Space and Time in Language and Literature
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative case</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTCH</td>
<td>attachment</td>
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<td>CNC</td>
<td>Croatian National Corpus</td>
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<td>ENG</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIM</td>
<td>dimensionality</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Figure (the object being located)</td>
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<td>FLA</td>
<td>First Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Fictive Motion</td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>French</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Ground (the object with respect to which F is being located)</td>
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<td>NFM</td>
<td>Non Fictive Motion</td>
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<td>OR</td>
<td>orientation</td>
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<td>PREP</td>
<td>preposition</td>
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<td>Resultative Verb Construction</td>
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<td>SL</td>
<td>Satellite framed languages</td>
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<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>Serbian</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>verb</td>
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We also wish to acknowledge the kind support of Carol Koulikourdi and Amanda Millar from Cambridge Scholars Publishing, as well as express our huge debt of gratitude to William Candler.

This project required a lot of patience, not just from all the participants, but also from our families. For bearing with us on this long journey, we thank Dean, Zoran, Mia and Roko. Unfortunately, we cannot promise to stop discussing space and time in any near future.

Marija Brala Vukanović
and
Lovorka Grujić Grmuša
INTRODUCTION

CAPTURING SPACE AND TIME: MISSION (IM)POSSIBLE

MARIJA BRALA VUKANOVIĆ
AND LOVORKA GRUIĆ GRMUŠA

What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not.
—St. Augustine's Confessions, Book 11

I do not define time, space, place and motion, as being well known to all.
—Isaac Newton in the Scholium to the Principia, 1687

Space and time, their infiniteness and/or their limit(ation)s, have been intriguing people for millennia. Issues relative to the character of space and time have indeed been central to philosophy from its inception. Various aspects relative to space and time are nowadays at the core of many scholarly disciplines. Linguistics and literature are no exceptions in this sense. This book brings together eight essays which all deal with the expression of space and/or time in language and/or literature.

The first section—Time and Space in Language—contains four papers which focus on linguistics i.e. explore issues relative to the expression of time and space in natural languages. Three articles explore the expression of space from various perspectives. The topics under consideration include: typology regarding the expression of spatial information in languages around the world (Ch.1), space as expressed and conceptualized in neutral, postural verbs and verbs of fictive motion (Ch. 2), and prepositional semantics (space as a force dynamics rather than a geometrical i.e. topological concept—Ch.3). Chapter 4 explores the issue of aspectuality (in Tamil), drawing a comprehensive picture of which aspectual and tense markers interact with different verb types. All the articles propose innovative topics and/or approaches, crossreferring when possible between space and time. Given that they all seem to propose at
least some elements of “language universality” vs. “language variability”,
the strong cognitivist nature of the approach (even when the paper is not
written within a cognitive linguistic framework) represents a particularly
strong feature of the section, with a strong appeal to experts from fields
that need not necessarily be linguistic. In other words, the issues under
consideration propose analytic elements and findings possibly appealing to
anyone with an interest in the topic(s) of space and time, their interrelation
as well as their universality, ontological status, metaphorical potential and
so on.

The second section of this volume—Space and Time in Literature—
brings together four essays dealing with literary topics. These papers aim
at demonstrating that space and time capture the imagination like no other
scientific subject. Inherent in each narrative are both temporal and spatial
implications; if a literary text is situated in a certain time, it is from and
about a certain period, as well as about a certain space, even if virtual.
Another particularly strong feature of these papers is that they envision
space and time as complementary parameters of experience and not as
conceptual opposites, following the transfer of perspective through an
entire century. Departing from the late nineteenth century fictive spaces of
England and Croatia, the topic moves via the American Southern Gothic,
focusing on Faulkner from the thirties to the early sixties, via the post-
WWII perspectives on history, probing the postmodern context of
temporality, to finally reach the contemporary era of post 9/11 space-time.
The voyage from chapter five to eight is thus a journey through space and
time that allows for some answers to the nature of reality (of a variety of
space-times) as conceived by both the authors of these essays as well as by
the authors that these essays discuss.

Why did we decide to focus on the topic of space and time? Why do we
believe that the topic is worth pursuing, why do we see it as being both
interesting and promising for scholarship? The answers to these questions
are, again, perhaps most exhaustively spelled out in two parts, one relative
to space and time in language, and the other discussing space and time in
literature. Let us begin by considering the interest that the topics under
consideration have attracted within the field of linguistics.

