Editor's Notes

As I write these lines fierce debates about borders dominate national and international politics. Just a few days ago, the Brexit process practically halted and might altogether be terminated over disagreement about the renewal of border controls between Ireland and Northern Ireland, while in the US, President Trump's insistence on building a wall along the border with Mexico has led to the longest governmental shutdown in the country's history. While the contemporariness of these debates is unquestionable, as they are closely connected to the political agendas of migration, globalization, and national sovereignty, the question of borders is as old as mankind. The history of borders, boundaries, frontiers, and borderlands, that is, the division, labeling, and protection of space, can be—to a large extent—equated with the history of human civilization. The city is often regarded as the main achievement of our species exactly because it is the most complex and refined form of thinking about space. In fact, the city is not only a unique design of space and (inner/outer) borders but also clear evidence of the fact that we are unable to think of the one without the other. Any space-bound activity is also a boundary-oriented activity. While the city lies at the center of the anthroposphere, the dialectics of space and its borders serves as a core model of anthropocentric thinking, be that geographical, biological, social, economic, political, or cultural.

Spatial studies is hardly a passing fancy of the humanities but the lingua franca of many sciences in a world where the expansion of the anthroposphere has reached its outer limits. Having run out of habitable space do we realize the value of space and its significance to the study of the past and present of civilization. Ágnes Györke's introduction to the thematic block on space provides further details on the emergence of the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences and some of its most pressing problem areas. Her preliminary remarks also point to the theoretical and conceptual tenet the articles in the block share.

In "Of Monsters and Migrants: On the Loss of Sanctuaries in Literature as a Parable of Biopolitics in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries," Peter Arnds examines the allegorization of the city as sanctuary in the wake of the recent migrant crisis and the spreading of populist rhetoric employing mechanisms and narratives of dehumanization. Examining three nineteenth-century canonical texts—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1830), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)—as parables of the process of monstering alterity, Arnds argues that the strategies of excluding people and ethnic groups fractures the very concept

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of the city as protected space, as sanctuary. Employing Giorgio Agamben's interpretation of the concept of the *homo sacer*, the article identifies three forms of expulsion: being banned from the human community, being declared undesirable within the city, and being denounced for intruding on city borders. In all three cases, although to varying degrees, dehumanizing cultural narratives such as criminalization, animalization, and corresponding strategies of silencing become activated. While the inspired analyses of past cultural representations illustrate the history of scapegoating, Arnds is equally interested in how amidst today's migrant crisis cities and the territory of nation states become a space of exception: a fractured sanctuary that fails to offer peace but only accentuate one's excludedness, a space that speaks of the loss of sanctuary. The corruption of its civilizing and domesticating mission emphasizes the ambiguous nature of the sanctuary and makes the Sovereign and its powers monstrous and fearsome, the very labels given to refuge-seekers.

Arnds's exploration of the sanctuary as the space of exception providing shelter as well as precarity holds a great deal of relevance for Huseyin Altindis's article on Cynthia Shearer's recent novel on the New South, *The Celestial Jukebox*, a novel about labor exploitation, the casino business, the heritage of plantocracy, and troubled race relations. The focus shifts from the city borders that supposedly guard "civility" from "animalism" to the city itself where less visible borders are called into being. The Lucky Leaf Casino, which serves both as the central location of the novel and the chief symbol of the global economic connections of the New South, is explored as an amalgamation of servicescape and retroscape; that is, a hybrid space that renders legible "the network of connections between plantation nostalgia, labor exploitation, and associated power structures continuing to restrict, disrupt, and capitalize on space, people, and history" (38). Locating the casino within multiple semiotic systems allows Altindis not only to analyze consumerism and the fascination with the past as spatial practices but also to reconstruct Shearer's critical attitude towards the plantation myth—another false sanctuary, we might add—that romanticizes and legitimizes the vulnerability of immigrant laborers at the hands of corporate capitalism. Karl Polanyi's arguments about money, land, and labor being false and fictitious commodities are adapted to the reading of the economically exploitative practices of the casino, described as the modern version of the plantation machine enslaving consumer culture and commodifying human labor. While the essay convincingly argues that the Lucky Leaf Casino stands as a central trope for Shearer's pointing out the shortcomings of capitalist nostalgia, it also establishes a creative dialogue between spatial and memory studies and

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advances our understanding of the interconnections between servicescapes and retroscapes.

