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INTRODUCTION

NARRATOLOGICAL THEORY ON SPACE

I.J.F. de Jong

Introduction

The first volumes of the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* discussed two central and heavily theorised aspects of narrative texts: the narrator and time. This third volume will deal with an aspect that—until very recently—has received far less theoretical attention and is yet of prime importance too: space. Space is here understood in the wide sense of the setting of the action of a story, other localities that are referred to, e.g. in memories or dreams, and objects ('props').[1]

The relative neglect of space in narratological theory, compared to the wealth of models for analysing narrators, perspective, or time, is acknowledged by narratologists themselves,[2] and is plausibly explained by Buchholz and Jahn as due to two reasons: 'One was that Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's characterisation of narrative literature as 'temporal' art (as opposed to 'spatial' arts like painting and sculpture) seemed too evident to be seriously interrogated. The second reason was that space in narratives—especially pre-nineteenth century ones—often seemed to have no other function than to supply a general background setting, something to be taken for granted rather than requiring attention, far less

[1] Cf. Bal [1985] 1997: 135: 'The filling in of space is determined by the objects that can be found in that space. Objects have spatial status.'

[2] See H. Meyer [1963] 1975: 210; Hillebrand 1971: 7; Issacharoff 1976: 10 ('la critique, dans son ensemble, a fait preuve d'une certaine myopie a l'égard de la spatialité'); Hoffmann 1978: 1; van Baak 1983: 1; Bal [1985] 1997: 132; Zoran 1984: 310; Lopes 1995: 7; Molino and Lafhail-Molino 2003: 301. One may note that one of the main narratological model-builders, Genette, apart from some remarks on description, does not discuss space. Likewise Forster's famous succinct introduction *Aspects of the Novel* from 1927 has no chapter on space.

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essential than the temporal directedness (…) of the plot.'[3] This theoretical neglect is not justified, however, considering the central place which space takes in the construction of stories,[4] and is also belied by the practice of novelists, who, to mention but one thing, often choose places for their titles: *Iliad*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Northanger Abbey*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *A Room with a View, Manhattan Transfer, Berlin-Alexanderplatz*, etc.

Recently, however, narratology has joined in with the 'spatial turn' that, perhaps under the influence of the globalisation, which accentuated the significance of locations, has become manifest across disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, geography, and cultural studies since the nineties of the twentieth century. In this introductory chapter I have brought together those theoretical concepts that I consider most useful for an analysis of space in ancient narrative texts.[5]

The Place of Space

There are huge differences in the attention paid to space: some narratives are full of detailed descriptions or semantically loaded settings, e.g. Dickens' *Great Expectations*; others, e.g. Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, focus on the plot or characters while their environments are largely left unspecified. Whether it is provided for in abundance or more sparingly, narratologists agree that space can never be presented in a narrative text in its totality: the narratees are offered a mere selection of details. Just as we distinguish between fabula-time and story-time, i.e. between the (theoretically) complete time of the reconstructed fabula versus the restricted timespan as it is actually presented in the story,[6] we may distinguish between fabula-space and story-space: the fabula-space would be a (theoretically) complete depiction of the location(s) of a

[3] Buchholz and Jahn 2005: 551. Cf. Lessing *Laokoon*, ch. 16: 'Handlungen [sind] der eigentliche Gegenstand der Poesie'.

[4] This is pointed out, e.g., by H. Meyer [1963] 1975: 231; Hillebrand 1971: 6–7; Issacharoff 1976: 10–12; and Molino and Lafhail-Molino 2003: 301.

[5] When writing this introduction, which also served as a guide for the authors of the chapters, in 2008, the only comprehensive discussions were Hillebrand 1971: 5–36 (German novels); Hoffmann 1978 (English novels); and van Baak 1983 (Russian novels). Since then Hallet and Neumann 2009 and Dennerlein 2009 have appeared. For the spatial turn, see e.g. Warf and Arias 2009 and Weigel 2009.

[6] See *SAGN* 2: 10.