1.1. Space and time in language

Natural language expressions for spatial and temporal phenomena have
long been recognized as being extremely puzzling and closely
interconnected. Both abstract notions have very slowly and laboriously
evolved within Western thought; for over two millennia space and time
have intrigued thinkers and served as fertile grounds for vivid discussions. One of the claims that distilling various, frequently opposed views on the topic has slowly yielded is the idea that space and time are fundamental intuitions built into our nature (let us just recall the notion of space proposed as a universal cognitive primitive within the Kantian tradition). As already pointed out above, linguistics has been no exception in this sense. From the surface, lexical level to the deep, cognitive one, many linguists have focused on a) the (mis)matches between the physical and the linguistic; b) the fact that both in the literal and metaphorical realms of language, similar terms are often used in both domains. This comes as no surprise given the conceptual primacy of space and time, as well as the many and close relations between the spatial and temporal domains.

The “conceptual primitiveness” of space and time has been revisited once again in the past thirty years, becoming a particularly attractive and prolific topic within the scientific framework of cognitive linguistics. With the advent of cognitive linguistics, semantic and/or syntactic particularities of spatial and temporal language, the relations between space and time in language, and the interplay between (spatial and temporal) language and conceptualization came, once again, into the focus of scholarly studies, becoming, to a large degree, one of the milestones of research within the discipline. Indeed, it is beyond any doubt that studies of spatial and temporal language and conceptualisation have been of fundamental importance in the development of cognitive linguistics. These studies have become a platform for revisiting some notions that had almost been outcast from serious science, such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (cf. Gumperz and Levinson, 1996). Ultimately, studies of spatial and temporal language and conceptualisation have provided a rich source of information for linguists, psychologists and other scholars interested in the issues of language, mind and their relations (cf. e.g. Bloom et al. 1996, Gentner, & Goldin-Meadow, 2003). Let us now take a look at some of the approaches to investigation of these issues.

We begin by observing that research in comparative linguistics as well as research in cognitive linguistics have revealed that there is a considerable variation in the ways in which different languages categorize space and time in order to talk about it (cf. e.g. Aurnague, Hickmann & Vieu 2007; Hickmann & Robert 2006). At the same time, we know that categorization, i.e. unveiling the principles and parameters underlying it, represents one the key approaches to most if not all research fields, (psycho)linguistics being one of them. Looking at things from this perspective, we immediately note two very puzzling issues: a) is there a way to reconcile crosslinguistic variation in the different (semantic and
syntactic) categorization of space and time in natural languages?, and b) is there a way to reconcile crosslinguistic variation in the categorization of space and time in natural language(s) on the one hand, and the frequently proposed universality underlying language as a faculty of the human cognitive system? In other words, the analysis and explanation of the language–cognition relation, which basically is the primary task of cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics¹, is inextricable from the analysis and explanation of the universal cognitive determinants underlying language vs. the language specific and/or culture specific in language, as well as of the causal relation between the two. It is, indeed, this latter element of analysis that seems to be the greatest source of information relative to the former, i.e. relative to both universality and language specificity. In fact, by studying (cross)linguistic expressions of space and time, focusing on universality vs. the language specificity (e.g. typological studies, which lie at the core of all four papers in the linguistics section of this volume), linguists hope to gain insight into the cognitive level of language. This hope is pursued by addressing a series of concrete research question, some of the best known, most widely researched and most influential in this work, being listed below:

- How is the conceptual relationship between spatial and temporal domains reflected in the application of spatial and temporal terms, and, furthermore, does the application of spatial terms in temporal contexts reveal consistent patterns in the conceptualization of the two domains?
- Extending the analysis of language use from the intralinguistic to the crosslinguistic: is it possible to identify a universal subset of spatial and temporal meanings that are expressed in all languages (as suggested by e.g. Talmy 2000)?
- Are there neuropsychological constraints on the nature of possible spatial and temporal meanings i.e. on what could be talked about and thus lexicalized in natural languages (see e.g. Jackendoff 1996; Landau and Jackendoff 1993, Talmy, 2000)? And, relatedly, does spatio–temporal language

¹ There still seems to be some confusion relative to the distinction between these two fields. It appears that the best way to look at the common vs. distinctive features of cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics is that, while pursuing the same goal of solving the language—mind riddle, the former reverts primarily to linguistic and the latter to psychological tools i.e. methodologies.
depend upon prelinguistic spatio-temporal schematisations (as suggested by e.g. Mandler 1996), and if so, how?

