

Classroom Activity: Mapping Literary Spaces & Emotions

“Visualizing Space & Emotions in Bendek’s *Salt Crystals*”

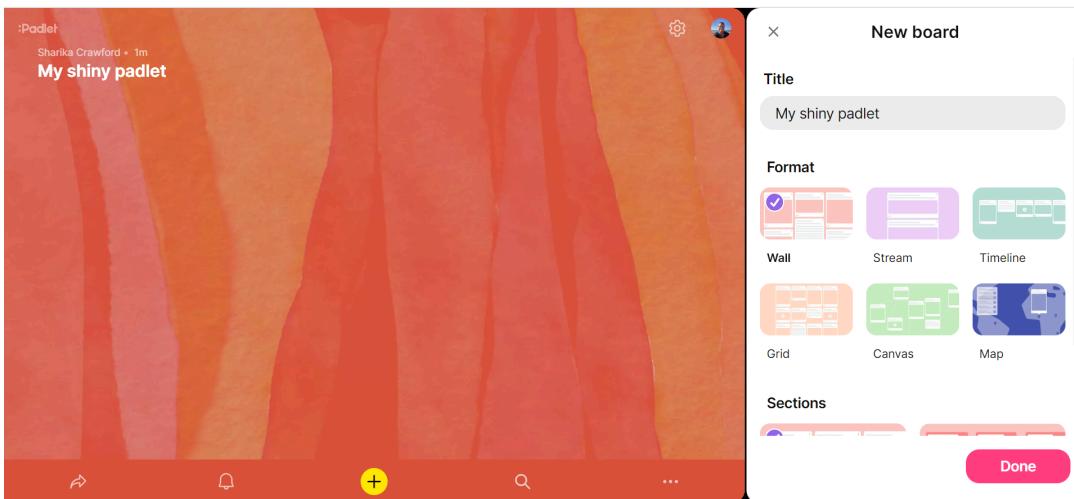
Narrative maps tell stories spatially and are an instructional tool for understanding texts. In this assignment, instructors will facilitate their students to map the literary spaces in Cristina Bendek's *Salt Crystals*. Space and mobility are important to the story. The protagonist moves geographically across Latin America and the Caribbean. She also moves spatially across a small island. In doing so, Bendek grounds the characters and events spatially in the novel. Using digital mapping software (ArcGIS, Google Maps, Sutori) in the classroom has become increasingly popular. By examining a text spatially, students may be able to detect patterns more easily in close textual readings and can help to interrogate the text. Tracing the movements of characters and events opens discussions about its meaning. Finally, it may prompt new questions because of the visualization. For this classroom activity, instructors will help students map the literary spaces to analyze the protagonist's responses. The assignment relies on an accessible digital platform: Padlet. Using this instructional method, the instructor can help introduce San Andres Island, an unfamiliar setting and place of action, which is essential to navigating the themes underpinning the novel.

Instructions

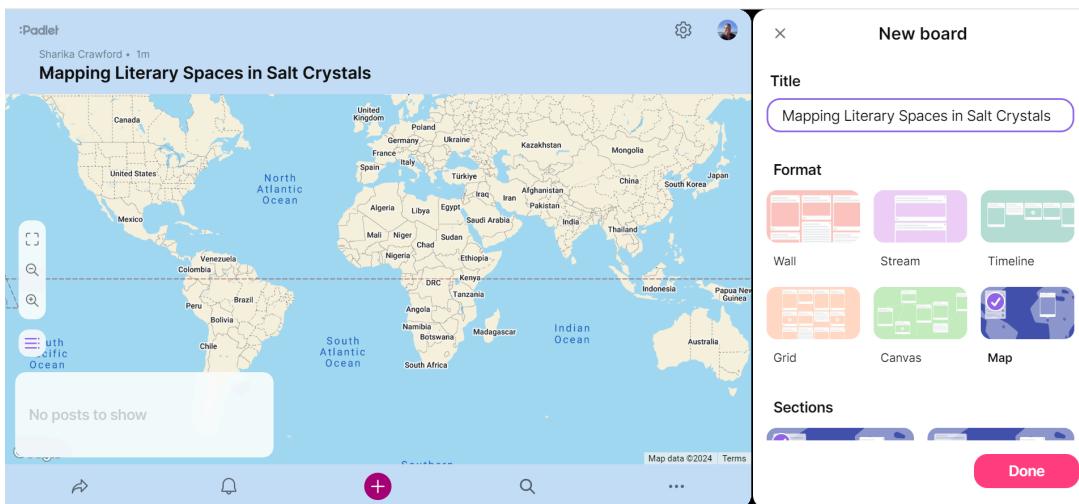
- In preparation for the class, assign Cristina Bendek's *Salt Crystals*, pp.1-84 (Chapters 1-4) to read. If possible, please ask students to bring their tablets and laptops or request a computer-equipped room at your educational institution.
- Before class, make a Padlet and Select the tab "Make a Blank Board."

