

MAPPING CRITICAL JOURNEYS IN LITERATURE, FILM, AND CULTURAL STUDIES

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The image of the map has been widely used in contemporary cultural criticism as it allows different commentators to explore issues related to representation, power, geographical relations, or the “constructedness” of what one might understand as the natural world. More than transparent depictions of a supposed reality, maps have been approached as cultural constructions that reveal as much about their producers and their context of production as about the content being explored in the cartographical exercise. Reflections about such interconnections are not necessarily new and were already literarily explored in one of the first poems published by Elizabeth Bishop around eighty decades ago. Bishop’s “The Map” opens with the following lines:

Land lies in water; it is shadowed green.
Shadows, or are they shallows, at its edges
showing the line of long sea-weeded ledges
where weeds hang to the simple blue from green.
Or does the land lean down to lift the sea from under,
drawing it unperturbed around itself?
Along the fine tan sandy shelf
is the land tugging at the sea from under? (3)

First published in 1935 and later opening Bishop’s first collection of poems, *North and South*, from 1946,¹ “The Map” has appeared in many other poetry collections, magazines, and anthologies and has been critically approached from a variety of perspectives.

One of the issues that might contribute to its many readings and multiple appearances over time is the fact that the poem encourages readers to revisit their

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interpretation of conventionally accepted images of “reality”. In that poem, and to some extent in great part of Bishop’s poetry, “representation and observation form an inseparable pair in the creation of new perspectives into the material world, yet the dialectic involved in these paired activities can be as ambivalent as her poem’s questioning” (Beck 37).² Although the speaker in the poem seems to be quite interested in rediscovering the different nuances of geographical contours, cartographical conventions are also reassessed: “Are they assigned, or can the countries pick their colors? / --What suits the character or the native waters best” (3). In the apparent multitude of choices one might have when representing observed realities, who picks the colors for various portraits, or in other words, can colors in fact be picked? Questions like these permeate Bishop’s poetics and, in the specific case of “The Map,” the acts of seeing and reflecting upon observation are at the core of the poem. For Sara Meyer, the poem “does not only read a map; but also maps a reading” (235), as it depicts the speaker’s imaginative exercise of reconstructing their reading of the map.

It is the very idea of “mapping a reading” that becomes especially relevant to this introduction of volume 72.1 of *Ilha do Desterro*, the second non-thematic issue of the journal focusing on literature, film and cultural studies in English. If the metaphor of the map is already rather appropriate to describe the plural directions and routes taken in current scholarship, the image of what lies behind the act of “mapping a reading” might offer an even more fruitful opportunity to reflect on how different critical approaches become re-mapped in the reader’s encounter with them. Critical readings demand questioning and the excavation of not so evident elaborations; as the speaker in Bishop’s poem suggests: “More delicate than the historians’ are the map-makers’ colors” (3).

Besides mapping a wide range of perspectives in literary and cultural criticism, the present issue of *Ilha do Desterro* follows a new editorial approach, inaugurated by the journal in 2016, which consists of publishing non-thematic issues devoted to the studies of language and literatures in a yearly basis. By creating more space for the plurality and multifaceted character of academic research being produced in English, *Ilha do Desterro* has once more demonstrated the journal’s constant reassessment of its editorial policies, which are well aligned with what Wasserman et al. identified as the journal’s “double mission: to think critically about cultural production within the Anglophone world, and to offer to its readers state-of-the-art bilingual research in English Language, Literatures in English, and Cultural Studies originating in different local, national and transnational contexts, collecting and making available work by scholars from all over Brazil and worldwide” (9). Volume 72.1 continues such mission, presenting a variety of themes and approaches to artistic, filmic, and literary productions that encourage readers to create their own maps of critical readings in English studies.

This issue comprises sixteen articles and one book-review, which were produced by scholars from thirteen different institutions and which address literary and theoretical works as well as film or adaptation studies. The array of topics within this issue’s scope includes subjects such as racial and cultural

hybridism, Irish history and literature, the tensions between tradition and modernity, autobiography, settler colonialism, transitional approaches in cultural criticism, neo-slave narratives and the historical archive, cultural identity and immigration, violence in the context of war, filmic and cultural representations, slasher films and the Gothic, adaptation and Shakespearean studies, British cinema, and feminism.

Ten articles focusing on literary and cultural criticism constitute a first group of texts in volume 72.1. “Aspects of Hybridism in Joseph Conrad’s *Almayer’s Folly* and *Heart of Darkness*,” by Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira, opens the volume. Approaching Conrad’s texts from a postcolonial perspective informed by the works of scholars such as Bhabha, Said, and Geertz, Oliveira argues that the main characters in each of Conrad’s novels can be analyzed from the perspective of racial and cultural hybridism. By revisiting aspects such as the concept of hybridity in cultural theory, Conrad’s ideological ambivalence, as well as the intricacies between race, gender, and what could be called a “search for purity,” Oliveira also demonstrates how Conrad’s works anticipate issues that would later become central to contemporary cultural criticism.

