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## POSTMODERNMAPPINGS: HETEROTOPIA, HYPERREALITY AND RHIZOME

Dr. MARIO VRBANCIC

Associate Professor Mario Vrbancic, English Department, The University of Zadar, Croatia  
[mavrbanci@unizd.hr](mailto:mavrbanci@unizd.hr)



### ABSTRACT

Until very recently the map was considered a mirror of nature, a mirror of the landscape. However, postmodern mapping undermines our known familiar geography, experimenting with different spaces and connections. In this article I analyse the ways Borges' narrative strategies of mapping serve as an illustration of post-modern alternative mappings. I explore various theoretical constructs of space – heterotopia (Michel Foucault); hyperreality (Jan Baudrillard); a rhizome (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari) – and how they are related to different literary narrative strategies.

**Keywords:** postmodern mappings, space, heterotopia, rhizome, hyperreality

### Introduction

In his book *Postmodernist Fiction*, a literary theorist Brian McHale asserts that postmodern fiction has a mimetic value, primarily seen in establishing different worlds, a pluralism of worlds related to numerous ontologies. Our postmodern ontological landscape, suggests McHale, is unprecedented in human history – at least in the degree of its pluralism. Spaces of very different worlds seem to collapse upon each other just like goods on the glistening shelves of gigantic supermarkets. Disruptive spatiality triumphs over the coherence of perspective. In the overwhelming juxtapositions narrative cannot hold onto Euclidean clarity, and itself explodes into different directions, leaving its diverse ontological roots unexplained. "...the ontology of postmodernist texts, will only tell us that there is foregrounding: it will not tell us how this foregrounding has been accomplished, what strategies have been deployed" (McHale 27). Analysing the strange, illogical space, McHale asks "what kind of space?" (44). To explain this impossibility he introduces Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there

might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy (Foucault 26)

McHale uses Foucault's concept of heterotopia as a starting point for classification of postmodernist fiction, creating a postmodern cartography. He tries in his descriptive poetic to classify all postmodern literary productions that create an 'impossible world' by opposing the scientific sense of order as a logic of excluded middle. But, as I argue in this article heterotopia is a more descriptive model of heterogeneous, impossible hybridity of the world or some characteristic of the text seen from outside. In addition to Foucault's concept of heterotopia, here I explore other postmodern theoretical constructs of space, mainly hyperreality (Baudrillard) and a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari) and I show how they are related to the literary narrative strategies, especially Borges' narrative strategies of mapping.

#### An ideal map

Borges' *The Aleph* tells us about a cartographers' dream, an ideal map, in particular a globe that would probably overwhelm the Guild of Cartographers, since the Aleph compresses time and space within its confines. This little nutshell of microcosms and universe overshadows even the perfect map that coincides point for point with territory, because it contains all movements, speeds, and there is no difference between inside and outside. It is "one of the points in space that contains all points" (Borges 280), a mystical object that may be likened to miraculous mirrors from Islamic tradition or the ancient Greeks' speculation about a universal mirror or "...that secret,

hypothetical object whose name has been usurped by men but which no man has ever truly looked upon: the inconceivable universe" (Borges 283). Although compressed into an impossibly small space, the Aleph is at the same time chaotic, kaleidoscopic and fragmented, mocking the cartographer's yearning for a total presentation of reality.

Maps may be projected onto new, invented territories, for example cartographers used to map not only the earth but also the imagination: Dante's medieval topography of souls wandering through the sacral and divine; numerous utopias are said to be found in distant lands over vast seas; maps of Stevenson's treasure islands were used as a vehicle for narration, and so on. In *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* Borges proposes navigation through the seas of papers of many encyclopaedias to chart absolutely new, undiscovered territories, invented countries and universes, with an astonishing precision that overcomes the art of cartographers involved in mapping the real.

Two years earlier, I had discovered in one of the volumes of a certain pirated encyclopaedia a brief description of a false country; now fate had set before me something much more precious and painstaking. I now held in my hands a vast and systematic fragment of the entire history of an unknown planet, with its architectures and its playing cards, the horror of its mythologies and the murmur of its tongues, its emperors and its seas, its minerals and its birds and fishes, its algebra and its fire, its theological and metaphysical controversies (Borges 71).