- Does the representation of the ‘human body’ as a spatial “source domain” play a role both in the structure and in the acquisition of (spatial and temporal) language (see Lakoff 1987)?

And finally:

- Does (spatial and temporal) language interfere with spatial cognition (in e.g. the comprehension of spatial and temporal expressions), i.e. does crosslinguistic variation in (the semantics of) spatial and temporal categories bring about differences in the non-linguistic spatial and/or temporal cognitive processes of speakers of different languages (as suggested by e.g. Bowerman and Choi 2001; Levinson 2003 etc.)?

Answers to these questions are very important not just in themselves, but also as they help shed light on the issue of the structure and the ontological status of (spatial and temporal) concepts in both language as well as in other sub-systems of human cognition. In other words, pursuing answers to the above questions represents a necessary step on our way toward the solution of a puzzling, fundamental, but still very controversial issue of the relation between language and thought.

In order to gain a full appreciation of the problem(s) we outlined above, and try to properly justify the great interest that the research of spatial and temporal language has been attracting in recent times, we need to point to two more facts pertaining primarily to the domain of space. First, we need not forget that spatial cognition is seen as being at the heart of our thinking (spatial thinking invades our conceptions of many other domains as diverse as time, social structure or mathematics—cf. e.g. Levinson 2003). Shifting the perspective slightly, from the developmental point of view we note that spatial words are frequently cited as prime evidence for the claim that children’s first words label non-linguistic concepts. These two facts represent two further arguments supporting the great scholarly interest in the relation between language and space. Given all the above, spatial words are seen by most scholars as good candidates for the search in the field of the universal (perhaps also primitive, innate) in language. It is perhaps because of these facts that, while being dedicated to both space and time, three out of four papers in the linguistics section put their primary focus on the issue of space in language.
Bearing in mind all that has been said above, one question is duly reiterated at this point: if what has just been claimed about the universality (primitiveness) of spatial language is justified, how are we to account for the fact that languages vary substantially in their semantic structuring of space (cf. e.g. Bowerman & Choi, 2001, Levinson 2003; Talmey 2000). Furthermore, and perhaps most interestingly, how are we to explain the fact that increasing evidence seems to suggest that children are sensitive to language-specific structural properties of the language they are acquiring from the one-word stage of development. It has, in fact, been shown that different linguistic patterns in linguistic input influence the meanings of children’s spatial words from as early as 18 months (cf. e.g. Bowerman 1996a, 1996b; Choi et al. 1999; Bowerman and Choi 2001). In the final analysis we necessarily wonder: is there hope, and possibly even a way, to reconcile all these contradictions relative to the findings about the relationship between the semantico-syntactic linguistic (at times seemingly incommensurable) parameters in the domains of space and time on the one hand, and the physical and psychic unity—or rather universality—of mankind (see also Levinson and Wilkins, 2006)?

The arguments put forth in the articles presented in the linguistics section of this book seem to suggest that it is indeed possible to posit a positive answer to this question. Shifting between space and time, different grammatical categories, and, crucially, between a number of different languages, each of the papers presented in the linguistics section of this volume explores some aspect of the universality and/or linguistic specificity of spatial and/or temporal universals in language. Furthermore, all the papers contribute, in one way or another, to the pool of elements of universality in language, that might not just be underlying typological patterns, but, possibly, even be related to the deep level of language, or rather, possibly, determining an interrelation between language and mind.

In the first paper of the linguistics section, “Adults’ Expression of Caused Motion in Chinese, English and French” the authors Henriëtte Hendriks, Yinglin Ji, and Maya Hickmann address the issue of language specificity vs. linguistic universality by investigating some elements regarding the typological frameworks as proposed by Talmey (1975, 1985, 2000) and Slobin (2000, 2004). Focusing on the expression of spatial information in languages around the world, the paper provides a detailed insight into the patterns of expression of caused motion in Chinese native speaker adults. The method used for gaining this insight is that of a cartoon-based production task. The results obtained from these Chinese native speaker adults are compared to the results obtained from English and French native speaker adults. The paper examines the following four
aspects in detail: the expression of the Cause component; the devices encoding Manner and Path of motion; the selection of information components; and the overall density of information. The results indicate that from the typological point of view, Chinese does not fully pattern with either English or French. Thus, when it comes to the expression of caused motion, Chinese shows a hybrid profile (resembling, on the one hand, English and showing features of satellite-framed languages, and demonstrating, on the other, also characteristics of verb-framed languages, being in that respect similar to French). The authors conclude that Chinese should be classified as an equipollent language (as proposed by Dan Slobin). The data presented in the paper furthermore shows that typological factors affect what information speakers express in verb and other devices, and how they organize this information in the discourse as a whole.