A reading of the main characters in one of Conrad’s novels is also present in the article “Hearts of Darkness: the Experience of Horror in Roger Casement’s Writings - the Fabrication of an Anti-Hero,” by Roberto Carlos de Andrade. Yet, differently from the previous article, which approaches Conrad’s works from a postcolonial perspective, in Andrade’s discussion, such reading informs the close relation between Conrad’s main characters and Roger Casement’s persona. Starting from a reading of various texts on Casement, Andrade shows how such texts construct a conflicting image of Casement as both hero and anti-hero. Based on a fresh assessment of Casement’s reports and diaries, Andrade seeks to resist previously fabricated images of this Irish figure while also highlighting Casement’s important role in both British and Irish histories. The recovery of Irish history permeates yet another article in this current issue of *Ilha do Desterro*. In “Subverting the Ideal of Womanhood: Mary Lavin’s Sarah and Female Agency,” Eloísa Dall’Bello and Beatriz Kopschitz Xavier Bastos discuss how Lavin’s short-story “Sarah” reveals the social roles and strict moral and religious codes imposed on Irish women particularly after Ireland’s 1937 Constitution, which was still greatly influenced by the Catholic Church. Grounding their analysis of Lavin’s work on a discussion of female agency, Dall’Bello and Bastos demonstrate how Sarah, the main character in Lavin’s story, disrupts patriarchal roles by not conforming to the social codes imposed on her.

In “Uma Releitura de ‘The Waste Land’ sob o viés do Materialismo Lacaniano,” Gabriela Bruschini Grecca analyzes aspects of T.S. Eliot’s poem from the standpoint of Slavoj Žižek’s rereading of Lacanian materialism, especially in relation to Lacan’s conceptualization of the “Real”. The tensions present in Eliot’s poem between tradition and modernity, which are marked, according to Grecca, by the desire for transcendence, are not necessarily redeemed in the poem’s movements. Poetry is also the focus of Maria Rita Drumond Viana and

Andrey Felipe Martins's essay "So Were I Equalled in Renown: Autobiographical Elements and the Epic Poet's Career in Milton." In it, Viana and Martins explore the autobiographical vein in John Milton's *oeuvre*, starting from a recovery of how the concept of autobiography has been approached over time and how it can be read in relation to Milton's work. Critical readings of poetical texts such as "Nativity Ode," "Lycidas," and of specific excerpts from *Paradise Lost* are brought to the fore as ways to demonstrate the different and intertwining autobiographical movements in Milton's poetics.

A comparative reading between two novels by Australian and Brazilian writers Katharine Susannah Prichard and Rachel de Queiroz is at the core of Deborah Scheidt's "Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo* and Rachel de Queiroz's *The Year Fifteen: a Settler Colonial Reading*." In this essay, Scheidt grounds her analysis on Lorenzo Veracini's theoretical approach which differentiates "colonialism" from "settler colonialism." By demonstrating how both novels explore issues such as racism, exploitation and dispossession of Indigenous groups from a settler's perspective, Scheidt argues that the novels are ambivalent in relation to their representations of the process of colonization that happened in settler colonies such as Brazil and Australia.

"Terry Eagleton: Cultura e Política em Transformação," by Daniel Puglia, discusses five books by Eagleton published between 1986 and 1996 in order to demonstrate that this decade represents a transitional time in this cultural critic's *oeuvre*. One of the main aspects of such transition, for Puglia, is related to Eagleton's attempts to highlight the intricacies between cultural debates and their repercussions in social and political debates. In this context, Puglia revisits the significance of Eagleton's works for contemporary cultural criticism.

Two other essays that articulate connections between memory and identity in traumatic contexts follow the range of critical texts in this present volume. In "Mal de Arquivo em *Linden Hills*," Sônia Torres and Rita de Cássia Marinho de Paiva analyze Gloria Naylor's novel in relation to how it relates to the group of stories and narratives that compose the archive of slavery. Focusing on the concept of the archive as discussed by Derrida and interpreted by other scholars, such as Bradley and Johnson, Torres and Paiva read Naylor's novel as a neo-slave narrative which adds to the historical archive of slavery especially by articulating personal and collective memories usually left out from official narratives. In "A Reconfiguração da Identidade Cultural in *Precisamos de Novos Nomes*, de Noviolet Bulawayo," Shirley de Souza Gomes Carreira focuses on the interconnections between place and memory as a way into the recreation of cultural identities. Carreira approaches Bulawayo's novel as a contemporary *Bildungsroman* in which the author articulates issues of immigration and displacement connected to the main character's movement from Zimbabwe to the United States in the context of Zimbabwe's political and social struggles after independence. For Carreira, Bulawayo's novel negotiates the meanings behind its very title, as the "need for a new name" permeates the novelist's formulations on how cultural identities are constituted.