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narrative, while the story-space is the actual space as the text presents it to us.[7] Discussions of space mainly concern the story-space. The depiction of story-space always requires active cooperation on the part of the narratees. They are asked to activate in their memory what 'Paris' or 'a dark wood' means, or to imagine a wonder-world like that in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.[8]

Next to the story-space there is the space of the narrator. In the first two volumes of the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* the 'reference to the narrator's own time' motif was introduced: when a primary narrator talks about himself, the circumstances of his act of narration, and his own time. In a similar way we may speak about the 'reference to the narrator's own space' motif. Thus the narrator in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* reveals at an early point that he comes from and tells his story in the Mid West ('My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations'), a location which differs from that of the story itself, which takes place in the East:

> Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg [Gatsby's village], especially, still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon … After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction.
>
> (Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*)

A narrator may also indicate that the space of his story is still to be seen in his own times:

> In that pleasant district of merry England which is watered by the river Don, there extended in ancient times a large forest, covering the greater part of the beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield and the pleasant town of Doncaster. The remains of this extensive wood are still to be seen at the noble seat of Wentworth, of Wharncliffe Park, and around Rotherdam. (Scott, *Ivanhoe*)

[7] For this distinction, see Chatman 1978: 96 and Bal [1985] 1997: 132–133.

[8] Bachelard 1957: 32; Hillebrand 1971: 7, 14; Issacharoff 1976: 13, 16; Chatman 1978: 104; van Baak 1983: 126; Stanzel [1979] 1984: 116–117; Zoran 1984: 313, 320; Bal [1985] 1997: 215.

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In the case of narratives embedded in non-narrative texts (drama or lyric), a comparison of or confrontation between the world of the narrator on the one hand and his narrative and the world of the embedding text on the other may be of particular relevance.

When analysing story-space we may further distinguish, following Ronen, between setting, i.e. the location where the action takes place, which of course may change in the course of a narrative, and 'frames', locations that occur in thoughts, dreams, or memories:[9]

> ils voyageraient, ils iraient en Italie, en Orient! Et il l'aperçevait debout sur un monticule, contemplant un paysage, ou bien appuyée à son bras dans un galerie florentine, s'arrêtant devant les tableaux.
>
> (Flaubert, *L'Education sentimentale*)

or

> Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had not that, after all, been love? She sat on the floor—that was her first impression of Sally—she sat on the floor with her arms around her knees, smoking a cigarette. Where could it have been? The Mannings'? The Kinloch-Jones's? … There they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world.
>
> (Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*)

Such frames may bring in distant, inaccessible, hypothetical, or counterfactual locations, which all expand the space of a story in various significant ways.

Drama-theorists in particular distinguish different forms of space,[10] of which the following may be useful for the purposes of this volume.[11] In the first place, there is the *scenic* space, the setting of a play, partly visualised by the facade with central entrance, altar or tomb, props, and further filled in by textual references (the cave on the island of Lemnos in Sophocles *Philoctetes*, the temple of Apollo at Delphi in Aeschylus *Eumenides*, etc.). Next, there is the *extra-scenic* space, that which lies immediately offstage, i.e. behind the facade (the palace interior in Aeschylus *Agamemnon* or the interior of the Cyclops' cave in Euripides *Cyclops*). Such extra-scenic space is frequently evoked in detail

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[9] Ronen 1986.

[10] For an overview, see McAuley 1999: 17–35.

[11] I base myself on Rehm 2002: 20–25, who in fact has a typology of six spatial categories (theatrical, scenic, extra-scenic, distanced, metatheatrical, reflexive). A comparable typology was developed by Edmunds 1996.

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by a messenger, e.g., the bedroom where Jocasta hangs herself and Oedipus stabs out his eyes in Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The ancient tragedians could also reveal extra-scenic space by showing it literally on the *ekkyklēma*, as in the case of the mad hero in Euripides *Heracles* who appears bound to a pillar of the home he has destroyed. Finally, there is the *distanced* space, which has no immediate relationship with either scenic or extra-scenic space, but lies beyond the areas visible to the audience. In Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for instance, Corinth, Cithaeron, Delphi, and the junction of the three roads are all important distanced locations.[12]

A final introductory question to be asked when analysing space is its distribution: are we dealing with synoptic introductions or with stray indications sprinkled over the text, usually when the action requires them? A classic introduction of space is at the opening of the narrative:

> Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely … The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest. (Forster, *A Passage to India*)

But Genette points at the habit of Stendhal to pulverise his 'descriptions, … systematically integrating what he allowed to remain of them to the level of his characters' actions—or daydreams.'[13]

The synoptic introduction of space and objects is also known as description, and this phenomenon merits a separate discussion.