The second paper, entitled “The many ways to be located: the expression of fictive motion in French and Serbian” authored by Laure Sarda & Dejan Stošić, is another paper with the primary focus being put on spatial language. The paper investigates the correlation that exists between neutral verbs (e.g. “the book *is* on the table”), posture verbs (e.g. “the book *is lying* on the table”) and fictive motion (e.g. “the road *descends* towards the coast”) in the expression of static spatial scenes in French and Serbian. The exploration is based on translation data. This paper shows that in order to express static location with inanimate figures, French makes use of either neutral verbs or fictive motion, whereas Serbian can also use posture verbs. Since French makes limited use of posture verbs, it uses fictive motion in reference to some situations described by posture verbs in Serbian. The lack of an extensive use of posture verbs in French makes fictive motion more salient. In the conclusion, the authors try to place their study in a cognitive context, and do so by asking how such cross-linguistic differences in attention to fictive motion affect human spatial cognition.

While also focusing on space, in chapter 3, “The story of ‘o’. Force dynamics in the semantics of (Croatian) prepositions” by Marija Brala Vukanović, the focus is shifted from verbal to prepositional semantics. Exploring the (seemingly very unsystematic and unrelated) usages of the Croatian preposition “o”, the author proposes a view of this preposition that differs significantly from those usually proposed by grammarians and lexicographers. Departing from the claim that space (in language) is not an abstract entity described by geometry and/or topology, but rather a dynamic conceptualization based on and represented through our everyday experience (in and with space) in the world, the meaning of “o” is
explored from the cognitive perspective, and its analysis grounded in Talmy’s Force Dynamics framework. This allows us to show that the Croatian preposition ‘o’ can be semantically explicated as a lexical item which codes a logically ordered sequence of dynamic exchange / kinetic situations. It is extremely interesting that this analysis shares many typological and analytical elements with comparable analyses of prepositional systems in other natural languages, and, most interestingly, that it shares a number of features with the prepositional crosslinguistic analysis by Bowerman and Pederson. The relativistic issue is left out of focus in this paper, but the possibility of there being a pool of semantic universals, that force-dynamic elements proposed in this paper are seen as belonging to, does speak in favour of a strong language-mind relation.

The linguistic section closes with a paper by Lavanya Sankaran, which gives more prominence to the temporal elements in language. In “Verifying the Distributional Bias Hypothesis: An Analysis of Tamil” Lavanya explores Aspect, an element of verb mechanics that refers to the way in which a verb’s action is distributed through the space-time continuum. The author explores the validity of the aspect hypothesis with regard to the Tamil language. She does so by testing whether adult native speakers of Tamil are influenced by the inherent semantic aspect of verbs when they use aspect and tense markers. Although a number of FLA studies of English, French, Spanish and Italian support the aspect hypothesis, it is nevertheless the case that such studies have not been done on non-European languages. While being a non-European language, and thus of extreme interest for further exploring the aspect hypothesis, Tamil, as one of the oldest Dravidian languages, makes a particularly interesting field of study as it uses separate linguistic devices to code distinctions between both tense and aspect. The fact that aspect marking is not obligatory in Tamil, but that the marking of tense is, also makes important predictions for the aspect hypothesis. The aspectual markers incorporated in this study are “iru” (auxiliary for the perfect or progressive aspect), “kondiru” (progressive) and “vidu” (perfective). These markers were integrated into a comprehension task, a production task and an imitation task which have been carried out with three adult native speakers of Tamil from Singapore. By examining and consolidating data from these three different performance modalities, the study draws a comprehensive picture of which aspectual and tense markers interact with which verb types, thus also attempting to verify the aspect hypothesis with regards to adult native speakers of Tamil.
1.2. Space and time in literature

Apart from being inextricably interwoven in all aspects of life, when it comes to literature, the temporal and spatial parameters of human experience move beyond their familiar dualism and are merged into space-time, inherent in every narrative work. The activity of narrating a story correlates with the temporal character of human experience. Thus, time is articulated through a narrative mode, while narrative acquires its full meaning when embedded in temporal existence (Ricoeur 1984). On the other hand, a literary text always testifies of a certain space. The text itself occupies a place, it is a presence, even when we look at it on computer screens—it is there—spatial. These facts demand that the analysis of both foundational categories in literature be treated together, which is why this volume brings together essays capturing both space and time.

