

A TRANSMEDIA DESIGN APPROACH TO LITERARY CARTOGRAPHY: THE CASE OF *O ANO DA MORTE DE RICARDO REIS*

ID 538

Luís Frias

Universidade da Beira Interior / ICNOVA

Ricardo Cruz

Research Centre for Human Development, Universidade Católica do
Porto / Externato Ribadouro

The field of literary cartography already established the pertinence of experiencing real places integrating a narrative to fully understand the spatial references an author uses to structure a text. At the same time, we need to consider that in the spatial atmosphere of a dramatic scene, any scene referencing physical elements of a real space builds also an emotional narrative fabric that deeply connects that space and the action in the text. The spatial identity of a place then shapes the narrative structure not as background scenario but as an active element in the action. An effort to map those spaces, and the literary experience they convey in the text, involves necessarily the use of a multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, one needs to understand a map as part of the narrative and not as a mere illustration of the setting where the action occurs. The use of critical cartography notions is paramount to understand, and be able to design the complex relations between map and text, and how the act of mapping can better explore the geographic, spatial structure of a story. On the other hand, the complexity of narrative spatio-temporal dimensions, framed by the author's vision and intention, needs to be preserved while augmented. This can become a fluid and difficult task when using different kinds of media to produce a map, namely digital and physical, for each one has its specific interaction rules and user experience appropriation. Grounding our exploration on the work of Robert T. Tally, Sally Bushell, Barbara Piatti et al., and

Patrick Colm Holm, the intention of this research is to understand how a transmedia experience designed to work both physically and digitally can augment the reader's experience and comprehension of a specific literary work, using the cartographic space that is already described in the action of the text. For the purpose of this experiment the novel *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*, by José Saramago, will be used to design the narrative of a cartographic literary experience in a transmedia format

Keywords

Literary Cartography; Narrative Design; Dramatic Space; José Saramago

THEORETICAL FRAMING

The literary question

By re-inventing Ricardo Reis, the classical heteronym by Fernando Pessoa, Saramago has his mind set on writing about the life of Reis, even though the title of the romance is focused on his death. Saramago takes advantage of the return of Reis to Portugal, to portray the city of Lisbon in the year of 1936, under the extreme-right dictatorship of Salazar.

The narrative of *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis* by José Saramago is set almost entirely in Lisbon. The plot begins on December 29th 1935 and ends on September 8th 1936. This precise temporal marking is possible due to event clues provided by the narrator. Saramago puts Ricardo Reis, a heteronymous by Fernando Pessoa, in Lisbon and gives him the opportunity to live the full spectacle of the world. Reis lived by the stoic rule of not interfering with the world, just being a witness of the actions. That is why Saramago decides to give Reis the adequate set to experience life. It is indeed a story of "a man's quest to understand language" (Sanders, 2002, p. 3). The city of Lisbon is the set where the narrative unfolds, where Reis is both a spectator and main character of a time and space carefully crafted by Saramago.

The literary space is referential to other spaces, connecting them (Boucher, 2007). By space we mean the spatial aspects of the reconstructed world (Zoran, 2009). An indirect consequence of this process is the reader being provided with an involuntary tour of the city by Pessoa and Reis, even though one must never "confondre le concept d'espace littéraire avec l'espace géographique" (Boucher, 2007, p. 84). Nonetheless, the maze provided by the narrative of *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*

recognizes its own constructing, ordering and selection processes (Hutcheon, 1988). The prevalence of the spatial dimension is so obvious in this work by Saramago that one has difficulty in classifying it as a historical romance since the narrator provides the reader with a detailed map of the city (Kaufman, 1991).

In the words of Italo Calvino, 'No one knows better than you, oh wise Kublai, that one should never confuse the city with the discourse that describes it' (Calvino, 1978). It is exactly this view that Saramago holds in his narrative, considering that at one point the narrator questions the existence of the city of Lisbon itself. The whole set is believed to be a mere dream. Consequently, the issue of the perception of the city in literature is obvious: is the urban space imaginary or a representation of a material reality? (Johnson, 2000). Through narrative, human imagination reconciles its rhythms to those of the larger world (Barrows, 2016). The descriptive nature of the work immerses the reader in "a mode of reading that moves away from the representation of place in literature to a direct presencing of place or sensation of place." (Moslund, 2011, p. 31). The reader feels the omnipresence of the urban background of the city and creates memories in his mind, according to the descriptive nature of the text. The likelihood of recognizing the roads crossed by Ricardo Reis is obvious and it is an ubiquitous strategy. Art resembles reality: "the work of art resembles the object of perception: its nature is to be seen" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 95).