Description

Ancient rhetoric already distinguished *descriptio* or ekphrasis, the detailed description of a place, object, person, or even event,[14] and narratologists tend to set description apart from narration as a separate mode:

[12] In view of the intricate relationship between these various forms of space in drama, in this volume of *SAGN* the analysis of dramatic space will not be restricted to the narrative parts but involve the play as a whole.

[13] Genette [1972] 1980: 101.

[14] See Lausberg [1960] 1998: 496. The descriptions of persons will be left out of account in this volume of the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, and be reserved for a later volume on characterization.

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if narration deals with events and actions, description deals with static objects; if narration means the progression of time, description means a pause; if narration is organized according to *logical* predictability (there are earlier and later events, there is a plot with a beginning, a complication, and a resolution), description is organized according to *lexical* predictability (there is a set of terms which in principle could be exhaustively followed, e.g. roof, attic, first floor, basement, etc.).[15] We usually recognise a description when we see one:[16]

> The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out the flies.
> (Hemingway, *Hills like White Elephants*)

Occasionally a speaker even explicitly labels what he says as a description, paradoxically in the form of a sigh that things actually are impossible to describe (the 'indiscribability' motif):

> (ENOBARBUS:) I will tell you.
> The barge she [Cleopatra] sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver …
> For her own person,
> *It beggared all description*: she did lie
> In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,
> O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
> The fancy outwork nature. On each side …
> (Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, my italics)

The 'indescriptability' motif may be compared to the '*aporia*' motif, which we often find when narrators embark on their tale and at first seem overwhelmed by the enormity of the task before them.[17]

But even if descriptions are easily discernible, they often display narrative characteristics, which makes the opposition to narration less clearcut:[18]

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[15] See e.g. Chatman 1978: 19, 74; Chatman 1990: 9, 31; Hamon [1981] 1993: 64–72; Bal 1981–1982: 100–105; Bal [1985] 1997: 36–43, 108–110; and Wolf 2007: 2–36.

[16] Cf. Bal 1981–1982: 105; Bal [1985] 1997: 36; and Wolf 2007: 6.

[17] See *SAGN* 1: index s.v. narratorial devices.

[18] See Genette 1969: 56–61; Sternberg 1981, esp. 72, 73, 76; Zoran 1984: 326; Bal

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> It [the village of Marygreen, where the main character lives] was as old-fashioned as it was small, and it rested in the lap of an undulating upland adjoining the North Wessex downs. Old as it was, however, the well-shaft was probably the only relic of the local history that remained absolutely unchanged. Many of the thatched and dormered dwelling-houses had been pulled down *of late years*, and many trees felled on the green.
> (Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, my italics)

The description of the village at first is static, focusing on its geographical location and outward appearance, but gradually it starts to acquire a narrative dimension, including elements of the village's history. And although a description often involves a pause (which means that no fabula-time matches the story-time),[19] this certainly is not always the case: at the end of a descriptive passage time may turn out to have ticked on or a description may be made part of an action (looking out a window; constructing an object, etc.). This phenomenon of the dynamization or narrativization of descriptions should be connected to the fact that from early times onwards narrators have invented all kinds of devices to naturalise descriptions, i.e. to integrate them as much as possible into their stories. I will return to this in more detail in the next section, on presentation.

Despite the—complicating but at the same time interesting—blurring of the boundaries between description and narration, it is worthwhile to continue to distinguish description, defined here as the synoptic presentation of space or objects, as a separate category, if only in view of the prime importance which ekphrasis takes up in ancient literature. When dealing with such descriptive passages it is relevant to pay attention to their organisation, since descriptions have, as Chatman notes, 'a logic of their own':[20] they may be organised as a refrain (he saw/made X, he saw/made Y, etc.), an enumeration (first, second, third, etc.), according to spatial principles (left, right, in front, behind, etc.), temporal principles (he first saw X, then Y; now, in the past), or other ideologically, culturally. or conventionally determined principles.[21] Finally, of course, there may be no order at all, which is in itself significant:

[1985] 1997: 36; Heffernan 1993: 5–6; Rabau 1995. Note that the ancient concept of ekphrasis, including as it does, the description of events (storms, battles) already allowed for the entrance of narration into description.

[19] See *SAGN* 2: 12.

[20] Chatman 1990: 24.

[21] See Sternberg 1981: 72–88; Lopes 1995: 22–23.

