. Tavares, who has been recognized as one of the best authors of Portuguese literature of his times. Both novelists are well-known for their transcontinental circulation and, still, their origins and, above all, their publications in native languages (Turkish and Portuguese) tie them to a minor position on the literary world-system scale.

The Museum of Innocence (2009) is a novel built around memory, in the sense of a reconstruction of urban environment, which encloses space, time, and characters whose dynamics and perceptions (filtered through the narrator’s voice) recreate Istanbul. The text itself and the actual museum in the heart of Çukurcuma, a neighborhood in the European side of the Turkish town, existed in a quotidian environment that would define the wholeness of the museum, and involve the two leading characters of the story. On a fictional level, the plot goes around the love story between Kemal Basmacı (the narrator), a bourgeois man in his prime, and Füsün (his love interest), a distant cousin of 18 years old from a limited economic background. Soon enough, both characters begin their relationship (secretly) until her disappearance after his engagement party with his former fiancée, causing in Kemal an emotional fall that turns into a materialistic obsession. From wasted cigarettes to combs, Kemal recovers any object that the girl touched during the time of the sexual relationship. Each object is linked to a memory that, initially, brings on the touch, the scent and the body of the young woman.

At the same time, Istanbul emerges from this activity: its streets, neighborhoods, buildings, houses, all places inspired by the act of remembrance. Likewise, the narrator describes specific landmarks and routes which provide his recreation of an established landscape, but with social and cultural accuracy and not only geographical. The experienced spaces and the pedestrian displacements around the town end up reflecting on the interpretation, assimilation and modification of European elements in Turkish society; which, according to the novel, is meant to become “modern”.

Through Kemal, Pamuk makes an emotional, historical and transversal cartography of Istanbul. The author’s career is compromised – at least interested in – with Istanbul’s quotidian life (local social history) through different historical periods. In this case, the range of the love story between 1975 and 1982 allows the author to concentrate on a process of assimilation of (Western) modernity (fifty years after Atatürk’s presidency) on three levels: urban, social and personal. In the novel, Pamuk uses literary composition to introduce Istanbul by establishing a narrative link between lovesickness and the transitional phase, through objects of everyday life that also, within a concealed place, will function as a smaller totality. Altogether, this wholeness is transversal, as the novel fluctuates between being a dramatic story and a fictionalized catalogue of the actual museum (located nearby a tourist area of the European side of the town).

An opposite case to the commitment of Pamuk is the emblematic de-localization of Tavares. Unlike the Nobel Prized writer, the novels of the Portuguese author are not identified with any specific spatial reality. In the best of cases, it is possible to associate his works to an unnamed city within the framework of the European continent. Naturally, this does not say much but it is this same ambiguity that provides another perspective to the sense of urbanity and spatiality regarding contemporary concerns.

Jerusalém (2004) opens with the representation of the human being in the limit between life and death. In this case, the novel is contextualized after an unnamed world violence, but still identifiable with the Holocaust, the cracking of European moral codes and the listed foundations for a *Europa 02*. The plot goes around the physical pain, the mental illness, perversions and the development of the self in six profiles (a woman, an assassin, a psychiatrist, a child, a prostitute and a mad man). As for “material” space, the peculiarity of this novel remains not only in the tensions and coalitions of such characters in urban places (hospital, church, streets, apartments), but in the lack of toponomy, i.e. the absence of specific locations, coordinates, directions. As the characters, one by one, are driven to leave home in search of placebos to their physiological deficiencies, the narrative voice enounces some sort of topography, which is not described but merely indicated: a church, the Hospice Georg Rosenverg, number 77 of Molke Street, a brief etcetera. Rather than recreate political conflicts and popular risings, name historical figures or allude to urban modifications – i. e. everything that originates and substances the urban grid, the author presents the skeleton of a city. This microcosm is built beneath the idea that after the destabilization of war, the city is distanced from the previous parameters of identity and distinction against the Other. Before such lack, urban space is reduced to inhabitants left only with the margins of their own physicality.

Apparently in *Jerusalém* (and in posterior works), cities and societies had no choice but to reconstruct from its (damaged) bowels. As urban space emerges through the displacement of each character, it is also recreated as an inner part of the conscience. Furthermore, it acquires organicity. City (wherever that is) and individual (whoever that is) are shaped as parallel entities – except for the names: in terms of equitability, the characters have been given names (with no correspondence with lusophone language).