Violence is one of the issues thematized in the essay “How to Do Things with Words – Haikais, Drones e Pornografia,” by Mariana Feminino Ruggieri. In Ruggieri’s discussion, the violence of war, in its many different contexts and forms, is articulated through a reading of different cultural productions, such as Don DeLillo’s *Point Omega* and Omer Fast’s *5.000 Feet is the Best*. Grounding her discussion on *A Theory of the Drone*, by Grégoire Chamayou, Ruggieri articulates the ways in which literary and artistic works are also implicated in how we understand what is done through and with the use of words.

A group of five articles on film and adaptation studies composes a second range of essays in volume 72.1. “A Imagem da Bruxa: da Antiguidade Histórica às Representações Fílmicas Contemporâneas,” by Bruno Vinicius Kutelak Dias and Regina Helena Urias Cabreira, presents a historical overview of the figure of the witch and its cultural, social, and religious resonances in relation to the transgressive power this female image embodies. Such historical perspective is at the background of Dias and Cabreira’s discussion of the representation of the witch in movies ranging from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) to *The Witch* (2015), allowing them to elaborate on how such representations change over time.

In “It Hurts ‘Cause You’re in my World Now, Bitch: Gothic Features in the 1984 and 2010 Versions of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*,” Claudio Vescia Zanini presents a comparative reading of two versions of this popular slasher movie, highlighting the Gothic features present in the two cinematic productions. Starting from a critical review regarding slasher films, Zanini analyzes the opening and closing scenes in both movies and demonstrates how the 2010 version of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* resignifies and updates the original movie’s Gothic legacy.

Two articles focusing on adaptation studies follow Zanini’s text in this volume. “‘Tá Difícil Competir:’ Adaptação da Trilogia de Michael Dobbs, *House of Cards*, pela BBC e pela Netflix,” by Brunilda Tempel, recovers significant aspects of the theory of adaptation as discussed by scholars such as Leitch, Stam, Pavis, among others, in order to analyze not only how the BBC and the Netflix series adapt Dobb’s trilogy but also how they recontextualize Shakespearean works in contemporary productions. By relating elements of Dobb’s novels and of the two series to some of Shakespeare’s plays, more specifically *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *The Moor of Venice*, and *Richard III*, Tempel demonstrates how Shakespearean themes and characters continue to be celebrated in the most various contexts. Adaptation of one of Shakespeare’s plays is also the focus of “*Duas Casas: a Creative-Critical Commentary on Romeo and Juliet*,” by Fabiane Lazzaris. In this article, Lazzaris discusses the significance of adaptations produced in a pedagogical context. Basing her critical approach on the works of scholars as Hutcheon, Elliot, and Huang, Lazzaris introduces and analyzes the short film *Duas Casas*, produced in Bagé, in the countryside of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, at UNIPAMPA. According to Lazzaris, the short movie produced by young students from the region and university students from UNIPAMPA rereads Shakespeare’s play in a local context as the story is situated in two communities in Bagé. For Lazzaris, the pedagogical exercise of adapting one of Shakespeare’s works allowed the

producers to negotiate identity issues and to recover cultural elements embedded in the region's history.

The final article from the group of texts focusing on film and adaptation studies is "O Trabalho Colaborativo no Cinema de Ken Loach," by Marcos César de Paula Soares. In it, Soares recuperates the collaborative nature of Loach's works by presenting how the British filmmaker, since the beginning of his career, worked closely and collaboratively with his cast. Starting from a close reading of a scene in one of Loach's film and from a discussion on Naturalism's heritage in British literature and cultural productions, Soares argues that Loach's methods and influences are directly related to the director's attempts to authentically depict British laboring classes.

Closing volume 72.1, the book review "Mary Beard's *Women and Power: Dialogues with Tradition and the Search for a Woman's Sentence*," by Marcela Santos Brigida and Davi Pinho, assesses Beard's text by showing its significance and the dialogue it creates with Virginia Woolf's legacy.

This concise introduction to the current issue of *Ilha do Desterro* has shown the different critical maps present in volume 72.1. From discussions of literary works or filmic productions to reassessments of cultural critiques, the volume invites its readers to participate in the constant re-mapping of the multitude of routes one might take in English studies.

Notes

1. "The Map" was first published in Ann Winslow, ed., *Trial Balances* (New York: Macmillan, 1935) 78-79.
2. A first discussion of Bishop's "The Map" by Magali Sperling Beck appeared in her PhD thesis, from 2008. This is an abridged and revised version of the discussion present in the cited thesis.

References

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