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> Now she [Lucy] entered the church depressed and humiliated, not even able to remember whether it was built by the Franciscans or the Dominicans. Of course, it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn! And how very cold! Of course, it contained frescoes by Giotto, in the presence of whose tactile values she was capable of feeling what was proper. But who was to tell her which they were? She walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date. There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, …
>
> (Forster, *A Room with a View*)

Although this lies outside the scope of this volume, which deals with the Greek texts in translation, it is to be noted that the linguistic model of discourse modes can be expected to sharpen the demarcation between description and narration.[22]

Presentation and Integration

By and large, space, including descriptions, can be introduced to the narratees in various ways.[23] The first, very common, method is via the *focalization of the narrator*:

> A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the black ships— … — are borne along to the town of St. Ogg's, which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and the river brink, tinging the water with a soft purple hue under the transient glance of this February sun. (Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*)

It is this type of description that is most clearly demarcated qua description and that usually creates a pause.

But narrators are often loath to interrupt the flow of their narrative and have looked for ways to integrate descriptions into their stories more smoothly or naturally. A slightly more integrated method of description consists in introducing an *anonymous focalizer*, a 'one' or 'man', who looks at the scene and thereby introduces it to the narratees:

---

[22] See e.g. C.S. Smith 2003 and, for an application to classical texts, Kroon 2007.

[23] See Friedemann [1910] 1969: 178–189; Petsch [1934] 1975: 38–39; Genette [1972] 1980: 99–106; Stanzel [1979] 1984: 117–122; Hamon [1981] 1993: 172–198; Bal [1985] 1997: 37–41; and Lopes 1995: 23–24.

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> Yonville-l'Abbaye … est un bourg à huit lieues de Rouen, entre la route d'Abbeville etcelle de Beauvais, au fond d'une vallée qu'arrose la Rieule … Au bout de l'horizon, *lorsqu'on arrive*, *on a devant soi* les chênes de la forêt d'Argueil … (Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, my italics)

By far the most widespread method of integrating a description is by making *one of the characters focalize* a setting or object:

> Next morning a fine mist covered the peninsula. The weather promised well, and the outline of the castle mound grew clearer each moment that Margaret watched it. Presently she saw the keep, and the sun painted the rubble gold, and charged the white sky with blue. The shadow of the house gathered itself together and fell over the garden. A cat looked up at her window and mewed. Lastly the river appeared, still holding the mists between its banks and its overhanging alders, and only visible as far as a hill, which cut off its upper reaches. (Forster, *Howards End*)

Such focalized descriptions are often recognizable in that they are in the past tense (as opposed to the present tense of descriptions focalized by the narrator). There are in fact many variations on this pattern, e.g. a character looking through a window, entering a room, or walking through a city (what Hamon calls 'ambulant description').[24] This method is not only a very elegant way of weaving descriptive or spatial elements into a story but also often acquires an important function *in itself*, in that the way in which a character looks at his or her surroundings may of course tell us something about that character (German narratologists speak of 'erlebte Raum'). I will return to this point in more detail in the section below on the functions of space.

A character may also himself describe a place or object, while addressing another character:[25]

> [the architect Bosinney describes to Soames Forsyte his new house] 'I've tried to plan a house here with some self-respect of its own … This is for your pictures, divided from this court by curtains; draw them back and you'll have a space of fifty-one by twenty-three six. This double-faced stove in the centre, here, looks one way towards the court, one way towards the picture room; this end wall is all window; you've got a south-east light from that, a north light from the court.' (Galsworthy, *The Man of Property*)

[24] Hamon [1981] 1993: 175.

[25] This, as has been pointed out by Hamon [1981] 1993: 186–187, is the typical method of Zola: an inquisitive or knowledgeable person (painter, technician), finding himself with time on his hands (because he is waiting for someone), takes the opportunity to describe some complex object (a locomotive, garden) to someone who does not know about it.

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Descriptions by speaking characters are of course paramount in drama.