In connection to temporal and spatial parameters of narrative analysis, Bakhtinian chronotope takes the lead in merging the two into an intersection of time and space. Although abstract thought can be related to time and space as separate entities, defining them apart from the emotions and values attached to them, Bakhtin observes that “living artistic perception (which also of course involves thought, but not abstract thought) makes no such divisions and permits no such segmentation” (Bakhtin 1994: 243). In literature and art, he claims, the temporal and spatial are inseparable.

Since Bakhtinian chronotope stresses the importance of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature, and it can be traced in each of the literary papers of this volume, it is only fair to apply this perspective to our investigation. The analysis of literary chronotopes proves that they are highly sensitive to historical change. Different societies and periods result in different chronotopes both inside and outside literary texts, which is visible in Brînzeu’s text on the postcolonial chronotope. But, they can also be transhistorical in structure and not unique to particular points in time. A great example of such a chronotope is discernible in chapter six which can be referred to as the Southern Gothic chronotope, not so much connected to time as to the space of the U.S. South, and its political and cultural distinctiveness and isolation. Specific chronotopes shape themselves in some kind of relation to the exterior conditions/space-times in which they arise, implying a unique correlation between a particular, historical intra-textual world, and an equally particularized extra-textual world—traces of which can be found in all four essays of the literary section.
In order to try and explain the topic better, some details about the narrative must be introduced first. We must recall Russian Formalists and their distinction between the way in which an event unfolds as a brute chronology (*fabula*), and *syuzhet*, where the “same” event is ordered in a mediated telling of it, and having a construction (plot) in which the chronology might be reversed so as to achieve a particular effect. This implies that events in complex narratives do not occur in a sequence arranged by chronology, but their order could be “recovered,” as it were, by rearranging the “distorted” pattern of events back into their “proper” or, as it is sometimes called, their “real-life” chronology, which we know is just our perspective of chronology. Therefore, stated in the most basic terms, “a particular chronotope will be defined by the specific way in which the sequentiality of events is “deformed” (always involving a segmentation, a spatialization) in any given account of those events” (Holquist 2002: 114).

Underlying this idea of separation between story and plot is an old assumption, revealing a fundamental discrepancy between literature and life: the assumption that in literature events can be variously arranged, following any sequence, whereas in real life they are always chronological. This principle reflects a general tendency of the early Formalists to make absolute distinctions between literature and lived experience. Bakhtin does not accept a distinction between “conventional” and “real” time as foregrounded by Formalists; he embraces the category of dialogism, where the chronotope is grounded in simultaneity at all levels, including those of literature and life. There is no purely chronological sequence inside or outside the text, as shown in the essays by Oklopčić, Grujić Grmuša, and Brînzeu. These papers display the above contingency in a variety of ways, one of which is constant overlap between life and art in all of their analyzed fiction.

In accordance with this view is Einstein’s idea about the inseparability of time and event: something happens only when something else with which it can be compared reveals a change in time and space. An event will depend on how the relation between what happens and its situation in space-time is mediated. But, the means by which any plot deforms any particular story will depend not only on formal (“made”) features in a given text, but also on generally held conceptions of how time and space relate to each other in a particular culture at a particular time (“given” features). The point cannot be stressed enough: chronology of events is always interpreted in different ways at different times, being shaped by the presumptions certain space-time emanates and the priority it gives to events and causation.
As we know, different types of reality have unfolded since the beginning of time, for reality is never given, but it is an outcome of society’s culture. For centuries, Western society nourished an image of reality that was of an actual presence. A person lived in a certain time and space, and when he wasn’t present, he wasn’t there. This gave an impression of reality as real, stable, absolute, and complete (as opposed to nowadays). It revealed a linear and closure-oriented spatio-temporal trajectory within perfectly closed spatial figurations, predating a unidirectional, linear, teleological temporality progressively moving towards completion, from life to death or more symbolically from mortality to eternity (in accordance with religious views). Virilio labeled that era as one of extensive space and time, “a space where duration of time was valued” (Virilio in Dercon 2001: 71), and whatever lasted briefly was as if not having existed at all. Such a closure-oriented pattern is detectible in the texts of Hardy and Kovačić, as interpreted by Čuljat. Written at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, their novels testify of specific chronotopes: Hardy’s by moving away from the Victorian centre and into the localized, indefinite marginal space, and Kovačić’s through spiritual decolonization and self-assertion, advocating the Croatian right to national independence.

