

*Sara Ansaloni & Eleonora Gioia (Eds.)*

# Literature, Geography and The Poetics of Space

*Tracing Historical Narratives Across Literary Landscapes*



IL Sileno  
Edizioni



*Preface by Charles Travis*

*Sara Ansaloni & Eleonora Gioia (Eds.)*

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*of the*  
Anthropocene

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Tracing Historical Narratives Across Literary Landscapes*

Sara Ansaloni & Eleonora Gioia (Eds.)

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The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” edited by the Scientific International Publisher “Il Sileno” (Il Sileno Edizioni) will discuss the new processes of the Anthropocene epoch through the various worldviews of geoscientists and humanists, intersecting disciplines of Geosciences, Geography, Geoethics, Philosophy, Socio-Anthropology, Sociology of Environment and Territory, Psychology, Economics, Environmental Humanities and cognate disciplines.

Geoethics focuses on how scientists (natural and social), arts and humanities scholars working in tandem can become more aware of their ethical responsibilities to guide society on matters related to public safety in the face of natural hazards, sustainable use of resources, climate change and protection of the environment. Furthermore, the integrated and multiple perspectives of the Environmental Humanities, can help to more fully understand the cultures of, and the cultures which frame the Anthropocene. Indeed, the focus of Geoethics and Environmental Humanities research, that is, the analysis of the way humans think and act for the purpose of advising and suggesting appropriate behaviors where human activities interact with the geosphere, is dialectically linked to the complex concept of Anthropocene.

The book series “Geographies of the Anthropocene” publishes online volumes, both collective volumes and monographs, which are set in the perspective of providing reflections, work materials and experimentation in the fields of research and education about the new geographies of the Anthropocene.

“Geographies of the Anthropocene” encourages proposals that address one or more themes, including case studies, but welcome all volumes related to the interdisciplinary context of the Anthropocene. Published volumes are subject to a review process (**double blind peer review**) to ensure their scientific rigor.

The volume proposals can be presented in English, Italian, French or Spanish.

The choice of digital Open Access format is coherent with the flexible structure of the series, in order to facilitate the direct accessibility and usability by both authors and readers.

## Preface

### *Literature, Geography, and the Poetics of Space: Tracing Historical Narratives Across Literary Landscapes*

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*Charles Travis*

This volume brings together seven essays which explore the dynamic interrelationship between narrative, geography, and the perception of space through historical and hermeneutic lenses. Each contribution addresses how the spatial dimensions within literature reflect broader social, political, and cultural contexts. Collectively this volume guides readers through the rich and textured literary landscapes in which place, identity, and narrative form new understandings of the relations between the written word and the geographical imagination. By examining different place settings—both real and imagined—and their influence on literary forms and discourses, this collection sheds light on the intricate and often profound ways that spaces, landscapes, and environments shape the art of storytelling, and how stories and other types of literature shape our perceptions of place.

The first essay investigates eighteenth century French epistolary novels, focusing on “Oriental” travel narratives. These novels serve as cultural mirrors through which European readers gazed upon Turkey, Persia, India, and China. The unique perspective of first-person narration in epistolary form reveals not only the fascination of French audiences with the “Orient,” but also offers a window into the complex exchange between geography and identity in an era of burgeoning global curiosity.

The second chapter delves into Chaim Potok’s *My Name is Asher Lev*, examining the role of memory and verbal semantics in shaping narrative space. Through a linguistic-typological approach, this chapter reveals how memory, geography, and identity are deeply intertwined in both the narrative structure and the cultural context of Potok’s novel, showing how different linguistic traditions influence perceptions of place, memory and identity.

In the third essay, the focus turns to the ancient Etruscan landscape, specifically the practice of viticulture and the concept of *Vite Maritata*. This chapter employs a multidisciplinary approach to reconstruct the vinicultural landscape of Central Italy, emphasizing how the historical cultivation of vines entwined with trees serves as a metaphor for the symbiotic relationship between human practices and natural environments, a fragile, but vital relationship that is rapidly disappearing in these (post) modern times and era of (post) human Carbonate technologies.