Maps are also a result of power relations. They illustrate contemporary dilemmas and anxieties; the futility of the quest for the map that would present the whole territory; cartography as the field of conflicting forces, science, culture and the institution of the state; maps as a craving for the power of ultimate possession. Everything is a long way from the crystal structures dreamed of by structuralists. Postmodern cartographers hope that text is a better metaphor for maps than a mirror of

nature or of a landscape. They follow Roland Barthes's expanded concept of the text that covers the entire world. Not the map but the text is everywhere. Just as old scholars saw letters and texts everywhere: in the stars, winds, rivers, castles, armies, societies, institutions, culture, and so on. Yet the postmodern cartographers shatter the old scholastic mirroring: texts and maps are constitutive of reality rather than its mirror, or mimicking it. Paul Ricoeur attempts to describe the world as a text; he suggests a similarity between written discourse and social life: an author's intentions and the meaning of the text often cease to coincide, the text escapes its author; the text is constantly reinterpreted depending on new social and historical contexts defined by a specific discourse. New cartographers apply the metaphor of text to landscape:

... a landscape possesses a similar objective fixity to that of a written text. It also becomes detached from the intentions of its original authors... the various readings of landscapes matter more than any authorial intentions. In addition, the landscape has an importance beyond the initial situation for which it was constructed, addressing a potentially wide range of readers. In short, landscapes are characterised by all those features that Ricoeur identifies as definitive a text (Barnes and Duncan 6).

As maps can be read, texts can point toward the map.

Maps, territories and narratives are always interrelated and interconnected. Instead of questioning what precedes what or how maps could present territories, it is interesting to get a glimpse of the relation between a narrative and the map. Narrative often precedes the map: strangers explore new ground by securing the help of guides who know the way to the 'other side', to the source of the river, the great lakes, to the end of the world or to the subterranean maze of death or hell. Sometimes the traces of these previous journeys are visible through records of the unknown. They were put together to make drawings or maps: narratives or stories existed before maps. Consequently, maps

are related to narratives, and narratology to cartography.

As Andrew Gibson claims, the narratological imaginary has always been haunted by dreams of geometry, like maps with perfectly straight lines, like the cartographers' dream of a map equal to territory. In his *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* Gibson 'protests' against a geometrisation of textual space, against the attempts to establish narrative grammars based on the idea of universal forms of narrative that are often taken to be geometric in nature. He argues that Barthes's earlier apotheosis of a "narrative as international, transhistoric and transcultural... simply there, like life itself" (Barthes quoted in Gibson 5) reveals narratology's roots in structuralism and its tendency towards geometric schematisation, simplification and a constant drive to universalise and essentialise the text. Thus Euclidian narratology becomes obsolete among different discourses confronted with fragments, 'Tattered Ruins of the Map' - "Ours 'is a world of dispersed or scattering structures whose amplitude – contrary to the structuralist – we can no longer measure'" (Virilio quoted in Gibson 9). Gibson's attempt to outline a different narratology in the context of the poststructuralists' war against totality, vaguely indicates new directions. As the classical conception of structure is inseparable from the idea of a centre, so the map is always connected to its cartographer. In a Derridian reading of postmodern cartography the idea of a centre both orients and organises the coherence of the structural system of the map. The centre itself is thought of as escaping structurality, "the totality has its centre elsewhere" (Derrida quoted in Gibson 20).

Both narratology and cartography reflect an overall crisis of representation. Until very recently, cartographers believed in positivist assumptions. They firmly postulated that their charts were an ineffable mode of access to reality. Harley confesses "cartographers seem unable to situate their maps within the discourse of cartography"(Barnes and Duncan 231). Simply, there has never been a pure platonic mirroring of landscape, an unearthly platonic presentation of rivers, hills, seas, towns, without borders, marks, selections... Although the

Guild of Cartographers have dreamt for centuries of a map that would cover immense and profoundly diverse landscapes, it seems that such cartography always shifts into other realms, that of imaginary lands - utopia. As if it were a text, cartography emerges from the essentially unstable nature of signification, from the vortex whirling in the gap between signifiers and signified. Yet, it seems that the map serves its purpose; it guides us through different landscapes, different realities, and we, more or less, reach our destination. Only when we become aware that our travel occurs in the tattered ruins of a once perfect map does the problem arise: we have arrived at the right place, but still there is anxiety, insecurity in our position regarding the whole spatiality.