The problem of the city as sanctuary is also raised by Zsuzsanna Lénárt-Muszka's article on the short stories of 2000's Pulitzer Prize-winner Edwards P. Jones describing the urban experience of traumatized teenage residents in Washington, D.C. The stories are analyzed as examples of spatialized identities and memories; that is, the way people perceive of themselves and remember their past in terms of locations, buildings, and spatial relations. The adolescent narrators, either as a result of growing up in black working-class homes or of the loss of a mother, carry traumas which they hope to cope with through their attachment to urban space. As Lénárt-Muszka claims, characters move "in between places arranged in concentric circles from private to public—from the home, the family, the school, and the city—with the last being the most important one" (53). This movement is an attempt to heal from traumas suffered in the abstract social space of the home, the neighborhood and school, and although the well-structured urban areas are the least threatening for the protagonists, they fail to find comfort. As they obsessively roam the urban landscape in search of the agency of self-understanding that would ease the destructive psychic effects of their traumas, the teenage protagonists become refugees for whom finding the sanctuary remains elusive. Coming of age could be completed and the healing process could start, Lénárt-Muszka asserts, at the cost of integrating pain and loss into their narrative of the self and returning from the public spaces of the city to the private spaces of the family in order to dismantle psychic boundaries.

Private and public spaces are intricately linked, influencing but also wrestling for dominance over each other. The topography of urban space is created through these symbolic struggles which are often underpinned by society's moral standards, superstitions, and prejudices. This is especially the case for spaces associated with sexual and criminal activities. Fin-de-siècle London, torn between Victorian morality and the many vices it offered, was portrayed in urban gay literature as a decadent city: a place, as Zsolt Bojti's article suggests, where specific spaces served the purpose for homosexuals to satisfy their bodily needs. Discussing Edward Prime-Stevenson's novelette *Imre: A Memorandum* (1906) and his study entitled *The Intersexes*, Bojti convincingly argues that instead of drawing readers into the decadent subculture, the American author hoped to address the layperson reader and explain in simple psychological terms the behavior of homosexuals: "Stevenson's work," Bojti claims, "is a courageous attempt to demonstrate his belief in the power of literary discourse, which shows guidance shaping the thoughts and attitudes of society in general" (74). To reach this aim, *Imre* is

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relocated from western capitals, perceived by the popular mind as centers of decadence, to Budapest (renamed as the imaginary Szent-Istvánhely and portrayed as a Foucauldian heterotopia). This strategy serves to redeem queer space from its criminal and pathological connotations without making it unreal. Szent-Istvánhely is described as a mirror which, while reflecting familiar, Western notions of spiritual and physical masculinity, allows the homosexual protagonists to be observed and evaluated from a safe distance. Presented as a liminal space between the West and the East but without the prejudicial associations and exotic stereotypes previous gay literature shared about Hungary, Prime-Stevenson's Budapest is both a city where the novel's homosexual protagonists find hopeful prospects for the future and an ideal space for sexual difference where social acceptance and the possibility of coming out overcomes vilification.