The screenshot shows the 'Make a padlet' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Gallery, Learn, and a 'Make' button. On the right, a user profile for Sharika Crawford is visible. Below the navigation, there are two main sections: 'Blank board' (pink background) and 'Create with AI' (purple background). The 'Blank board' section shows a preview of a wall with several pink sticky notes. The 'Create with AI' section shows a preview of a wall with several cards featuring images of landscapes and buildings. At the bottom, there is a section for 'AI recipes' (BETA) with five options: Discussion board, Class activity creator, Lesson plan, Ideas for class activities, and Timeline of events. Each option has a small icon and a 'New' badge.

- Select Map from the "New Board" tab and click the "Done" tab.



- Title the board "Mapping Literary Spaces in Salt Crystals" and click "Done."

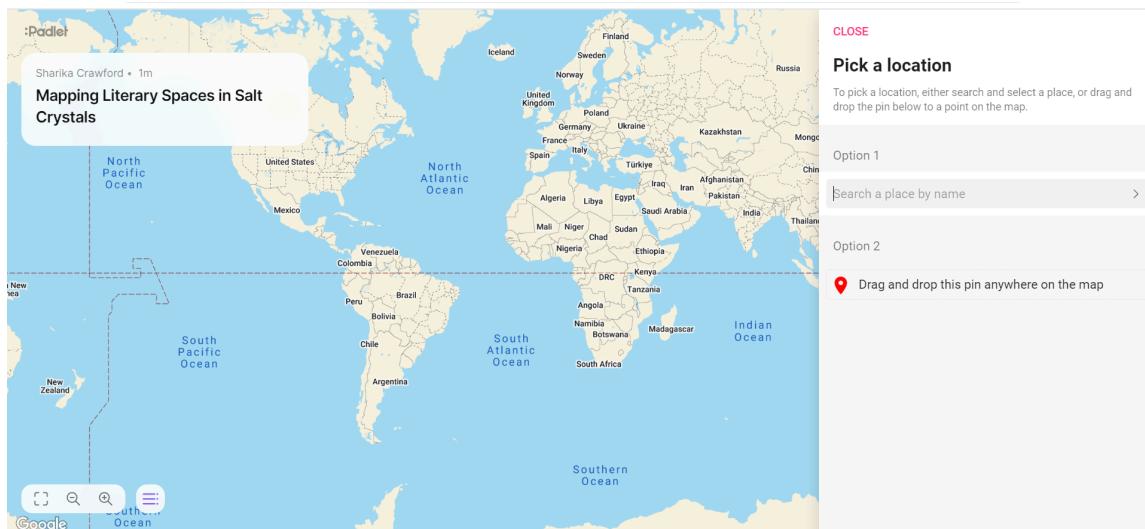


- Before organizing the students into groups, explain briefly the activity.
- Open the Padlet board "Mapping Literary Spaces in Salt Crystals" and share the URL with the class.
- Explain how important mobility is to the protagonist, Veronica Baruq, and the novel's themes, migration as essential to the Caribbean experience.
- Place students into groups of 3-5 students.
- Assign them to select one of the following categories of analysis: (1) place of action, (2) imagined places, and (3) places where the protagonist moves to and from in the novel.
- Give the group 5-10 minutes to select and discuss as a group 1 - 3 locations referenced in the novel related to the assigned category of analysis.
- Inform them that they must choose a textual passage related to the location(s) and assign an adjective that reflects how this place triggers a specific emotion for the protagonist.