#### **In the tattered ruins of the map**

(Postmodern landscape: heterotopia, hyperreal, a rhizome)

Postmodern culture with its omnipresent fragmentation of the whole, that scatters the sensory spaces of dogma and anxieties calls the map with its geometrised lines into question. From the dazzling avant-garde idea of omnipresent simultaneity to the transformation into disturbing heterotopia, and later on into the 'precession of simulacrum', with reality fading away, there has been a need for a new mapping. Though in some ways different, all these ideas share the notion of the importance of the revaluation of space and spatialisation in the light of being in the Tattered Ruins of the Map that once covered all the Empire. Following Borges' allegory we may say that heterotopia just consists of 'Tattered Ruins of the Map', fragments, splinters, that in the era of globalization get closer and closer to each other. Indeed, the classical conception of space seems obsolete, and the cartographer Foucault (so named by Deleuze) nostalgically replaced Utopia with Heterotopia.

There is a worse kind of disorder than that of the incongruous, the linking together of things that are inappropriate; I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or

geometry, of the heteroclide; ... in such a state, things are: 'laid', 'placed', 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a common locus beneath them all...(Foucault xviii).

On the other hand the Cartographers' dream of an ideal map may be preserved only by confusing and inverting the traditional relation between the map and territory. Jean Baudrillard reads Borges' allegory 'On Exactitude in Science' as an illustration of the end of traditional ideas of presentation. By inverting map and territory, by postulating the primacy of the map that precedes the territory, Baudrillard interprets Borges' narrative as an Odyssey of Sign on its way to hyperreality, in the style of the adornment of ruins by the Romantics. He concludes:

...it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the real itself (Baudrillard 2).

Baudrillard's manipulation of the whole of reality presupposes an absolute knowledge equal to a metaphysical system that would enable such a 'saltomortale'. Thus Borges' narrative serves as an illustration of post-modern metaphysics introduced in various discursive formations. The map of simulacra encroaches on the territory; Baudrillard in 'America' suggests that America is constructed as a giant screen (Harvey 89).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>By inverting the relation of the map and the territory, Baudrillard charts a new territory - a glimmering, electronic, screen that substitutes 'reality'. However, "for the finest allegory of simulation" (Baudrillard 1), there has been the suggestion (see Perry) that Borges' other story 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' might better allegorise the gradual expansion of hyperreal. Thus the investigation through the immense labyrinth of paper, libraries and encyclopaedias serves to solve 'our' anxieties, confusion and alienation in the

However, like each text, Borges' 'On Exactitude in Science' as well as 'The Art of Cartography' cannot be exhausted by one interpretation. Eleanor Kaufman in the introduction to *Deleuze and Guattari, New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture* is attracted by the new possibility evolving from the equivalence between the map and the territory. She claims that such a map would be an odd conjunction of the actual and the virtual: "actual in that it would be drawn to real-life scale, virtual in the way that only the real can be, so real that it is no longer really a map but something other" (Kaufman 3). 'A map of Empire whose size was that of the Empire' in a strange way retains the necessary relation of proportion, and simultaneously transforms it into a relation of equivalence, that, on the other hand, is a relative equivalence because of the different position of the body navigating through the perfect Borgesian map that coincides with the reality. Kaufman compares such a map to navigating Paris by foot, bus, or metro. The space covered is the same – Paris! But different routes dictate different modes of perception; the Borgesian cartographer charts different, social, economic, or physical maps with her body that at the same time correspond to the real and virtual – the virtual because the other perspective on Paris stays obscure, uncharted: the space of the metro corresponds virtually to the space of bus or space of walking.