Coming out is also the focal point of Imre Olivér Horváth's essay, which explores the gradual transformation of Thom Gunn's poetry with regard to how openly his poems—dating between 1954 and 1982—addressed the author's homosexuality. Horváth identifies the double relevance of space referring to, on the one hand, psychic suppression captured by the metaphor of closeted homosexual identity and, on the other hand, a creative-poetic space, the "leitmotif of the split self, which is always accompanied by spatial division" (85). Close readings of how the poems evoke disturbed mental spaces enter into dialogue with Ruth E. Fassinger's model of gay and lesbian identity development, which emphasizes the importance of stepping over boundaries (of visibility) and conquering (public) spaces where the subject feels confident and without the compulsion to self-disguise his/her identity. Thus, the transformation of mental spaces, the gradual disappearance of spatial divisions, and the synthesis of selves in Gunn's later poems is recognized as the order of identity development. Horváth identifies "Talbot Road" from 1982 as the first poem without allusions to divided consciousness, masks, or poses to disguise homosexuality. The deconstructive transgression of heteronormative boundaries marks the completion of Gunn's poetic coming out.

Moving on to more miscellaneous topics, the issue does not altogether drop its focus on space and boundary. The first article takes aim at Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, winner of the 2015 Man Booker Prize. The first Jamaican author to receive this prestigious award, James was praised for combining a multitude of narrative voices, of which Anna Tomczak analyzes the most complex and unique, that of Sir Arthur Jennings's. The special role of this voice is established, as she contends, by Sir Arthur's "position of both belonging and not belonging, transcending binaries and

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inhabiting Borderlands, while constructing a new locus of enunciation blurring the boundaries between the colonial and the post-colonial" (113). The character is analyzed as a boundary figure, a duppy; that is, a spectral manifestation of a dead person in the indigenous religion of Jamaica. Sir Arthur's liminal position—occupying the space between the world of the living and the supernatural, the official and the vernacular, colonial rationality and native spirituality—gives recognition to perceiving the world in alternative ways and symbolically unites the many cultures of contemporary Jamaica. The hybridity of the narrator is further explored through his reliance on the local oral epic tradition and his likeness to the figure of the griot, the traditional Caribbean bard with credibility and moral authority. On the whole, Tomczak's investigations provide proof of the more general argument that to understand space we have to equally understand the borders that segment it. Here, the liminal subject position of Sir Arthur allows James to explore postcolonial Jamaica's social dilemmas, cultural meanings, and life.

Liminal positions in art are self-reflexive moments as in the case of theatre, the most spatial art form, crossing into the territory of visual arts. Teresa Botelho's essay discusses two plays—John Logan's *Red* (2009) and John Murrell's *The Faraway Nearby* (1996)—as examples of stage productions about visual artists Mark Rothko and Georgia O'Keeffe, respectively. The main challenge for this type of *Künstlerdrama*, even more important than the representation of the art objects and their creation on stage, is which formative events to focus on in the construction of the artistic self. Yet, as Botelho succinctly argues, these plays limelight "discontentment with the dramatized dominance of the artist as a biographically established fact and the search for mechanisms of performative representation of the visual art in and by itself" (139). In *Red*, Logan emphasizes Rothko's belief in the intimate relation between painting and painter, the autonomous identity of the works created and their ability to overwhelm the function of the space they are exhibited in. The play stages the artist's inner conflict brought about by the unconquerable disharmony he senses between the sacredness and vulnerability of paintings and the commodifying world, a fracture that leads to the corruption of the former by the latter. In *The Faraway Nearby*, an intimate portrait of O'Keeffe's later years, Murrell uses the vast corpus of photographic images about the artist to shape particular scenes. This strategy foregrounds the presence of the artist as an artistic creation instead of a biographically accurate portrait and requires the audience to reflect on the nature of art and what it means to be an artist rather than reduce creative practices to recorded life events.

András Beck examines Morna Pearson's *The Artist Man and the Mother Woman* (2012) in the generic framework of the *Künstlerdrama*, understood here

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as a narrative formula which links the inter- and intrapersonal dynamic of personality development with the protagonist's emergence as a self-conscious author. According to Beck, the uniqueness of Pearson's authorial signature as a dramatist lies in her ability to design plots which set out in the alluring tone of light comedy that draws spectators into the world of the play but eventually releases intense pain and tragedy, turning the table on the audience. This double strategy of immersion and catharsis, contends Beck, puts "as much emphasis on the audience as on the artist and the artwork, and self-exploration and self-reflection are highlighted on both ends—production and reception" (148). As such, the formula of the *Künstlerdrama* will not only portray the protagonist's artistic development but require a more responsive and responsible attitude from the audience.

