Introduction
Cities: Literature and the Urban Imagination

Though the need to protect and delineate borders is as old as mankind, as Zsolt Győri remarks in his Editor's Notes, the scholarly interest in space is a relatively recent phenomenon. Often called the "the spatial turn" in the humanities and social sciences, the shift of focus from time and historicism to space and locality, which gradually unfolded in the twentieth century, has transformed these disciplines.[1] As the essays in this section demonstrate, the spatial turn has led to a versatile, productive, and creative engagement with cities, regions, and other localities and has foregrounded the role of literature and textuality in the production of space. The five essays in this section of *HJEAS* offer insights into the relevance of the spatial turn for literary scholars. In its own way, each focuses on the role of space and (trans)localities in poetry and fiction, exploring, for instance, the conceptualization of the sanctuary in nineteenth-century novels, the perception of Budapest as queer heterotopia in expatriate literature, and the aesthetic and poetic role of coming out in Thom Gunn's poetry. The authors analyze these issues in diverse literary texts ranging from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to recent fiction such as Cynthia Shearer's *The Celestial Jukebox* (2005), which makes this section versatile yet theoretically and conceptually coherent.

The attempt to foreground space, context and difference in academic discourse reflects the historical and cultural transformations that took place in the twentieth century on a global scale: the end of colonialism and the decriminalization of homosexuality in the Western world led to an increased visibility of diasporic cultures and non-normative identities, revealing the privileges that characterized Western modernity. Michel Foucault, undoubtedly, played a significant role in the creation of a theoretical framework appropriate for the analysis of these cultures and identities. Though he was not primarily interested in space itself, like Henri Lefebvre, Foucault's theory about knowledge production and heterotopias did have an impact on the spatial turn, which is clearly shown in this issue as well. All contributors rely on Foucauldian concepts to some extent, either quoting him directly (Peter Arnds, Zsolt Bojti, Imre Olivér Horváth) or referencing critics influenced by his theories, primarily Michel de Certeau (Zsuzsanna Lénárd-Muszka, Imre Olivér Horváth) and David Harvey (Huseyin Altindis). Not unlike Foucault, the authors see space as a dimension of social relations by which "power/knowledge gets materialised in the world" (Brown 2-3), yet, at

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the same time, they also point towards contemporary issues beyond Foucault's horizon, such as the representation of migrants as monsters in the contemporary media, for instance (Arnds).

Some of the articles, especially Arnds's and Altindis's, touch upon the experience of living in a constantly transforming, less and less sustainable world. The destructive impact of neoliberal capitalism and the experience of running out of habitable space explain why scholars feel the need to rethink theories of globalization and invent new terms that reflect this discontent. Paul Gilroy in 2004, for instance, replaced the term globalization with "planetarism," as he argued for the need to understand the role of "translocal solidarities" in the contemporary world (70). His concept of translocality, just like planetarism, challenges earlier theories. By foregrounding the role of the local, the term calls into question the assumptions theories of transnationalism rely on, primarily the idea that borders have been superseded in the decentered empire of global capitalism (Hardt and Negri xiv). Since the publication of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, a number of scholars have articulated the need to focus on the local, the affective, and the intimate in a profoundly global context (Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta, 2011) and called for a transformation "from below" (Gilroy 74). Though the twenty-first-century world might seem borderless and decentered, trans*localities* embedded in global flows demand attention, as do borders and boundaries. Arnds's essay shows that contemporary media, echoing Mary Shelley's, Victor Hugo's, and Bram Stoker's narratives to some extent, reproduce impenetrable boundaries and limits when it comes to the portrayal of space.

The contributions also offer a glimpse into the conceptual and terminological richness of city studies. The difference between "place" and "space," for instance, explored by Zsuzsanna Lénárt-Muszka, is perhaps the most significant terminological issue in urban studies, especially in de Certeau's and Jon Anderson's writings. The concept of "retroscape," used by Huseyin Altindis to call attention to the role of nostalgia in the production of twenty-first-century business investments, might remind the reader of Arjun Appadurai's famous list of five "scapes,"[2] which also had a significant impact on urban geography. Lénárd-Muszka's reference to places of difference "scale" in Edward P. Jones's writings, from intimate to vast, relies on Anderson's writings, whose concept of "place" is profoundly different from de Certeau's notion, which is widely used by scholars in the humanities. Even readers not especially well-versed in urban studies might find this conceptual bravado engaging and informative.

The idea of queer space, explored by Zsolt Bojti and Imre Olivér Horváth, is yet another significant spatiality this issue investigates. Spaces such

as baths, gay bars, and more open public buildings designed by innovative gay architects are conceptualized as empowering locations in queer theory.[3] The metaphor of the closet, however, analyzed by Horváth in Thom Gunn's poetry, is a more ambiguous trope. After the publication of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's groundbreaking *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), "closet space" became one of the most often discussed metaphors in queer theory. Its twofold meaning primarily results from the fact that the closet is a hidden, private space, a space that needs to be left behind, yet it is also a space that empowers the emergence of non-normative sexualities. As Michael P. Brown points out, the closet "kept us from knowing the lives of queer subjects from the past" (3), and, no doubt, homophobic individuals still think this is the proper place of gay people. Other critics, however, perceive the closet as a space where gay subjects can construct their identities, free from outside constraints (Betsky 21). Horváth subscribes to the first option: reading Gunn's coming out of the closet as the renegotiation of his identity, he argues that leaving the closet behind leads to a more affirmative identification with queerness as well as to a profound artistic growth.

The articles also touch upon the role of the city, which is often considered to be the most complex and refined form of thinking about space, as Zsolt Győri puts it in the Editor's Notes. The city, *prima facie*, is the space where social, cultural, political, and economic issues gain heightened significance due to the media and the concentration of economic wealth. The concept of "global cities," popularized by Saskia Sassen, calls attention to the role of metropolises as nodes in global economic networks, while Charles Landry's work on creative cities and UNESCO's Cities of Literature program show how cities and the arts contribute to the neoliberal world economy. Critics of neoliberalism, nevertheless, claim that these programs are unable to do justice to the poverty and precarity which characterize urban peripheries and the countryside (Dzenovska 16), while queer theorists often point out that capitalism, normativity, and the urban landscape are inseparable (Brown 66-67). These unresolved issues indicate that city studies has become one of the most significant interdisciplinary research areas to date, and there is still a lot to be done. The current issue of *HJEAS* contributes to this burgeoning field by showcasing how literary works map the urban imaginary in the context of migration and other forms of displacement ranging from walking in the city to dystopian border crossings. Each essay offers unique insights into the ways cities, as diverse as nineteenth-century London, imaginary Budapest, and futuristic Madagascar, function in these narratives. For Arnds, the city is a protective and repressive location, a sanctuary undesired outsiders cannot penetrate; for Altindis, it is a dystopia, a microcosm of capitalist relations

allegorized by retroscapes. In Lénárt-Muszka's article, the city functions as a mixture of traces that tie humans into a particular environment and hinder their development; in Bojti's, it is a heterotopic, transgressive location which offers an escape from normative patterns. In the same vein, Horváth perceives the city as a space that allows for the formation of affirmative queer identities, which, despite the constraints both authors delve into, lends this section a rather hopeful conclusion.

Ágnes Györke
Károli Gáspár University

Notes

[1] See, for instance, Arias and Warf's *The Spatial Turn* (2009).

[2] Ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes. Appadurai defined these different "scapes" as "landscapes" of global cultural flows (33).

[3] See, for instance, Aaron Betsky's *Queer Space* (1997).

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