Finally, the most integrated or narrativised form of space-presentation is when *a character makes an object*. This is the method of the Homeric narrator in the case of the Shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 18), so much admired by Lessing and indeed prescribed by him as the only correct way of integrating descriptions into narrative.[26]

In the specific case of an object of art being described (ekphrasis), no less than four agents may be involved, as Fowler has pointed out:[27] the artist, making the object or having made it in the past; a viewing character; the narratees, who may respond to the object with their imagination or foreknowledge, and the primary narrator-focalizer. Let us take the example of a well-known modern variation on the Shield:

> She looked over his shoulder
> For vines and olive trees,
> Marble well-governed cities
> And ships upon untamed seas,
> But there on the shining metal
> His hands had put instead
> An artificial wilderness
> And a sky like lead
> […]
> The thin-lipped armouror,
> Hephaestos, hobbled away,
> Thetis of the shining breasts
> Cried out in dismay
> At what the god had wrought
> To please her son, the strong
> Iron-hearted man-slaying Achilles
> Who would not live long. (Auden, *The Shield of Achilles*)

In this poem we have the artist Hephaestus, who is at work; a character, Thetis, who watches what he is making and does not see what she had expected to see; the narratees, who bring in their knowledge of Homer's Shield of Achilles (and therefore understand what Thetis' expectations are based on) and of contemporary history (and recognise what Hep-

[26] *Laokoon*, chs. 16 and 18. A similar preference for description through action rather than perception is expressed by Lukacs [1936] 1978, who at p. 157 explicitly aligns with Lessing.

[27] D. Fowler [1991] 2000: 76–77. In general on ekphrasis, see e.g. Heffernan 1993; (in antiquity) special issues of *Ramus* 31 (2002) and *Classical Philology* 102 (2007) (with rich bibliography); Webb 2009.

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haestus is depicting: the modern, totalitarian world); and finally the primary narrator-focalizer, who presents it all. This beautiful poem nicely captures the intriguing ambiguities involved in all ekphrases, the complex division of labour between artist, viewing character, narratees, and narrator: who is it that calls the wilderness depicted 'artificial'?

Presentation and Spatial Standpoint

Another, partly related, aspect of the presentation of space is the *spatial standpoint* of the presenter. We already saw that we must distinguish between the presenter being the narrator, an anonymous focalizer, or a character. But we may further distinguish between the distance which this presentator has towards the space or object described.[28] On the whole we find the following possibilities. Firstly, there is the *panoramic* standpoint, which means that a narrator positions himself at a considerable distance and can thus oversee a large stretch of space:

> The autumn wind blew over England … The streets were crowded. Upon the sloping desks of the offices near St. Paul's, clerks paused with their pens on the ruled page … But in England, in the North it was cold … In Devonshire where the round red hills and the steep valleys hoarded the sea air leaves were still thick on the trees … The smoke hung in veils over the spires and domes of the University cities … (Woolf, *The Years*)

A narrator may also adopt the position of one of the characters (actorial panoramic standpoint), even embedding their focalization, to take up a suitable position on a tower or hill:

> Having mounted beside her, Alec D'Urberville drove rapidly along by the crest of the hill, chatting compliments to Tess as they went, the cart with her box being left far behind. An immense landscape stretched around them on every side; behind, the green valley of her birth; before, a gray country of which she knew nothing except from her first brief visit to Trantridge. (Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*)

Secondly, there is the *scenic* standpoint, e.g. when a narrator positions himself on the scene and describes it, moving about (*shifting* standpoint) or from one vantage point (*fixed* standpoint). An example of the second possibility is:

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[28] In the following I draw on the model which was developed by De Jong and Nünlist 2004. One may also compare Hoffmann 1978: 445–486 and Purves 2010. It should be noted that the spatial standpoint of the narrator-focalizer is relevant not only for the presentation of space, but in general for all narration.

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> In Marseilles that day there was a villainous prison. In one of its chambers … were two men. Besides the two men, a notched and disfigured bench, immovable from the wall, with a draught-board rudely hacked upon it with a knife, a set of draughts, made of old buttons and soup bones, a set of dominoes, two mats, and two or three wine bottles … It received such light as it got through the grating of iron bars fashioned like a pretty large window, by means of which it could be always inspected from the gloomy staircase on which the grating gave. There was a broad strong ledge of stone to this grating where the bottom of it was let into the masonry, three or four feet above the ground. (Dickens, *Little Dorrit*)

When adopting a shifting scenic standpoint a narrator will often choose to accompany one of the characters:

> … Emma had a charitable visit to pay to a poor sick family, who lived a little way out of Highbury. Their road to this detached cottage was down Vicarage-lane, a lane leading at right-angles from the broad … and, as may be inferred, containing the blessed abode of Mr. Elton. A few inferior dwellings were first to be seen, and then, about a quarter of a mile down the lane rose the Vicarage; an old and not very good house, almost as close to the road as could be. It had no advantage of situation; but had been very much smartened up by the present proprietor; and, such as it was, there could be no possibility of the two friends passing it without a slackened pace and observing eyes.—Emma's remark was—'There it is. There go you and your riddle-book one of these days.'—Harriet's was—'Oh! What a sweet house!—How very beautiful!' (Austen, *Emma*)