Yet with this, each of the three spaces is no less real at any given moment. The challenge comes in trying to link these virtual spaces together (for example, using the bus as a way of connecting the perceptive space of metro with perceptive space of walking) and map various virtualities with and against each other (Kaufman 4).

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"unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole" (Jameson 51). The threat of intrusion of Tlön's objects may correspond to Baudrillard's interpretation of consumer society. The world of Tlön is ordered (like hyperreality); it is in a sense an anti-Aleph. Its intrusion is at the same time quieting and terrifying.

Thus Borges' story on 'Exactitude in Science' once more serves to illustrate an alternative system of mapping – that of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a rhizome.

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* they explore and propose different concepts of mapping – a rhizome, in an attempt to make connections between widely different spaces without imposing hierarchy. The map, as they argue, is not an instrument of reproduction but rather one of construction. It does not trace something larger but constantly captures and inflects from outside itself, so that it is not clearly distinguishable from 'the surveyed landscape'. Its functions are multiple, intersecting several different discourses at once. A rhizome presents a new form of thought, a politics of establishing non-systematic connections, an anti-system that would not be trapped in the rigid formations of the state, the unconscious, or language. It traverses the territory without ever anchoring in one of the discursive formations, like the navigator who in one trajectory uses the metro, the bus, and foot in combination. The flexible, nomadic thought constantly forms connections between different systems of discursive practices: it is a cartography of living, the new version of a Borgesian map, the guild of Cartographers experimenting with the multiplicity of equations between a map and a territory.

The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself, it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can



be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation (Deleuze and Guattari 12).

### Navigating or cogitating?

Borges' story *Museum: on Exactitude in Science* inspired different readings that attempt to construct from its obscure allegory towards new, alternative mappings: heterotopia, hyperreal, and indirectly a rhizome. They all present different metaphors of different discursive practices encapsulated in the art of Borgesian cartographers: blossoming strategies from various ontologically grounded relationships between the map and territory; whether the map mirrors or precedes or creates territory. In spite of the confusion, the metaphor of the map, even as a fiction and misrepresentation, more or less serves our navigation. No map is a total illusion. However ill-surveyed or fanciful, it relates to the landscape and helps our navigation. In the midst of confusion – heterotopia, hyperreal, a rhizome – we need some kind of orientation, both on the map and in a text.

Hence, in his synthetic overview of postmodernism in a global space of multinational capitalism, Frederic Jameson calls for a new mapping – a cognitive mapping. Jameson's cognitive mapping draws on Lynch's description in *Image of the City* which raises the very central issue of representation, disputing poststructuralist critique, on a higher and more complex level. Yet its goal is not at all spectacular: a little map in a pocket and a little orientation in the neighbouring block.

Surely this is exactly what the cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city: to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole (Jameson 51).

Furthermore, comparing his idea of cognitive mapping to the old sea chart, portolans

that enable navigation through Mediterranean, and the introduction of longitude and latitude, Jameson asserts "At this point, cognitive mapping in the broader sense comes to require the coordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with un-lived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality" (Jameson 52). Thus, according to Jameson the individual subject should be endowed with a sense of his or her place in the global system.

Contrary to Jameson's project of historical mapping, Edward Soja discards 'the temporal prisonhouse of language', rather than following an historical, linear flow of the narrative "that predisposes the reader to think historically, making it difficult to see the text as a map, a geography of simultaneous relations and meanings that are tied together by a spatial rather than a temporal logic" (Soja 1). Soja advocates laterals rather than linear connections. Hence, the ideal mapping of postmodern geographies and the exemplar city of Los Angeles that constantly integrates and disintegrates the past, which Soja sees in the mystical, hypothetical object – the Aleph. Because the Aleph, as Los Angeles, presents the place of all places, the only place in the world where all places are, a 'limitless space of simultaneity and paradox'. The Aleph generates myriad images, disparate narratives and histories, and "always seeming to stretch laterally instead of unfolding sequentially" (Soja 222). Soja points out that its spatiality challenges analysis and interpretation, "for it too seems limitless and constantly in motion, never still enough to encompass, too filled with 'other spaces'" (222).