Theme and Study Subject

In 1936, Saramago was thirteen-years old. Forty-eight years later, in 1984, he publishes this romance about Ricardo Reis and Lisbon. Having lived in Lisbon since he was two-years-old up until then, it becomes obvious that the urban space of the city present in the narrative is the one preserved in his memory. The narrator retrieves a bank of places and sets, rebuilding the would-be Lisbon of Ricardo Reis. A sense of tangibility is obvious: "An aesthetics of presence is about bringing back to our consciousness and bodies the experience of the thingness of the world—the dimension of physical closeness and tangibility in works of art." (Moslund, 2011, p. 31). Heidegger & Hofstadter support that the naming is a way of bringing into presence something that was once hidden or unknown: "The call does indeed call. Thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness." (Heidegger & Hofstadter, 1975, p.196). The naming of the spatial references embodies them, even if one has never seen them before. By naming the street and squares where Ricardo Reis lives his last months of literary saramaguian existence, the reader summons the tangibility dimension of space in this literary work.

Mapping the entire spatial references in the narrative was a true challenge. All references were noted and catalogued. Photographs of around 1936 – the year when the narrative takes place – were retrieved from the online city hall archive. Then, each place was visited and photographed, mimicking the images from around 1936. Finally, a thorough historical re-search of each reference was made in a specialized public library. According to Moslund “The presencing of the physical dimensions of a text and its signs through sensory experience is relevant to the appreciation of any matter the text may raise.” (Moslund, 2011, p. 33). Following this line of thought, mapping-like activities allow anyone to build a personal memory archive, giving not only a name but a memory, that is recalled whenever a given passage of the romance is read.

This interaction between author-narrator-text-reader promotes a new understanding and analysis of narrative space and the relations between literary geography and fiction itself (Hones, 2011).

Literary Cartography and Spatiality

Mapping literary stories is an increasing trend that has been taking advantage of the techno-logical improvements as far as digital cartography is concerned. Literary texts are an important element in the cognitive mapping process (Goddard, 2014). Through the description of locations and specific spaces, literature provides points of reference and provides a way of mapping the spaces encountered or imagined in the author’s experience (Tally, 2013). The spatial descriptions combined forms of the author’s literary cartographic map of a specific work (Tally, 2014). In order to achieve a coherent mapping of any narrative three challenges must be overcome, according to Caquard & Fiset (2014). First, locating the different places associated with the story. Second, representing the connections between these different locations. Finally, taking into account the temporal dimension inherent to any narrative.

Relevant to this dimension is the notion of spatiality and the differences between the representation of physical space in maps and the subjective space of human action. As defined by Hogan (2011) “spatiality, the ‘existential’ experience of location, is fundamentally an emotional experience” (Hogan, 2011, location 398). To him this “is a sort of emotional geography that develops out of fundamental human propensities toward organizing the world along two fundamental axes: normalcy and attachment” (2011, location 415). In short, we understand space, also in literature, as an affective structure in an action or drama. He also relates this perspective to a self-classification instrument of our emotional experience of time: “It too is organized,

more precisely, encoded-emotionally. Encoding is the process whereby we select, segment (or 'chunk'), and give preliminary structure to our experience" (2011, locations 416-417). Space is omnidirectional, time is linear. Narrative fiction is thus an emotional experience of time and space in a continuous dynamic flux of randomized speed and direction. A geography of fiction, as Barbara Piatti puts it, "should be much more than mere cartographic illustration or a support to scholarly literature in which everything is already said. Quite the contrary, literary maps are meant to be tools of interpretation, powerful analytical instruments (Piatti et al., 2009).