In this example it is not easy to make out whether the *actorial scenic* standpoint of the narrator also entails the embedding of focalization: it would seem to be the ironic narrator who calls the Vicarage 'the blessed abode of Mr. Elton', but is it the narrator or Emma who qualifies it as 'old and not very good'? Anyway, this focalization contrasts with the enthusiasm of Harriet, who considers it 'beautiful'. Things are easier to determine in the case of internal (first-person) narration:

> Before passing the threshold [of Wuthering Heights], I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door, above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins, and shameless little boys, I detected the date '1500', and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw' … One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby, or passage. They call it here 'the house' pre-eminently. It includes kitchen, and parlour, generally, but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter, at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling or baking, about the huge fire-place; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. (Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*)

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Finally, we have the *close-up*, in which a setting or object is described in detail while the narrator or a character looks at it from close quarters (as opposite to the panoramic standpoint):

> Now eight candles were stood down the table, and after the first stoop the flames stood upright and drew with them into visibility the long table entire, and in the middle a yellow and purple dish of fruit. What had she done with it, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, for Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears, of the horny pinked-lined shell, of the bananas, made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet, of the bunch that hangs with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus (in some picture), among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold … (Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*)

The description, focalized by Mrs. Ramsay, zooms in on the long table, the fruit-dish, and then the pieces of fruit and shell which lie on it. One may note in passing how from 'made her think' onwards the setting is replaced by a frame, a picture of Bacchus which the objects on the fruit-dish call to Mrs. Ramsay's mind.

From a discussion of the formal aspects of space, which already contained hints of its significance, I now turn to the important subject of its functions.

Functions

Compared to plot, the most important element of a narrative according to Aristotle and many narratologists after him, and characters, the main interest of a novel according to many modern writers, space has long seemed just a minor ingredient and a mere ancillary to the narrative: a plot and characters have to be situated somewhere and the first and main function of space is to set the scene. When taking the form of a longer description, space would even seem to have merely an *ornamental* function, an idea which goes back to ancient rhetoric, which listed *descriptio* and *evidentia* under the *ornatus* of a speech and considered it to belong especially in digressions. This idea has been reiterated in recent times, e.g., by Genette. Barthes suggests that detailed descriptions may serve to increase the reality effect of a story.[29]

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[29] See Lausberg [1960] 1998: 360; Genette 1969: 58; and Barthes [1968] 1989. For a fuller historical overview of ideas on description, see Hamon [1981] 1993: 9–36.

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Few critics nowadays would like to leave it at that and ascribe space and description a purely ornamental or subservient function. Firstly, space may acquire a *thematic* function, when it is one of the main ingredients in a narrative,[30] for instance in so-called city novels, of which some were already mentioned in the introduction (Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* or Döblin's *Berlin-Alexanderplatz*), or in travel stories (e.g. Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgersson's Wonderful Journey* or Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*).

A second function is involved when a place or object, fully described in the form of a synoptic description, *mirrors* or contrasts themes of the narrative in which it is inserted. Such mirror-descriptions, as they might be called, are a subtype of the larger category of the mise en abyme, when a work within another work in some way resembles the outer work (or part of it).[31] Mirroring is of course a function which is of great importance to both ancient and modern ekphrases.[32] Thus, in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* the heroine, who has just been raped and is now waiting for her husband to return, kills the time by looking at a painting:

> At last she called to mind where hangs a piece
> of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy:
> before the which is drawn the power of Greece.
> For *Helen's rape* the city to destroy,
> Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
>
> (Shakespeare, *Lucrece* 1366–1370, my italics)

There follows a description of this painting in no fewer than 200 lines, whereby the focalizing Lucrece explicitly looks for points of similarity between the painting and her own situation:

> To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
> to find a face where all distress is stell'd.
> Many she sees where cares have carved some,
> but none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
> till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
> staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
> which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.
>
> (Shakespeare, *Lucrece* 1453–1459)

[30] See Bal [1985] 1997: 136–137; Hamon [1981] 1993: 175; and Molino and Lafhail-Molino 2003: 307.

[31] See e.g. Dällenbach [1977] 1989; Bal [1985] 1997: 57–58; and J.J. White 2001.