Jerusalém encloses an environment that warns about a disconnection with any patriotism or association with Portuguese literature. Still, Tavares has been considered one of the greatest figures of his generation. His literary production comes with an expansive intention. The identity to reconstruct is, unlike Pamuk, the human itself, beyond national delimitations (linguistic, geocultural, political, or any mix of the sort). The interest between the self, the body and the reconstruction of urban space is a common formula today. The conferring of emotions in this process, analyzing them, locating them and working with them consciously, comes along with 1) what Lefebvre pointed out about the linkage between culture, society and history at the spatial frame; and with 2) the self-centered impulse to interiorize the reading of the surroundings and the movement across them. All of these, from the creation of personalized stories inside a heterogeneous totality, identifiable in the representation of a place that, within or away from fiction, have a meaning and an emotional charge that is hard to avoid.

Now, the fact that both semi-peripheral authors, Tavares and Pamuk, returned to the city as an epistemological core is not exclusive to the discussed novels. In fact, urban spaces are

constants that seem to weave their own narratives through their literary compositions and careers. It seems sufficient to recall Pamuk's *The Black Book* (1994), *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005) and *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2015) on the one hand; and, to mention the familiar case of the sequel *The Neighborhood* (2002-2005) of Tavares, and even the *Kingdom Cycle* (2003-2007) – where *Jerusalém* “belongs”. Instead of turning to a patriotic sentiment or a social cohesion, the prominence of the city leads to consider not only an interest in outlining the society beyond or – at least – detached from old entities, but also in creating the possibility to rethink the actual frame where global changes occur. The common choice of urban space as a prime reality drives the possibility to recognize an amalgam of social constructs inserted into literary texts as basis of the constructed world. Facing times when global homogenization seems imminent and national structures are insufficient and distant, the sense of belonging can only rely on immediate tangible reality, which is the lived space.

Now then, how can urban space conjugate with world literature? Bertrand Westphal already made an interesting suggestion in the foreword to *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (2011), edited by Robert T. Tally Jr., which has to do with spatial analysis and the need of literature “to be reinstated within a discourse on the world” (xiii). In his opinion, world literature is in a position to “imply a double openness on literary productions: first, that they be regarded as wholly universal and freed from any discrimination between supposed centers [...] and peripheries, and second, that they be linked to “real-life” referents” (ibid.). World literature can pursue the “the status of the world’s occupants” (according to Westphal) already observed by geocritical perspectives.

Contemporary authors are conditioned by transnational movements, cultural diversity and the increasingly frequent amalgam of linguistic systems on a regular basis (whether it takes place on different geopolitical frames or in the same town). Some of them have transformed such conditions into *leitmotifs*. The consciousness of the world is transferred to the literary text and becomes not only a fictional alternative but an imprint on nowadays literature. In this order, world literature can and should be able to (re)integrate spatial analysis in the measure of this consciousness under the gaze of the global. It is not enough to develop a general tracking of “globalizing” clues encompassed in contemporary works. Even if to do so would offer an interesting panorama. World literature can aim to identify transversal concerns in literary production and transcend to an interdisciplinary presence.

Apropos, cities are a fruitful unit of analysis. After all, they had been centralized as the spatial core of human practices (see Lefebvre, De Certeau, Tally). In addition, as expressed by Carles Carreras i Verdager (2013), “most authors had been themselves urban, most or all of their lives, at least, were formed in some city” [la mayoría de los escritores han sido ellos mismos urbanos, en toda o gran parte de sus vidas, o, por lo menos, formados en alguna ciudad, más o menos importante] (my translation; 40). Above any sense of compromise with their homeland, authors are inclined to integrate themselves to world circulation through the inclusion of global references, for which the city – and distinctively not the nation – seems fitting.

Returning to the novels, throughout *The Museum of Innocence*, Pamuk makes constant assertions about his attempt to facilitate the perception of quotidian lifestyle by a foreign reader, pointing out anthropological facts of Turkish culture concerning the image and proper behavior of women, the entrance of Euro-American cinema and movie theatres and the imitation of

imported items. Each aspect is mentioned as the main character intercalates specific places with his obsession – the “archive fever” from Derrida embodied in Kemal (Giraldo 85). A clear example is the marking of a city map according to his pain – Chapter 31 “The Streets that Reminded Me of Her” – and the geotag of settings where he “saw” Füsün – Chapter 32 “The Shadows and Ghosts I Mistook for Füsün”. On one level, the city map turns into a historical and emotional representation of memories; on the other, the lovesickness allows the embracement of a cultural mixture in progress. In fact, the act of literary and actual *museumification* of a fictional story is a way to establish a dialogue with Western literature and culture. Altogether, he elaborates a recollection of memories that turn the neighborhoods of Istanbul – Beyoğlu, Sisli, Nişantaşı – spaces for remembrance (not quiet *lieux de mémoire*) and conjunction between East and West. Istanbul becomes a city of remembrance.