NARRATIVE MAPPING OF O ANO DA MORTE DE RICARDO REIS

Concept

The novel *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis* is set almost exclusively in Lisbon (there is only one short excursion to Fátima, a small town in the Center countryside part of Portugal). The spatial structure of *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis* was broken into several units and connected under a linear paradigm: where did the main character go and how many times. Some compromise must be set between the space referenced in the narrative and the space in the physical world. According to Piatti (2009), both author and reader will tend to relate the spatial references to real physical world locations. Luckily, this romance by Saramago is extremely precise in the references of locations and routes taken by the main character.

CARTOGRAPHIC TRANSMEDIA DESIGN

Cartographies in the digital space already exhaustively explore the geography of places, the connection between them and their temporal dimension, aspects that are all essential to establish the structure of a story. Other dimensions like emotion, memory, personal and collective experience are also essential to the narrative spatial structure, either in literature or real life, and need to integrate a critical literary cartography.

For the purpose of this experiment, the novel *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*, by José Saramago, will be used to design the narrative of a cartographic literary experience in a transmedia format. The pertinence of this choice is justified for a set of reasons: 1st - It's a literary work of fiction whose study has recently been added to the Portuguese program syllabus at the end of high school (twelfth-grade); 2nd - It establishes a clear spatial narrative structure, involving the city of Lisbon, using the three axes of literary cartography, geography, geometry and time. The transmedia map

design of this narrative will produce two different sub-formats or pieces: a website, on the ESRI Story Maps platform; and a graphic printed guide to explore the novel's cartography in the city of Lisbon, establishing connections (links) with the digital format in Story Maps .

Literary Map (printed guide) Concept

The option for a map, a guide, in a physical format, after first considering a digital app, was intentional and had two main purposes related with the user's experience of the geographic fiction in the novel:

1. Maintaining a level of tactile, emotional, attachment to the idea of map and book;
2. Avoiding the immersive digital experience of the screen effect that would partially detach the user from the physical space of the city and the places portrayed in the novel's narrative.

The mixed graphic design concept of map and guide allows the user to walk the city following the steps of the character Ricardo Reis. At the same time the user, being also the reader, can understand by excerpts, notes, illustrations and photographs where that fictional space was at the time and how it is configured today in the physical city.

One note here to explain why the historical moment of the city in 1935-36 is represented in the locations of the guide by illustrations and not photographs. Due to constraints of archive accessibility and good image framing, the authors opted in a 2nd approach to re-create the fictional atmosphere of the places since some already disappeared, and others were severely changed or had no precise location. All the recreations are based in detailed descriptions and archive photography. On the other hand, the fictional time of the novel cannot be fully transmitted by actual archive photographs since the user will always be facing and experiencing today's multi sensory and physical aspects of the city. Therefore, for reasons of graphic coherence and narrative aesthetic in the geographic fiction, illustrations were used. Photographs will be used as contextual notes and as the contemporary depictions of the locations in the novel.

Story Map (ESRI) Concept

When deciding on a digital component that could enable the test of a transmedia cartograph-ic concept and narrative design, applied to Saramago's novel, we looked to achieve three goals:

1. To provide a remote digital experience of the literary cartography of *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis* to the user/reader;
2. To enable the user/reader to anticipate and motivate itself for the experience of the fictional geography in the city of Lisbon;
3. To support a reflexive memory of the experience in the city as an extension of the novel's literary interpretation.

Story Maps is a recent web app from the platform ArcGis that allows everyone to build and design their own geolocated based narrative. Authors of the tool portray it as a "rich mix of multimedia that we think best expresses the power of storytelling in the digital age, in which data-intensive maps complement the emotional punch of images to tell a fully engaging story" (Carroll & Wilber, "Maps in Dramatic Roles"). In their essay they fully explain the capabilities of the tool to structure a full dramatic experience using an online multimedia map-ping narrative. The tool keeps a user friendly, visual design approach, avoiding more complex web coding skills. It enables its use by everyone wanting to design their own map based narrative.