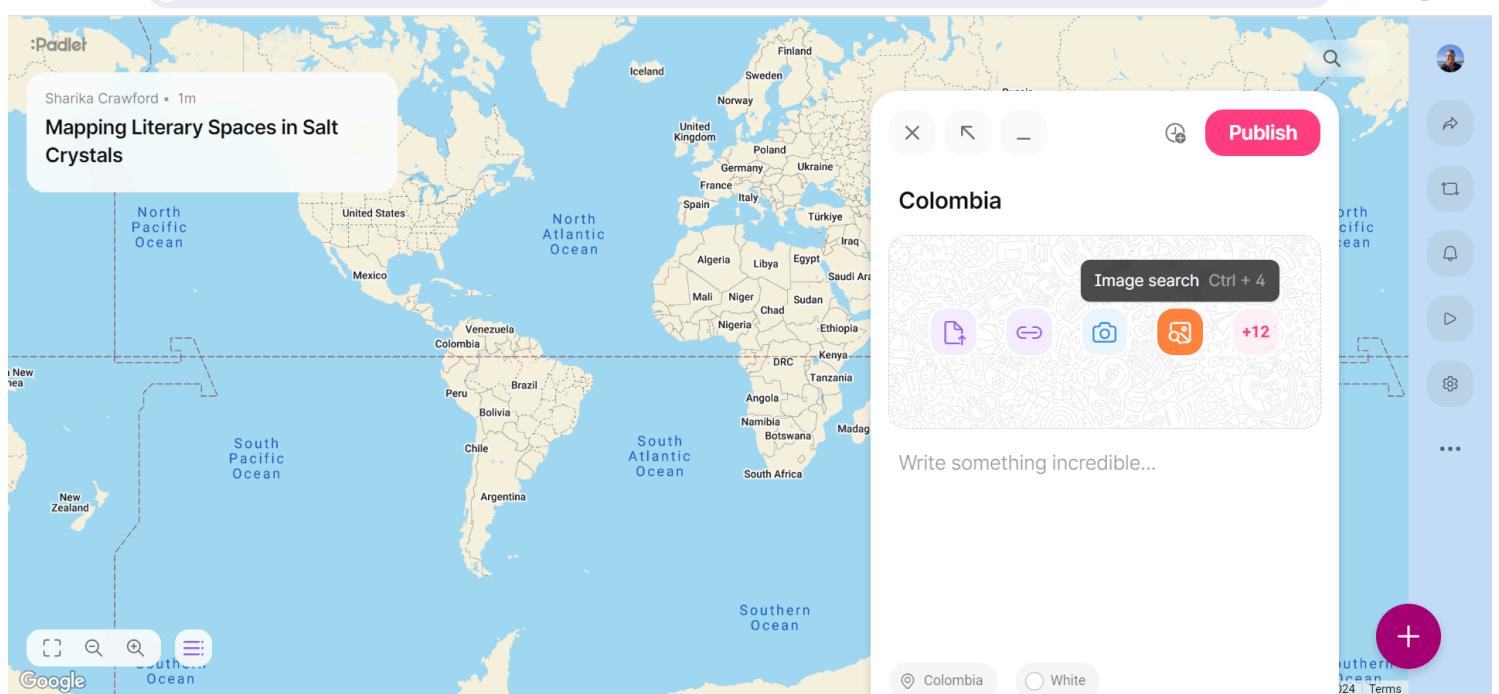
- Finally, ask the groups to plot the location(s) referenced in the novel related to the given category of analysis onto the Padlet map.
- Go to the Padlet map and have them click on the writing icon at the bottom right corner.



- Tell students to type the location into the browser and pick the correct location.



- Then, ask them to select an image related to the location by selecting the icon



- Finally, ask that they type a topic sentence that denotes the protagonist's emotion and then insert the textual passage. They should include a MLA parenthetical citation with the page number.
- After all groups have inputted their information onto the map, engage the class in the following questions. Draw on their responses plotted on the map.
 - Where does this novel take place? Why?
 - Where has the protagonist moved to and from, and how have the accumulated experiences shaped her identity and sense of belonging?
- After the class discussion is done, ask the class whether the mapping activity helped them to understand the novel better.
- Does the map of the literary spaces and the protagonist's emotions assist you in understanding the novel?