[32] See esp. Bartsch 1989; and further e.g. D. Fowler [1991] 2001: 82–85; and Elsner 2002, esp. p. 3.

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Mirror-descriptions can offer solace, as here, or anticipate the plot, or shed another light on it.

A third function of space is the *symbolic* one, when it becomes semantically charged and acquires an additional significance on top of its purely scene-setting function.[33] Notions, often oppositionally arranged, such as inside versus outside, city versus country, high versus low, become negatively or positively loaded, or are associated with cultural or ideological values. In the same way certain spatial features (rivers, hearths, stairs, roads, etc.) may represent certain ideas. Some settings have become literary conventions, e.g. the *locus amoenus*. Examples of the symbolic function of space are legion and I pick out just two:

> That second-floor arch in a London house, looking up and down the wall of the staircase, and commanding the main thoroughfare by which the inhabitants are passing … —that stair, up or down which babies are carried, old people are helped, guests are marshalled to the ball, the parson walks to the christening, the doctor to the sick-room, and the undertaker's men to the upper floor—what a memento of Life, Death, and Vanity it is—that arch and stair—if you choose to consider it, and sit on the landing, looking up and down the wall! (Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*)

Here the narrator himself more or less explicitly indicates that he is talking about the arch and stair in symbolic terms. In the next passage it is the focalizing character who realises the symbolic value of a place:

> He [Jude] saw what a curious and cunning glamour the neighbourhood of the place [the city of Christminster] had exercised over him. To get there and live there, to move among the churches and halls and become imbued with the *genius loci*, had seemed to his dreaming youth, as the spot shaped its charms to him from its halo on the horizon, the obvious and ideal thing to do … He always remembered the appearance of the afternoon on which he awoke from his dream … From the looming roof of the great library, into which he hardly ever had time to enter, his gaze travelled on to the varied spires, halls, gables, streets, chapels, gardens, quadrangles, which composed the *ensemble* of this unrivalled panorama. He saw that his destiny lay not with these … (Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*)

The main character Jude realises how he had projected his ambitions and aspirations on the impressive city of Christminster.

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[33] See H. Meyer [1963] 1975; Lotman [1970] 1972: 311–329; Hillebrand 1971: 9; Hoffmann 1978: 267–444, 629–674; van Baak 1983: 54–78; Bal [1985] 1997: 137–138; Lopes 1995: 9–10.

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Fourthly, we may distinguish a *characterizing* function, when space tells us something about a person, his milieu, character, or situation:

> … the house-floor is perfectly clean …; as clean as everything else in that wonderful house-place, where the only chance of collecting a few grains of dust would be to climb on the salt-coffer, and put your finger on the high mantelshelf on which the glittering brass candlesticks are enjoying their summer sinecure … (Eliot, *Adam Bede*)

This is an entirely positive description which tells us much about the sober, hard-working, and industrious mentality of the inhabitants of this farm, among whom the future wife of the hero of the novel.

Space may also tell us something about a character's feelings and then we are dealing with the *psychologizing* function:[34]

> The bird's-eye perspective before her [Tess leaving her parental home a second time] was not so luxuriantly beautiful, perhaps, as that other one which she knew so well; yet it was more cheering. It lacked the intensely blue atmosphere of the rival vale, and its heavy soils and scants; the new air was clearer, more ethereal, buoyant, bracing … Either the change in the quality of the air from heavy to light, or the sense of being amid new scenes where there were no invidious eyes upon her, sent up her spirits wonderfully. Her hopes mingled with the sunshine in an ideal photosphere which surrounded her as she bounded along against the soft south wind.
> (Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*)

The symbolic, characterizing, and psychologizing functions are not always easy to distinguish, and the terms are often used indiscriminately by scholars. Moreover, they may come into play at the same time. As a rule of thumb we may consider symbolic functions to be universal or at least collective, characterizing and psychologizing functions to concern individuals; and the characterizing function to concern permanent traits, while the psychologizing one pertains to the mood of a moment.

A particular form of semantic loading of space is *personification* (or *pathetic fallacy*), the projection of qualities normally associated with human beings upon inanimate objects or nature, and animals:[35]

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[34] See Friedemann [1910] 1969: 185–186; H. Meyer [1963] 1975: 211, 216–219, 222–229 ('erlebte Raum', 'Erlebnisraum'); Genette 1969: 58–59; Hillebrand 1971: 15; Hoffmann 1978: 55–79 ('gestimmte Raum'), 644–683; Sternberg 1981: 81–88; Bal [1985] 1997: 150–152.