Looking into scientific data that could corroborate Story Maps authors' assumptions, we found in Strachan & Mitchell's (2014) study with teachers, of the tool's educational "*Perceived Ease of Use*" factor, an important confirmation: "an overwhelming majority of the participants felt that Story Maps were user-friendly, interactive, and engaging" and also "expressed that their students would enjoy using Story Maps" (pp. 209-210). The "*Perceived Usefulness*" factor has also a major influence in technology adoption (p. 211). In their study Strachan & Mitchell (2014) confirmed as well that participants perceived Story Maps to be useful in a variety of contexts. They were viewed, most importantly, as a tool to better present material that meets academic standards but also "responses indicated that participants planned to use Story Maps as supplements to existing lectures or presentations, as part of student projects, and for web outreach. Participants clearly perceived Story Maps as easy to use and applicable to their educational environment".

Based on this conclusions, this study will be using ESRI Story Maps as the tool to design and build the digital cartography component for the transmedia

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The prototypes of these two formats will be used in a series of tests with users, to attest how the understanding, acquisition and retention of information in a literary work can be influenced by the experience of a literary map, either in a digital format or through a physical experience, or by the association of both. The design of the tests will consider as subjects students studying the novel, in which the prototypes are based, in their high school studies. The experiment will divide the subjects in four groups or categories: A - students that had no experience with the digital or the physical literary map (control); B - students that only had the experience of the digital literary map (website); C - students that only had the experience of the physical literary map (printed guide); D - students that had both the experience of the physical literary map (printed guide) and the digital literary map (website).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As stated before, the main objective of this experiment is to test how a more immersive experience using the fictional geography of a specific novel can improve the levels of literary comprehension and strengthen the affective connection of the reader with the book's dramatic action. In this proposal, the book *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*, by José Saramago, has been used to build the literary cartography experience that will be the prototype base for research.

Using a transmedia format structure to convey the narrative cartography of the novel will give the user more points of contact with the experiment. The approach will cover both a physical immersion of the user in the real locations of the novel supported by a physical map/guide prototype and a remote immersion through the access to the web based digital cartography of the story map prototype. This comprehensive articulation of both formats will give the user access even if distant from the fictional geography, and a deeper level of immersion when at the physical locations, setting at the same time a more robust research design to gather data for analysis of the experiment.

Aimed in 1st place for Portuguese students having the novel in their high-school syllabus, the experimental prototypes and future use of the resulting products (guide/map and website), will be of interest to any reader from the general public. Furthermore, the experimental prototypes resulting from the interactive design process of testing will consolidate this trans-media cartography concept with the intention of future replication in other literary works.

The literary cartography experience would also benefit from the users collaborative participation in the production of web based content. Photographs may be added by readers or users of the online map interface. Short theme based texts written by readers may also be inserted in the future, conveying sensorial experiences such as sounds perceived, smells, particular aspects seen or the overall ambience under specific weather conditions (in the novel, the rain is a constant background presence, for example). Social media applications such as Instagram or SoundCloud could be constituted as repositories of participatory user content connected by tagging posts and allowing uploads of video or snippets of audio with user's testimonies.