All four essays of this section take us on a journey through space and time in literature, displaying a variety of chronotopes, from the late Victorian era of British and Croatian landscape and circumstances, through Southern Gothic regionalism and Faulkner’s geographical and historical milieu, to postcolonial and postmodern chronotopes of the contemporary age.

Sintija Čuljat in “Fictional Topographies Diluting the Polarity of the Centre and its Margins: A Comparative Account of the Late Nineteenth-Century English and Croatian Novelists” seeks to define the convergence of the fictional space in Thomas Hardy’s and Ante Kovačić’s work. Declining the existent euro-centric cultural stereotypes founded on polarity of the metropolitan and provincial in the European novel, Čuljat argues the two contemporaries compose their respective novelistic space-time by means of an autonomous narrative of creative topography. Her paper adds to comparative discussions of national literatures in light of their local space-times.

Čuljat’s essay advances a methodology for incorporating creative fiction into research on spatial figures and unique spiritual landscapes. It

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2 Virilio worked both on space and time. During the sixties he focused on geopolitics, geometry, space, and topology, and from the seventies on, he dedicated his work to topics like time, speed, and dromology.
argues that Hardy’s and Kovačić’s literary texts offer fresh perspectives on the overlapping layers of experience which characterize temporal and spatial cultural circumstances, bringing together the historical, the global and the local within a single, multiply constituted, “imagined space.” Literary accounts of this kind can be characterized as a data source in their own right, complementing social science research methodologies grounded in “real-life” observation and offering hypotheses for subsequent verification of topographic modes. Through the narrative process of metaphorical transfer and characters’ lapsing to the margins and into mystified space-times, Culjat demonstrates that although Hardy and Kovačić chronologically belong to the pre-modernist generation, their texts create a singularly modernist narrative stance against the linear realistic narrative plane.

Although the next essay entitled “William Faulkner and Southern Gothic” takes us across the ocean and into the antebellum U.S. South, where we encounter the specific Southern Gothic chronotope, there are some similarities in themes treated by Hardy and Kovačić, and Faulkner and his Southern Gothic predecessors and contemporaries. All of these authors were labeled as regionalists, contrasting agrarian and industrial ways of life, and displaying the discrepancies between national and regional ideals. While painting a vivid picture of rural life in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, they testify of a specific space-time that informed literature. A peculiar trait that repeats itself in their novels is that characters are constantly encountering crossroads, symbolic of a point of transition.

This recalls another Bakhtinian chronotope, that of a “threshold,” highly charged with emotion and value, whose “most fundamental instance is as the chronotope of crisis and break in life” (Bakhtin 1994: 248). It is connected with the crucial decisions one has to make that determine her/his whole life, familiar in Hardy, Kovačić, and Faulkner, which after the moment of crisis occurs become a place of renewal and epiphany. The social relevance of such narrative representations is further demonstrated by their involvement in mainstream discourses, thereby illustrating how they articulate with existing social norms and how they serve against the backdrop of social structure.

Biljana Oklopčić in “William Faulkner and Southern Gothic” takes issue with Southern Gothic’s emergence, topics and demythologization, at the same time exploring the techniques and methodology but also the specific space-time that Faulkner as a Southerner depicted. Oklopčić argues that Southern Gothic has been determined by a certain region of space (the U. S. South) during an interval in time (the Southern past and
even present). The strength of Oklopčić’s approach is the persuasive connection it forges between temporal and spatial metaphors inherent in Southern texts, and the transhistorical structure revealed in the specific Southern Gothic chronotope.