[35] Personification is the broader term of the two, including also the attribution of physical life and movement or bodily appearance to elements of nature or the anthropomorphism of abstract ideas ('Peace'). Pathetic fallacy is the attribution of feeling to inanimate nature.

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> The wind grew stronger, *whisked under* stones, carried up straws and old leaves, and even little clods, marking its course as it sailed across the fields. The air and the sky darkened and through them the sun shone redly, and there was a raw sting in the air. During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug *cunningly* among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn *fought* the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the *prying* wind and then each stalk settled *wearily* sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.
>
> (Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, my italics)

In this example it is the narrator who turns to personification. When focalizing characters do so, the device acquires a psychologizing function and the previous example, from *Tess*, is a case in point. Personification is found throughout Greek literature, from as early as Homer. It remains to be decided in each individual case, however, whether we are dealing with a literary device or a mode of thought, i.e. a manifestation of the ease with which the Greeks anthropomorphise nature.[36] With this *caveat* I have already embarked on the final topic of this introduction, the historical dimension of the presentation and functions of space.

A History of Space in Ancient Greek Literature

Having sketched what can after all be only a working model for the analysis of space in narrative texts, the way is now open to turn to the subject of this volume, space in ancient Greek literature. If in the previous two volumes of the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* there was the challenge to try and apply modern narratological concepts to ancient texts, in the present volume there is an additional issue at stake. Taking stock of modern theory on space and description I have time and again come across the idea that only recently, i.e. mainly with nineteenth-century realist and naturalist novels and with the *Nouveau Roman*, space has become *en vogue* and novelists have started to explore its full range of possibilities.[37] Here theorists seem to have simply overlooked classical literature, with its long history of ekphrasis, the ubiquity of topoi like the *locus amoenus*, or charged spatial oppositions, e.g. inside versus outside, to mention but a few of the more obvious examples. To fill in these blank pages in the history of space in Western European literature will be one of the aims of this volume.

[36] See e.g. Copley 1937; Webster 1954; Hurwit 1982: 193–197; Jenkyns 1998: 21–59.

[37] Cf. Genette 1969: 56; Hillebrand 1971: 21; Ricardou 1978; Hamon [1981] 1993: 26.

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Several theorists have stressed that space, perhaps even more than time, is a historical category, i.e. that the way in which space is introduced and functions in a narrative text is intimately bound to genres and periods. Here, finally, the name of Bakhtin must fall, who, as the coiner of the concept of chronotope, cannot be absent from an introduction to space, though the practical value of his idea for the kind of narratological analysis undertaken in this volume is, to my mind, small. The term chronotope was introduced by him as follows: 'We will give the name chronotope (lit. 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature … In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history.'[38] In practice, what Bakhtin means (and illustrates in his analysis of some ancient Greek novels), is that different genres or periods may display different ways in which space and time are expressed and are connected. While Bakhtin insists on the close connection between time and space, Hillebrand suggests that narratological time is of a more universal nature than space. Space would 'seismographically' register more of an author's personal intention than time. Finally, Molino and Lafhail-Molino claim that the history of space forms a straight line: 'L'évolution littéraire, …, se caractérise par deux traits: la description va vers une précision croissante, de la structure de liste du *locus amoenus* au paysage organisé et aux précisions quantifiées du Nouveau Roman; par ailleurs la description est de plus en plus integrée au point de vue d'une acteur-spectateur'.[39] To test the validity of all of these suggestions will be one of the other objects of this volume.

However, the main purpose of this volume is to investigate systematically and in detail the manifold forms and functions that space has in the different genres of ancient Greek literature. Some parts of this large topic have already been researched and the results are included,[40] but the chapters assembled here cover more or less the whole of Greek literature. This scale offers the potential of a comparative perspective, which even when it is not realised to the full, will at least have been reconnoitred.

[38] Bakhtin 1981: 84.
[39] Molino and Lafhail-Molino 2003: 301–302.
[40] See e.g. (on space in poetry) Vetta and Catenacci 2006; (on space in the novel) Paschalis-Frangoulidis 2002; (on landscape in poetry) Elliger 1975; (on the representation of nature) Cusset 1999; (on space in epic and historiography) Purves 2010.

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