What is this place? Even knowing where to focus, to find a starting point, is not easy, for, perhaps more than any other place, Los Angeles is everywhere. It is global in the fullest sense of the word. Nowhere is this more evident than in its cultural projection and ideological reach, its almost ubiquitous screening of itself as a rectangular dream machine for the world (Soja 222 -223).

Soja's Los Angeles generates and disseminates its countless images around the world

in the increasing globalization. But the Aleph as a mysterious object interwoven in the sempiternal intertextuality of Borges library cannot be reduced to the one, even complicated and ramified symbol, that of the city. Los Angeles contains “the confrontation of a hundred different homelands”(Soja 223), for this accumulation of ‘diversity and difference’ is due to the process of colonialization.

The main obstacle to mapping this endless and simultaneous ‘being’ of the city, as Soja assesses, lies in Borges’ dilemma and anxieties in the encounter with the vertiginousness of the Aleph, as with the interpretation of postmodern geographies.

Every language is an alphabet of symbols the employment of which assumes a past shared by its interlocutors. How can one transmit to others the infinite Aleph, which my timorous memory can scarcely contain? ...Perhaps the gods would not deny me the discovery of an equivalent image, but then this report would be polluted with literature, with falseness... What my eyes saw was simultaneous; what I shall write is successive, because language is successive. Something of it, though, I will capture (Borges 283).

John Barth’s essay ‘The Literature of Exhaustion’ inaugurates Borges as an Olympian predecessor of the postmodern era; he sees in that writer a recognition that there is no real ‘originality’ in literature, but “all writers are more or less faithful ... translators and annotators of pre-existing archetypes” (Barth 33). Paradoxically, as we could see, Borges’ narratives envisioned the development of the spatial problem of the postmodern landscape. The correlation of ‘existential data’ with the geographic totality of the global system is under question in different discursive practices. However different and disparate they may be, they all attempt to explore the ‘Tattered Ruins’ of that Borgesian map by constantly experimenting and inventing new possibilities of mapping, sometimes navigating between simulation and presentation, sometimes simulating presentation in order to illuminate obscure, opaque and invisible surfaces of

the text. Hence a metaphor of the map that contains in itself this painful ambiguity, and brings up the possibility of interplay between reading and navigating, walking through the city and reading the city, between the reader and the traveller. The metaphor of the map opens up the texts, enabling different points of entrances that like cities become infinite storehouses of citations, echoes and references, crosses and re-crosses. Borges’ texts tend to express this uncertainty in the ‘unrepresentable totality’ by parataxis, by paratactic sentences. It is the dominant mode of postmodern experience, parataxis is yoked together with controversy between parts and whole. Borges’ majestic long sentence that describes the Aleph is a paratactic sentence subordinated to a larger narrative frame. “I saw millions of delightful and horrible acts; none amazed me so much as the fact that alloccupied the same point, without superposition and without transparency” (Borges 283). The sentence portends a dilemma of postmodern narrative of being in the middle: on one side there is the illusion of totality invoked by a narrative, the subject, a plot, depth; on the other, fragmentation, simulacra, hyperreal, schizophrenia, pastiche, heterotopia, surface.

Postmodern mapping undermines our known familiar geography, experimenting with different spaces and connections. Emphasizing such a multidisciplinary, hybrid approach of intertwining different discourses, not based on any unifying theory, it is difficult to draw a conclusion. In addition, a conclusion would be deliberate surrender to a rigid structure, the opposite of the rhizomic guerrilla strategy – a surrender to academic take-away. Instead, let me trace the genealogy of my own research – some kind of hotchpotch of navigating and cogitating, composed of poststructuralist leftovers in the light of the post-leftist yearning for, even a mirage or an instant glimpse of, totality. With Jameson’s metaphor of cognitive mapping – the correlation of ‘existential data’ with the geographic totality of the global system. The postmodern experience of spatiality stems from a profound sense of ontological uncertainty, and from this uncertainty emerge various concepts of space – like heterotopia,

hyperreal or a rhizome. In the face of unimaginable pollution, holocaust, the death of the subject, our orientation, the mapping of 'existential data' in a larger context, that of totality, only results in a deeper anxiety due to the loss of a fixed point of reference.