As if shielded from the mainstream standards and quick and pervasive change brought about by the Industrial Revolution, the U.S. South remained distinct and marginalized from the U.S.A. and sank deeper into social and political isolation. Refusing to be entrapped within the technological apparatus and feel like appendages to machines, the Southerners chose what they referred to as a natural and patriarchal way of life, while the rest of the Americans, as Oklopčić writes, viewed them as morally degenerate since they separated from the essentially American ideals of chastity, capital, and industrialization. The juxtaposition of these views is visible in Southern Gothic writing. Laden with supernatural and ironic motifs and grotesque characters whose purpose is to explore social issues and highlight aspects of Southern culture (with a twist), Southern Gothic literature testifies to this unique space-time embedded in Southern regionalism burdened with history. Faulkner, probably the most famous Southerner, dealt with the past of his native soil through Gothic tropes, blending the history, settings, and atmosphere of the American South with unconventional plots, while disrupting linear and chronological narrative, using stream of consciousness techniques and fluidity of interpretation.

This experimentalism on Faulkner’s part suggests that there has been a collapse of culture modes in modernism that brought about a shift, displacing the major ways that made sense of culture and the world in the past, and knocking them off center while newer paradigms have started to contest that space. The reality that has emerged, along with acceleration of temporality, offers a growing awareness of living a multiplicity of times and of moving in different directions, while developments in transport and communication technologies render the world both more extensive and considerably “smaller” at the same time.

Thus, the commonsense conceptions of time and space have radically modified in the second half of the twentieth century. The geographic mobility of capital with investments placed all over the globe intensifies the demographic mobility of industrial societies. The alienated, migrating worker of modernity further metamorphoses into his postmodern counterpart, who is taking along his family, fragmented by the loss of a sense of place and community. People are now faced with the dissolution of the traditional support system formerly provided by the extended family which is detectible in both modern and postmodern literature, and specifically in some novels analyzed by Brînzeu and Gruić Grmuša. The
weakening of the sense of belonging to a place and its people and temporal scales, constantly on the move, has made the individual spatially disoriented and temporally accelerated.

This takes us to our last two chapters dedicated to postmodern space-time and literature. The defining characteristic of postmodern chronotopes is closely tied to our condition of postmodernity, and that is the shortening of commonsense perceptions of time, which is presented in both Grujić Grmuša’s and Brînzeu’s essays. The long pasts and futures of our ancestors have collapsed. The loss of temporal bearings has created new generations who are now made to live more intensively in the present: “the present is all there is” (Harvey 1989: 240). Future expectations are lowered further by conscious or repressed fears of a future that will be used up before it arrives, either by nuclear catastrophe, terrorist attacks, or by the damage perpetrated every day on the environment, claiming the entropic pull. The loss of a sense of living and participating in a historical continuity (delineated by traditional values and beliefs) and the collapse of future expectations define the continuous present established in postmodern society.

Lovorka Grujić Grmuša in “The Notions of History in Postmodern Literature: Kurt Vonnegut” offers a postmodern approach to history as viewed through the perspective of the post-WWII literary generation. Vonnegut, as a representative of early postmodernists, Grujić Grmuša claims, provides a different angle of vision of truth, history and temporality in general, variously colored by their subjective origins/observers. Focusing on the specificities of time phenomena in literature, Grujić Grmuša’s essay is a substantial contribution to the conception of reality, underlining the internal experiences of perception and indicating that connections between postmodern literature and history/science are more than metaphoric, because the boundaries separating fiction/fancy from fact/truth have themselves been dissolved.

Both Grujić Grmuša’s and Brînzeu’s essays acknowledge that postmodern narrative time often focuses on the moment of the narrative present at the expense of larger temporal developments. The moment is not envisioned as a self-identical instant of presence, but as partaking in an indefinite number of different, and sometimes mutually exclusive temporalities. The fact that different sequences contradict one another and can easily be replaced in a different order without changing things, for there are no causal relations, makes temporal patterns increasingly difficult to grasp in view of a variety of moments, each split into multiple versions of itself, embedded in intricate and sometimes logically impossible recurring structures, and appearing as a series of slices that correspond to
each other. However, this does not mean that time is sucked into space as some cultural theorists of our age claim, opting for “spatial turn” (Sayer 1985, Jameson 1991). Consequently, the postmodern texts, including Vonnegut’s novels as analyzed by Grujić Grmuša, deny closure–oriented spatio-temporal structures and feature unrecognizable, unstable characters struggling for autonomy in a world in which various systems oppose their identities, preventing the individual’s ability to seize control of the processes that surround him/her.