On his part, Tavares follows another path. The omission of topographical indicators along with the lack of basic urban content, may give the impression of an intended disconnection with the space. To a certain point that is the case. Agreeing with Isadora Dutra, “on the urban cartography of the author, Portugal is no longer there: Portugal disappeared from the map! In fact, there are no maps” [na cartografia urbana do autor já não está Portugal: sumiu do mapa! Aliás, não há mapas] (my translation; 2014, 165). But the nature of the novel does not allow a compromise with a specific city, because the purposed society does not belong to a single town or country. The focus is on a damaged, broken, defectively standing Europe. First, the title; “Jerusalém” is only mentioned to quote the Psalm 137 from The Bible: “*Se eu me esquecer de ti, ó Jerusalém, que seque a minha mão direita*” (170). As a parenthesis, it calls to attention that in an English translation of The Bible, the quote would be “If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill”; but in the English translation of the novel, the words are “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand wither...” (149), which varies from the religious text alluded by the author in a paratext.

Returning to the subject: more than a catholic blink, “Jerusalem” becomes a sign for Western rebirth. In the middle of the text – at least in the original version – the author introduces pages of a “work of fiction” [*obra de ficção*] (127) under the title *Europa 02*. Narrated in second person, the catalog describes clinical examination and automatized torture as triggers for survival instincts and brutal behaviors against humanity. “*Jerusalém* is the law of man” [*Jerusalém é a lei do homem*] articulated by “characters that interiorized the War, (...), personagens que interiorizam a Guerra, [...], with those who are permanently at war with themselves, the crazies, and a few that do not belong to either category” [a par daqueles que estão permanentemente em guerra consigo mesmos, os loucos, e uns poucos que não têm cabimento nem numa nem noutra categoria] (my translation; 29, 30). The conjunction of the human’s law with Europe and Jerusalem as the only geographical references follows the cracking of social and moral structures, which implies a disconnection between the individual and an environment, paradoxically interiorized and detached. By enclosing fragmented characters on an unnamed city, subjected to the traces of a war, Tavares turns an ambiguity into a symptom of reformulation.

Both works, both authors, expose human condition and manifest moments of transition as guidelines of their microcosm. The city is configured as *imago mundi* mapped according to a multiplicity of features that translate contemporary society to the literary text. In this order, the novels extend an awareness of the world, function as worlds on their own, and, finally, are still fragments of a wider whole – literary phenomenon. Likewise, this totality can be a measure of

the epicenters of human development, structured by extra-literary factors that return, one way or the other, to the literary text. Not to say that the movement is cyclic, considering the variables of each dynamic. Remembering a main principle of Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature", one and unequal. Yet it is essential to start somewhere and with contemporary literature, what better beginning than urban space?

Cities became the cores for human thinking and distribution of the world. Even in terms of literary systems, they function as an anchor for unity, cohesion and stability during the last global changes. They act as a whole because they are the primary whole where a sense of belonging and self-definition take place. To experience the world concerning world literature's interests implies – among other things – to read the tensions between individual motifs and social surroundings and to intercalate the local and the foreigner's conceptions under the embrace of a totality, conditioned by geopolitical impositions. In the case of semi-peripheral narratives, such juxtapositions unfold the conditions and social codes imprinted on the city, under a parallel upkeep of the relationship with center domination. In short, semi-peripheral narratives (and literatures) revert the omnipresence of centrality as model of literary expression, but without rejecting its influence. Habituated to conjugate the local and the global in order to remold inner-development as needed, the semi-periphery becomes a systemic fragment amongst the upkeep of tradition and the permanent acts of renovation.

And all of these inside urban and emphatically linguistic frames, for there is no other way to assimilate the ways of humanity but through language, and there is no other form of expanding such ways across borders than through the arts of translation. In a way, urban space does not exceed translation but it relies on it, at the same time a translated work is prepared to function inside other geographical destinations. The fact that Pamuk's Istanbul is "given" to the global reader with specific details on sociocultural contexts, exemplifies an attempt at expanding knowledge about the Turkish city; and even the statement of urban environments without toponymic indicators as frames of the microcosm in Tavare's narratives, reassures such connection.