"John Williams's *Stoner* and Literature as Dark Matter in the Age of Educational Managerialism" by Joakim Wrethed somewhat expands this issue's concern with space and borders through a look at the pedagogical potential of literature. While pragmatic critics of the humanities might prefer literature to have clear borders and its teaching to involve well-formulated learning outcomes and transferable skills, true literary education—according to Friedrich Nietzsche, whose relevant arguments Wrethed reconstructs with great clarity—is like dark matter, mysterious and inchoate, something that reveals itself arbitrarily and is indefinable by scientific scrutiny. The difference between the two epistemological systems, the utilitarian and the idealist, creates unresolved tensions in the classroom with the former giving the false idea that literature suits any student. The character of Stoner in the novel illustrates that the force of literature, despite its evanescent quality, is transgressive and easily alters one's path through life. The essay describes Stoner's shift towards literature as a form of withdrawal from the desire to control and dominate things in his life. His choice to let life slip through his fingers, that is, choosing not to exercise power over life, is not a sign of weakness but an "aesthetic will to power" as Wrethed, inspired by Nietzsche, calls it. The pedagogy of literature, thus, demands giving oneself over to unknowing, a demand that is unlikely to be greeted warmly by goal-oriented educational philosophies.

In his analysis of nineteenth-century, pre-Lovecraftian American weird fiction as well as Lovecraft's own writing, Pál Hegyi identifies the power of this type of prose in terms similar to Stoner's perceptions of literature as dark matter. Hegyi claims that "[b]ordering on the dividing line between what it is possible to say and what is not is a property in both weird and new weird tales that not only descriptions but also narrative strategies in general share" (162). This liminal position and reliance on dualities recall the dichotomies in the psyche, language, and signification which Sigmund Freud theorized in his concept of the uncanny. Capitalizing on this analogy, Hegyi identifies six allegorizations/literary tropes of

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the uncanny—the *Doppelgänger*, the haunted house, the automaton, chance events, madness, and humor—and examines them as literary tropes in selected works by Henry James, Ambrose Bierce, Edgar Allan Poe, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain. Weird/new weird literature thrives upon the liminal and captures through aesthetic means the tension between homely and unhomely, subject and abject. According to Hegyi, the formlessness and fracturedness of physical-mental spaces, furthermore, the absence of a singular signifying process to capture these, should be ultimately recognized as the impossibility of the story. Not the end of literature, only the type of literature that fails to cater for ambiguities, enigmas, and weirdness. Apart from revitalized literature's enduring dependence on the arbitrary dark matter, allegorizations of the uncanny contaminate other genres in different art media and in doing so ensure the survival of the Lovecraftian heritage.

The review section introduces recently published books on a variety of subjects. Some of the edited volumes reviewed are connected to the issues discussed at greater length in the articles sector, including a collection of essays on the most recent developments of Dracula studies, another about the interconnected notions of space, gender, and gaze in Anglo-American literature, one about the African American cultural memory of the Middle Passage, and an edited volume focusing on the timely issue of surveillance and its effects on identity politics. Scholars of theatre will be pleased to read our learned colleagues' critical assessments of a monograph on Cuban-born American avant-garde dramatist Maria Irene Fornes and another about the theatre of Edward Albee. Other volumes reviewed vary thematically from contemporary critical voices about vulnerability to a Nietzschean interpretation of Anthony Burgess's visionary fiction to a monograph on the relevance of postcolonial theories to the study of the post-Soviet era, and, finally, to a conference volume dedicated to the study of utopia and its ideological, political, and literary dimensions.

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