

of *Secrets* with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, viewing the former novel not only in relation to its prototext, but mainly as a product of a new, postcolonial literary history of the Global South with its unique matrix of textual and cultural values.

The volume *Taking Stock* offers a valuable overview of current trends in comparative literature, which I follow due to my own research and background in translation studies (a discipline which itself emerged partly from this field). Since this book is very broad in scope, nearly any scholar of literature and cultural history will find some topics, approaches, concepts, and references of interest. Given that the collected texts are for the most part, case studies, they can be viewed as heuristic examples as well.

However, the title of the book can be seen as its primary drawback. What the individual studies bring to the fore in terms of range and novelty of topics and approaches, the book lacks in conception. The phrase "taking stock"

implies the need to catalog and describe what has been done; one takes stock to think and move on. Yet the introduction to the volume is very brief and its declaration that "[v]iewed conjointly, the essays seek to expose enduring deep structures of Comparative Literature" (3) seems self-servingly vague. What it needs instead is a deeper, extensive introduction that would help readers (some of whom might not be experts in comparative literature) understand the development of the discipline over the last 25 years. If one is to assume that the reader will understand the position of the book in the system of the discipline only by virtue of its being part of an established and well-known series, this does great disservice to an otherwise well-edited collection and goes against the spirit of openness and transdisciplinarity epitomized by its authors.

IGOR TYŠŠ

Institute of World Literature SAS

Slovak Republic

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3172-9369>

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**ÁGNES GYÖRKE – IMOLA BÜLGÖZDI (eds.): Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture: Central Europe and the West**  
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Even though the concepts of affect and translocality have recently been a popular field of study in the Western context, the inclusion of the frequently-overlooked region of Central and Eastern Europe into the discourse had long been overdue. In addition to being an important step in the recognition of the region's intellectual composition, *Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture: Central Europe and the West* edited by Ágnes Györke and Imola Bülgözdí, introduces a refreshing contemporary look at the affects of social changes regarding spatial features in literary and visual media. It highlights the intersection of affect theory and translocality, since the chapters emphasize both the impact of an environment

on the process of identity formation and the reverse effects of emotional experiences reconstructing the space. While affect theory provides the authors with the opportunity to explore the senses of regional belonging and estrangement as the indicators of environmental impact, the adoption of the term translocality enables the contributors to foreground "localities and subjectivities *within* the context of global flows" (4). Moreover, the volume pays particular attention to gender in making localities accessible globally without jeopardizing the specific cultural heritage of the region.

*Geographies of Affect* is a collaborative effort with 13 scholars from various European countries, whose editors accentuate the

importance of rethinking the significance of Central and Eastern Europe in the process of illuminating the gravity of the region in the history of Western legacy and overall intellectual global circulation. The volume claims to have the objective of “investigating the production of space in post-1945 translocal culture in a comparative theoretical framework exploring the ways representations of space and emotion intersect in works of literature and film” (2). The editors further elaborate their aim by saying that “focusing on the emotional landscapes of cities and regions in the English-speaking world as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, the volume intends to open a productive intercultural exchange between the region and global urban studies” (3). The result is a sound attempt at investigating the legitimacy of the binary understanding between the center and the periphery of Europe to reconceptualize the Central and Eastern region’s translocal culture by spotlighting the locale within a larger global context. Throughout the chapters, affect remains a significant concept that draws attention to the senses of belonging and alienation while simultaneously generating a place of resistance for the localities against national programming and transnational flows.

The volume is divided into five sections, each composed of thematically related chapters. The first part begins with Pieter Vermeulen’s chapter on the impersonal affect of translocal narratives that investigate how personal affect can help reach a better understanding of a transpersonal community. By showcasing the mobile nature of the chosen contemporary literary texts, Vermeulen emphasizes literature’s ability to physically and emotionally “move” and affect readers while demonstrating the ways in which translocality reveals the intricacies of “intra-national” and “inter-regional” urban settings. The following chapter by Miklós Takács explores the unique case of the Hungarian Holocaust survivor Eva Fahidi’s theater performance in *Sea Lavender* that hauntingly blends the experiences of survivor/actor

and the spectator in terms of powerful affect. Synthesizing testimonials with dancing, the author claims that Eva Fahidi battles her traumatic experience on stage by transforming the feelings of shame, violence and vulnerability into euphoric emotions. The chapter is definitely exceptional in its exploration of trauma depicted in theater in the context of positive affect which is quite uncommon. This first section ends with Katalin Pálincás’s discussion of the concepts of historicity and collectivity in Lisa Robertson’s novels, set against a rapidly changing translocal urban space. Through archival research combined with social practices personal to Robertson, Pálincás traces the description of a multi-layered city’s present from the historical lens of a poetic *flânerie*. These three introductory chapters are important in demonstrating the power of narratives in exceeding personal emotion, especially trauma, to reach a transpersonal affective community and set the tone for the upcoming sections.