Reality projected in Vonnegut’s novels is typical of postmodern chronotopes. The author mixes historical data with fleeting memories and fiction, manipulating space-time, fracturing it, and revealing general cultural interest in short time spans. Grujić Grmuša argues that the novelist’s attempt to explore the simultaneous rather than the sequential structure of time as a means of organizing narrative exposes human time as just one among a multiplicity of temporal scales, one that can no longer be considered the measure and standard of continuity. Hence, Vonnegut’s works portray the multiplication of divergent time scales within predominantly Western spaces, displaying temporal discontinuity in the individual and social domains, and underlying the uncertainty regarding any relevant description of past and future.

Pia Brînzeu in “Transit Space, Transit Time: Terrorism in Postcolonial Fiction” discusses the transit space-time of the postcolonial and post-postcolonial period. The new era, Brînzeu claims, where globalization and reorganization of the economy but also the presence of evil (terrorism) has influenced modifications in real living conditions, and changed our commonsense conceptions of space and time. Brînzeu’s readings illustrate how problematic the assertion of a place is in the light of post 9/11 occurrences where penetrability and vulnerability of the post-postcolonial era homogenize places even if they remain differentiated by internal specificities.

What remains after post-colonization is a chronotope of “nowhere” and “never” (Said 1994), where postcolonialism becomes, as Brînzeu notes, a space and time of transit, of territorial and ethnic specificities and multiplicities. But colonization continues, only now a different kind, where technology colonizes the world through globalization and also colonizes bodies, their attitudes and behaviors. Brînzeu’s and Grujić Grmuša’s texts testify to these colonizations and display how collective memory has been reconstructed, modified, and endowed with political meanings.

The authors such as Fullerton, Vonnegut, and Foden, analyzed in the last two chapters, balance fact and fancy, experimenting with forms,
incorporating historical figures, public testimony, and other real data with historical falsifications and fiction, revealing the entropic condition of postmodern history. Like other postmodernists, these authors agree that nonverbal experience can only be described and not reproduced, even when history is in question. They believe history becomes highly distorted through language, which is why historical testaments must be regarded with a certain skepticism. Historical perspective is thus just a narrative, often based on political or social bias, a presentation of ideals, heroes and villains, but also providing moral and exemplary behavior for future generations (White 1973, 1987).

As the blurred boundaries between documentary, memory, and the fictive of personal experience (and history) have become more intensively theorised, creative writing is re-emerging as an important resource in social science, penetrating both factual and fictional spaces. All the four chapters of the literary section focus on and link real and fictive space-times, trying to grasp their complex relationship and the meanings of temporal and spatial parameters detected within the texts interpreted by Ćuljat, Oklopčić, Grujić Grmuša, and Brînzeu. Possessing singular and context-dependent structures and significations, each of the novels analyzed displays its chronotope, intersecting space and time, exposing “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Bakhtin 1994: 84).

1.3. Conclusive remarks

Most books available on the topic of the expression of time and space deal with the theme either from the linguistic or from the literary perspective. One of our aims in compiling this volume has been to try and propose a unified view of the problem departing from different perspectives. In our words, the main goal of the editors has been to bring together different scientific traditions which can contribute complementary concerns and methodologies; from the literary and descriptive via the diachronic and typological explorations all the way to cognitive (linguistic) analyses, bordering psycholinguistics and neuroscience. One of the strengths of this volume thus lies in the diversity of perspectives articulated within it, where the agreements, but also the controversies and divergences demonstrate constant changes in society which, in turn, shapes our views of space-time/reality. This also suggests that science and literature are not above or apart from their culture, but embedded within it, and that there exists a strong relativistic interrelation between (spatio-temporal) reality and culture. Our only hope to envisage objectively any if
not all of the above, is by learning how to move (our thought) through space, time or, to put it in simpler terms, how to shift perspectives.

Our rationale behind this volume is a simple but, in our view, strong one: we firmly believe that it is only by broadening our horizons, or rather working from a multidisciplinary or possibly interdisciplinary perspective, that we can ultimately hope to achieve some objective insights into any topic, more so when the topic is as general and as universal as time and space are. Detailed analyses within single frameworks can, and at times do, create disbalance between the need for objectivity on the one hand, and a just interpretative flexibility or rather potentiality on the other. Any finding relative to the domains of time and space needs to be verified or at least “verifiable” from different perspectives, if it is to hold any claims to scientific validity. Our book aims at providing the platform for exactly this type of approach.

References


Introduction