### Conclusion

Borges' narratives envisioned the development of postmodernist fiction as well as the spatial problem of the postmodern landscape. Because of many idiosyncrasies his literary space is difficult to define. Rather than establishing transcendental truth or allegorical connections, the reader is confused by a simple orientation: where are we exactly now? Whereas Borges' speculative model of space is shaped by the traditional narrative strategies: for instance the narrator is confused by the Aleph but the obscure attic, as well as Buenos Aires, stay intact – the stable points for unfolding of narrative; like the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius', in other texts the confusion increases. Borges' majestic long sentence that describes the Aleph is a paratactic sentence subordinated to a larger narrative frame. "I saw millions of delightful and horrible acts; none amazed me so much as the fact that all occupied the same point, without superposition and without transparency" (Borges 283). The sentence portends a dilemma of postmodern narrative of being in the middle: on one side there is the illusion of totality invoked by a narrative, the subject, a plot, depth; on the other, fragmentation, simulacra, hyperreal, schizophrenia, pastiche, heterotopia, surface.

Heterotopia exists only as a relation between different elements rather than being derived from within itself. It is not the relationship within a space that is the source of this heterotopic relationship, for such an arrangement, seen from within that space, may make perfect sense. It is how such a relationship is seen from outside, from the standpoint of another perspective, that allows a space to be seen as heterotopia. Heterotopia cannot be used as classificatory model of any narrative space, since in itself it resists the flow of a narrative by emphasising isolated, incongruous, heterogeneous entities. In Borges' essay on the

bizarre, impossible taxonomy of animals that belonged to Chinese emperors, boundaries are transgressed by a simple alphabetical order. But how can the boundaries be transgressed to enable the narrative flow and, at the same time, preserve the void gaping around things and fragments and sentences?

My thinking about narrative has concerned itself with two distinct kinds of space: the space of presentation (naively presumed to be the homogeneous space of the signified), and the space of the model of the theory. According to Foucault, under a premonition of the worst kind of disorder that lurks somewhere beneath the lost grid, this heterotopic unthinkable space can be only the language, enclosed in the text itself (*Order of Things*), or later (in his essay 'Of Other Places') it may be situated as a site outside the text. Postulated as a model to describe narrative (by McHale) it has been haunted like a structuralist narratological imaginary by dreams of geometric purity, since numerous lines and gaps separate the narrative continuum, and as a site in 'reality' it generates confusion and anxiety by its unmasterable unclassified profusion. Foucault, by comparing utopias with heterotopias, seriously suspects the narratibility of his own construct.

This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the fabula; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentence (Foucault xviii).

Unlike heterotopia, rhizomes are not closed into separate compartments, into monstrous propinquity, but they form the texture and network of communication by which we establish our line of escapes from arborescent structures. The state and any domination of forces lurk everywhere constantly moving to new lines. The rhizome, like heterotopia, contains juxtaposed worlds which are not totally separated but form a web of constant



flow. In the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattarianalyse rhizome in the much broader context of economy and the history of desiring production. The rhizome, and rhizomic space, is not just outside but inside, “the two of us wrote Anti-Oedipus together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd” (Deleuze and Guattari 3).

To maintain a rhizomic flow, Deleuze and Guattari argue that

...expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sprouting. When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the content that will necessarily be part of a rupture in the order of things. To take over, to anticipate, the material ...Kafka deliberately kills all metaphors, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary to the metaphor...Language stops being representative in order now to move toward its extremities or its limits (Deleuze and Guattari 22-28).