The second section examines the existence of male, female and queer identities in urban spaces through cinematic affective analysis. It begins with György Kalmár’s analysis of the concept of “retreat” in selected contemporary Hungarian films in terms of a fragmented identity resulting from spatial displacement experienced by Eastern Europeans after the fall of communism. By focusing on the non-gender-normative male protagonists who are disillusioned by their former dreams of a modernized urban West, the chapter questions the need for a return to the homeland of traditionally masculine culture in order to build a sense of authenticity and a grounded identity. Following Kalmár’s exploration of disintegrated male identity is Zsolt Györi’s chapter on various female experiences in the socialist spaces of communal living with examples from late communist Hungarian cinema. Drawing attention to the gendered affective experiences of communal blocs, the author claims the role of “architectural patriarchy” in hindering the gender equality through ensuring female subordination to a paternal-

istic regime. The final chapter of the second part, by Fanni Feldmann, focuses on the affective qualities of queer spaces overviewing their inception and utilization in the contemporary Hungarian cinema, underlining the difference between mainstream films and queer productions. Contrasting the strong homophobic undercurrents of mainstream cinema that tends to prioritize the bodily aspects of queer identification, especially by centralizing affective qualities of shame in queer urban spaces, Feldmann provides an insightful vision into queer historiographic documentaries with their stance of activism seeking to establish safe spaces that foreground a sense of security and belonging. Through drawing attention to the spatial and affective feature of the term “safe space” that is generally used in queer discourse, the author underlines the connotation of the word, meaning both a non-violent and an emotionally supportive home of subculture. In its approach towards gendered identity in late and post-communist urban settings, the section provides fresh perspectives regarding emotional effect of borders that blend public with the private in East and Central Europe.

As the standout section of the volume, the third part begins with Imola Bülgözdí's rich analysis of Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992) in terms of its depiction of rural Southern African-American migrants' affective response of fascination to New York's Harlem as a result of a translocal journey. Emphasizing the highly different urban experience of black migrants from that of middle-class white city dwellers and the complex relationship of an individual and a place, Bülgözdí affirms the double-sidedness of Morrison's depiction of urban experience that reveals the ways in which the past lurks into reconstructed identities of immigrants which renders the chapter a great investigation of translocal geographies. The following chapter by Márta Kőrösi takes an equally enlightening approach to Marjane Satrapi's prolific graphic novel *Persepolis* (2000) by employing the thematically and formally relevant notion of “border thinking”, which en-

ables the exploration of multiple geographical and cultural spaces with a historical “double critique”. By situating the novel in the larger discourse of comic genre with special attention given to icons and gutters, the author Kőrösi is able to showcase the suitability of the medium to Satrapi's autobiographical topic of border subjectivity and translocality. This section is certainly striking in its unique analysis of borders, both physical and abstract, in the chosen migrant narratives with particular attention given to the utilization of different media in the narrative such as music and illustration, and how in both cases the affective outcome of the process of migration leads to a reconstruction of a subjectivity in translocal terms.

The initial chapter of the fourth section by Anna Kérchy analyzes the spatial and narrational disorientation in Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland* and its loose adaptation by China Miéville, *Un Lun Dun* (2007). Throughout the chapter, the author presents how Alice's adventures, both in Carroll's original and Miéville's adaptation, question and reinterpret the concept of space in terms of affective psychogeography. Foregrounding “the girl's curiosity” of the protagonist in investigating the concept of space in terms of affective psychogeography, Kérchy claims psychoanalytical, lingophilosophical, ideological and even environmentalist assumptions in Alice's random mobility that help blur the border between the self and the space. In the second chapter of the section, Jennifer Leetsch analyzes how the central romance in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013) helps emphasize the ability of metropolitan spaces to affectively suggest both concepts of belonging and alienation, especially to migrants. By presenting the unsettled affective relationship between the two migrant protagonists, the chapter provides a contemporary glance at the ways in which migrant narratives reshape the boundaries of transnational writing while simultaneously drawing attention to the close bond between love and space. Both chapters of the section are illuminating transgression and

the reconstruction of affective urban landscapes from an alternative lens of gendered and racialized depictions that question the more commonly portrayed white and masculine urban experience.

The fifth and final section of the volume, focusing on crime and the city, begins with Tamás Béneyei's analysis of Patrick Neate's utilization of the noir structure in his hard-boiled thriller *City of Tiny Lights* (2005) to outline the complexities of the multi-ethnic urban space of post-9/11 cities, in which the affect of fear is replaced by that of terror. Béneyei's approach to the unconventional crime narrative with a Black British private eye reveals the deconstruction of hard-boiled discourse's stability in urban spaces, the key words being rootlessness, and multiculturalism, lack of control. In the final chapter of the volume, the author Brigitta Hudácskó questions the borders of classic crime narratives in a Hungarian context through a novel with a female Hungarian detective, underlining the reasons behind the genre's absence in the Hungarian canon despite the genre's conveniently reproducible structure and cultural obstacles emerging in the process of transfer. The interesting aspect of the chapter is the exploration of how a classic detective story can be installed in a location with a crime history that tends to deviate from the expectations of the genre norms. This final section with chapters centering on crime narratives present unconventional versions of the noir genre that question the prescribed figure of the detective to reject traditional investigative methods for a more affective approach and the validity of local urban crimes in a contemporary global scene.

In conclusion, the volume presents a refreshing survey of affect theory in relation to translocality through the analysis of several contemporary literary and cinematic productions of Central Europe and the West. One thing to note is that though the introduction of the book suggests a tighter focus on relocating Central and Eastern Europe on the global and cultural scene of the 21st century, most of the chapters focus on works

or authors from Western Europe or the USA. Furthermore, the limited attention given to Central and Eastern Europe in the volume is mostly reserved for Hungary as a case study for the overall region, since most contributors of the volume are of Hungarian origin. However, the emphasis on this country results in an uneven representation of the region which does not seem to align with the volume's intention. Nevertheless, the originality of each chapter creates an engaging and rich perspective that contributes greatly to the discourse and will captivate readers interested in representations of affective spaces both in literature and visual media.

RANA YÜRÜKER  
Yeditepe University  
Turkey

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6696-6612>