Urban space is a reality that has endured throughout human evolution, molding it and making it possible. Even if contemporary authors tend to (de)particularize the reception of spatial (w)holes by detailing its meaning, or else, avoiding it, the spatial dimension unfolds the aesthetic reality in which the microcosm occurs. Therefore, by observing the local and the global, the diegetic space and the city in more than one literary text, or better said, the small and the large (loaned conjunction from Eric Hayot), it becomes possible to assess inter-literary connections beyond linguistic and geopolitical boundaries. An entity enclosed is doomed to perish, whether societies, literatures or disciplines.

Towards Conclusions

Foucault considered that space is the contemporary concern of present times. In this sense, it might be plausible to add translation. Nowadays, authors not only have unlimited access to internationalization and share a predisposition for multicultural involvement, but they have interiorized both the conditions in their lifestyles and literary production. As a discipline in progress, world literature faces the inquiry of these motions and might be able to achieve its aimed spectrum by searching with other kinds of tactics.

Space defines profiles, relations, languages, hegemonies. Beyond an image, a scenario or a group of settings configuring a “void where something happens with time” and a certain impulse, space leads to a symbolic charge that sustains any viewpoint. The city is part of the self, as background, partner and base of personal and social interpretation, but also as a frame where transformation happens, with all the debates that come with it. As space and language are the kernels of current times, Literary Studies and, in this case, a geoliterary approach to world literature might find another frame to read the ungraspable moment of the present.

Notes

¹ On “Literatura mundial en/desde el castellano”, Domínguez recalls the emergence of the emblematic ‘worldly conscience’ of Goethe’s *Weltliteratur*, the heart of Euro-american core, and pursues similar attempts beyond the core of World Literature Studies. One of the highlights of Domínguez’s attention is the proposition of go beyond such domain, and he does it from a semi-peripheral front (Spain, nothing less), for it is undeniable (at least until now) that even when “world literature has been eurocentrically conceived and reduced to the Western canon, in its different variants” [la literatura mundial ha sido eurocéntricamente concebida y reducida al canon occidental, en sus diversas variantes] (6), the center of operation lies on the United States and, in terms of circulation, it rests on Anglophone worlds.

² As an example, besides the renowned *What is World Literature?* (2003), it might be quite illustrative to mention “Invitation to World Literature”, an audiovisual project financed in 2013 by Annenberg Media.

³ About the misleading judgement surrounding Goethe’s call of broadening the spectrum of literary knowledge, see Fritz Strich (1949) and Theo D’Haen (2012).

⁴ Referring to previously quoted Domínguez’s “Literatura mundial en/desde el castellano.” Also, John Pizer’s contribution to *The Routledge Companion of World Literature* in 2012: “Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe: Origins and Relevance of *Weltliteratur*” (3-11).

⁵ Peter Carravetta addresses distinctive issues concerning language, historic relevance and canon in “The canon(s) of world literature” (same volume, 264-272). On another yet close path, Horace Enghal also reflects on the process by analyzing Nobel Prize awarded as a case-study in “Canonization and World Literature: The Nobel Experience” (*World Literature, World Culture: History, Theory, Analysis*, eds. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen and Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, Aarhus: Aarhus UP, 2008, 195-214.)

⁶ See Martin Puchner, Thomas O. Beebee, Reingard Nethersole, Ann Steiner, for *The Routledge Companion of World Literature*.

⁷ See Sanja Bahun, “The politics of world literature” in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*; Gerard Holden, “World Literature and World Politics: In Search of a Research Agenda”, *Global Society* 17, 3, 2003, 229-252.

⁸ See Hans Bertens on “World Literature and Postmodernism” (*The Routledge Companion on World Literature*); and César Domínguez, “World Literature and Cosmopolitanism” (*World Literature: A Reader*).

⁹ Micéala Symington, “World Literature and Minor Literatures,” *Contextualizing World Literature*, Bessière, Jean, Gillespie, Gerald (eds.), Peter Lang, 2015. Theo D’Haen: “Major Histories, Minor Literatures, and World Authors”, *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15, 5, 2013.

¹⁰ Thomsen’s arguments are founded on the inclusion of texts with a perceptible 1) condition of impact, 2) meaningful contribution to the international canon, 3) remarkable quality of a specific period, 4) contribution to literary evolution and, 5) to the perdurability of these same features (36-37).

¹¹ Through spatio-temporal analyses of 35 novels and 30 authors, Alves and Queiroz relied on historical archives, city zones and listing of referenced places in the literary works, in order to identify epicenters of activity. The research results published in “Studying Urban Space and Literary Representations Using GIS” (2013), illustrate the management of multiple functional tools for the study of urban space. Nonetheless, the axis is alien to literary habits.

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