Hence the way to the promised lands not visited cannot be simply mapped. The task might be difficult to accomplish because of the aphasic disorder. Besides, numerous diagnoses of our postmodern condition as an era of – cynicism, lonely crowd, hyperreal, millennium panic, new age imaginary, decentralism and so on – in my opinion, we can add one more characteristic, that of aphasia, spread through Baudrillard’s types of consumers to the ‘world’. As the consumer is created by constant bombardment, by the tearing at his holistic integrity by commercials, information sickness, fragmented in hundreds, often opposite, ‘heterotopic’ needs, desires, so he or she loses the ability to connect, to sort things, just as the sufferer of the aphasia disorder does. Hence the map of utopia proliferates in numerous private dreams, utopia becomes heterotopia (Vattimo’s idea of heterotopia as scattered herds, small communities). On the other hand, utopia’s map might be inexpressible, muted, because of a schizophrenic fear of being finally signified, caught again in grand

narratives, in the net of the paranoid forces of the State, and so on, or it might be due to the rhizomic flow, cultivated schizo-energy such as advocated by Deleuze and Guattari.

In *Anti-Oedipus* against Freudianism and Lacanianism, Deleuze and Guattari chart the unconscious as not graspable in itself thanks to the discourse of intimacy. They define the unconscious as the rhizome of mechanical interactions through which we are integrated into the systems of force and the formations of power that surround us. According to Deleuze and Guattari the unconscious represents nothing, creates no symbols or signifiers, no veiled or distorted wishes that call for interpretation. The unconscious produces, and what it produces need only be described.

Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari my intention here is to evoke a vivid tapestry of a lateral antihierarchical map –an energy of reading or mapping that cannot be contained by rigid structures (see Vrbancic). Hence Borges narratives may not be evaluated as depthless pastiche or ‘blank parody’. Contrary to Jameson’s synthesis of postmodernism in which cognitive mapping relegates the whole of postmodernism to a depthless, one-dimensional space, I hope that my reading of knotted nodes of postmodern fragmentation and decentred language has produced the possibilities of different mappings. Jameson’s project establishes a connection between the multinational global economy and the depthless, fragmented and randomly heterogeneous images of postmodern landscape that completely suffocates dissenting voices. This is a strong and transcendental interpretation of postmodernism, it imposes a strong Platonic meaning on discursive practices and a text, impoverishing its true complexity. Instead of large and overall generalisation, the attempts at different and new mappings, a metaphor of the map that would gain access to the invisible, to the unconscious and in a rhizomic interrelation prompt a new notion of the politics of Desire. Contrary to Jameson’s project and his politics of Desire as something trammelled by Historical necessity and harnessed in a dialectical struggle and class system, I think that the political notion of desire cannot be relegated to a sphere of

class struggle. The time has passed when only coherent narratives could give us a glimpse of totality; the reader should meander, wander, and fight for meaning in a broader context of 'unrepresentable totality'. Perhaps because of that, postmodernism may be more a kind of blurred distinction of reading and writing or mapping and navigating than favouring just one side.

Hence, the body of Borges' texts is traversed, branded by Signs of different times and places, strange and terrifying: the worst of all places haunted their imagination. Borges' allusion to the chaotic, literally tittering Aleph representing a modern and postmodern Hell, parallels Dante's medieval mapping, and is still productive.

Spiralling down the abyss of Hell to the very bottom, we see a huge hairy giant with three monstrous faces –Satan! – beating bat wings and generating the chilling wind that keeps everything frozen. God's once handsome former right-hand angel is buried in the ice of sin, as though signalling the simple message: 'Hell is a place we make for ourselves'. Dante's journey may also be read as a descent within a pre-Freudian Self: the notion of a purely secular 'psyche' was still unknown. Following the Augustinian injunction to 'Descend, so that you may ascend', Dante also travels to the dark heart of himself. Only after deep scrutiny of his own inner life can he reach the point from which psychological healing can begin. And, like many epic writers of Greece and Rome, Ronald R. MacDonald has argued, Dante sees this passage only "through struggle and suffering and reflection, by submitting the self either individually or collectively to the worst as well as the best that lies buried within it, it is possible to effect a passage from a state of barbarity and disorder to a state of integration and harmony" (MacDonald quoted in Wertheim 58). Similarly, Borges sees heaven only through spiralling down the abyss of hell. There, the one renegade group of the mysterious Guild of Cartographers still might have been making maps of places that have never existed. In short, each epoch has its own Hell, and its mysterious Guild of Cartographers.

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