The fourth chapter brings readers to postcolonial Morocco, exploring how the avant-garde journal *Souffles* navigated the complex terrain of national identity through geo-linguistic experimentation. This essay highlights how postcolonial literature grapples with the legacies of colonialism, using language as a site of resistance and a tool for the construction of a pluralistic Moroccan identity.

The fifth chapter shifts to the early twentieth century, the era of European showman politics and the Fiume occupation led by Gabriele D'Annunzio. This study explores how a political and artistic avant-garde in two revolutionary magazines—*La Testa di Ferro* and *Yoga*—transformed a territorial dispute into an experimental socio-political project. Fiume exemplifies the ways in which geopolitical and artistic ambitions interweave to produce new forms of space and identity, pushing the boundaries of both literature and political activism.

The discussion of space continues in the sixth essay, which examines German Romantic fairy tales. By analyzing the contrast between urban and natural spaces in these stories, the essay highlights how changing environmental and social conditions influenced the portrayal of landscape, reflecting anxieties and aspirations that resonate with contemporary ecological concerns framed by the heuristic of the Anthropocene.

Hayao Miyazaki's fictional worlds come to the forefront in the last chapter, which addresses the ethical and ecological dimensions of his work. Set against the backdrop of war-torn landscapes and the Anthropocene, Miyazaki's films blur the lines between nature and technology, adulthood and childhood. By foregrounding empathy and the ethics of care, the essay illustrates how space in Miyazaki's cinematic narratives foster in audiences a sense of ecological awareness and the potential for healing in an era of environmental degradation.

Together, the essays in this volume offer a multifaceted exploration of how literature not only reflects but actively shapes our understanding of space, geography, and identity across different historical and cultural landscapes.

Through these diverse approaches, the volume emphasizes the enduring power of literary landscapes to inform our perceptions of the Earth and how we create and dwell within our individual and collective *lifeworlds*.



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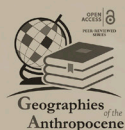
This volume examines the interdisciplinary nexus of literature and geography through a multifaceted lens, blending theories from cultural studies, narratology, and spatial analysis. Beginning with a systemic understanding of literary geography, the chapters explore imaginative, political, and ecological landscapes, emphasizing their relational and dynamic nature. Contributions analyze the production of place and space, highlighting their role in shaping cultural, historical, and environmental narratives.

Key topics include the interplay between memory, identity, and travel in literary geographies, the cultural significance of territorial disputes, and the transformative potential of ecological narratives in the Anthropocene. Methodological frameworks range from geocriticism and literary cartography to ecocritical and geopolitical analyses. Case studies span diverse contexts, such as French 18th-century travel narratives, Etruscan agricultural practices, and Hayao Miyazaki's ethical landscapes. Themes of power, positionality, and environmental responsibility are examined through postcolonial, feminist, and ecological perspectives, illustrating the creative and critical capacities of literature to reshape spatial imaginaries. The volume introduces innovative concepts, including the cultural critique of geopolitics in avant-garde aesthetics, mnemonic geographies in Jewish narratives, and urban-nature dynamics in Romantic fairy tales.

The contributions underscore the ethical and performative dimensions of literary geographies, revealing how storytelling fosters new spatial understandings and responses to global challenges. By reimagining real and fictional spaces this work demonstrates the transformative interplay of literature and geography in shaping our understanding of history, culture, and the environment.

**Sara Ansaloni**, holds a degree in Modern Languages and Literature and a Master's degree in Global Studies with a focus on Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Turin (Italy). She studied at the Université de Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens and, after conducting fieldwork in Morocco with the support of the University of Casablanca, she published her findings in a book titled *Covid-19 as a Syndemic* (2022). Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Graduate Teaching Fellow in French and Francophone Studies. Her research explores the intersection of human geography and the formation of religious and cultural identities, particularly in the Maghreb region. She is also interested in the ecocritical dimensions of Arabic and Maghrebi literature, examining issues of identity, gender, and religion.

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