REFERENCES

- Barrows, A. (2016). *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn*. (A. Barrows, Ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. <http://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-56901-1>
- Boucher, G. (2007). Espace littéraire et spatialisation de la littérature. @Nalyses, 2(3), 80–85. Retrieved from <https://uottawa.scholarsportal.info/ottawa/index.php/revue-analyses/article/view/690>
- Bushell, S. (2012). The Slipperiness of Literary Maps: Critical Cartography and Literary Cartography. *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization*, 47(3), 149–160. <http://doi.org/10.3138/carto.47.3.1202>
- Caquard, S. (2013). Cartography I. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(1), 135–144. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511423796>
- Caquard, S., & Cartwright, W. (2014). Narrative Cartography: From Mapping Stories to the Narrative of Maps and Mapping. *The Cartographic Journal*, 51(2), 101–106. <http://doi.org/10.1179/0008704114Z.000000000130>
- Caquard, S., & Fiset, J. P. (2014). How can we map stories? A cybercartographic application for narrative cartography. *Journal of Maps*, 10(1), 18–25. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17445647.2013.847387>
- Carroll, A. (n.d.). Maps in Dramatic Roles (H. Wilber, Ed.). Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2018/maps-minds-stories-3/index.html>
- Cooper, D., Donaldson, C., & Murrieta-Flores, P. (2016). *Literary mapping in the digital age*. Retrieved from <https://www.routledge.com/Literary-Mapping-in-the-Digital-Age/Cooper-Donaldson-Murrieta-Flores/p/book/9781472441300>
- Ferreira, P. D. O. (2006). Ricardo Reis : entre a heteronímia e a personagem ficcional, 2(2), 1–10.
- Fioruci, R., & Salomão, J. M. (2014). 32 Ricardo Reis, Pessoa E a Morte: (Des)Caminhos Da História Na Ficção De Saramago. <http://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2175-3180.v6i11p32-47>
- Hoeveler, D. L. (1991). A poetics of postmodernism: History, theory, fiction. *History of European Ideas*, 13(4), 445–446. [http://doi.org/10.1016/0191-6599\(91\)90030-3](http://doi.org/10.1016/0191-6599(91)90030-3)
- Hogan, P. C. (2011). *Affective narratology: The emotional structure of stories*. U of Nebraska Press. (n.d.).
- HOGAN, P. C. (2011). *Affective Narratology The Emotional Structure of Stories*. Lincoln; London: UNP - Nebraska, Kindle Edition.
- Hones, S. (2011). Literary geography: setting and narrative space. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(7), 685–699. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2011.610233>
- Johnson, J. (2000). Literary geography: Joyce, Woolf and the city. *City*, 4(2), 199–214. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13604810050147820>
- Kaufman, H. (1991). A metaficção historiográfica de José Saramago. *Revista Colóquio/Letras*, 120, 124–136.
- Lemmer, J. F. (1996). The Causal Markov Condition, Fact or Artifact? *SIGART Bulletin*, 7(3), 3–16. <http://doi.org/10.1145/239616.239619>
- Martins Gama-Khalil, M. (n.d.). O Lugar Teórico Do Espaço Ficcional Nos Estudos Literários the Theoretical Place of Space Ficcional in the Literary Studies, 213–236. <http://doi.org/https://doi.org/>

org/10.18309/anp.v1i28.166

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2008). *The World of Perception* (Routledge Classics). Oxfordshire and New York: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-World-Perception-Routledge-Classics/dp/0415773814>

Moslund, S. P. (2011). The Presencing of Place in Literature. In R. T. Tally (Ed.), *Geocritical Explorations* (pp. 29–43). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. http://doi.org/10.1057/9780230337930_3

Piatti, B., Bär, H. R., Reuschel, A.-K., Hurni, L., & Cartwright, W. (2009). Mapping Literature: Towards a Geography of Fiction. In *Cartography and Art* (pp. 1–16). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-68569-2_15

Press, U. C. L., & Today, R. (2018). New reading strategies in the twenty-first century: transmedia storytelling via app in Marisha Pessl's *Night Film*.

Press, U. C. L., & Variations, V. (2018). UCL Press Chapter Title : Story-craft : The imagination as combinatorial machine in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* Book Title : Venice Variations Book Subtitle : Tracing the Architectural Imagination Book Author (s) : Sophia Psarra Published by : UCL.

Purves, R. S., & Derungs, C. (2015). From Space to Place: Place-Based Explorations of Text. *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing*, 9(1), 74–94. <http://doi.org/10.3366/ijhac.2015.0139>

Ricardo Reis Beijo, D. (n.d.). *a Metalinguagem E a Intertextualidade Entre Fernando Pessoa E José Saramago Em O Ano Da Morte*.

Strachan, C., & Mitchell (2014). Teachers' Perceptions of Esri Story Maps as Effective Teaching Tools. *Review of International Geographical Education Online*.

Tally Jr., R. T. (2014). Literary cartographies: spatiality, representation, and narrative.

Tally, R. T. (2011). *Geocritical explorations: Space, place, and mapping in literary and cultural studies*. *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*. <http://doi.org/10.1057/9780230337930>

Ventura, S. R. (2006). A intertextualidade como elemento de base construtiva em *O ano da morte de Ricardo Reis*, de José Saramago, 02, 1–7.

Weigel, A., Hax, A., & Olavarria, L. (2018). New reading strategies in the twenty-first century: In *Reading Today* (pp. 73–86). UCL Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt20krxjt.10>

Zoran, G. (1984). Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative. *Poetics Today*, 5(2), 309. <http://doi.org/10.2307/1771935>

