

# **lived space**

The Ideologies of Lived Space in Literary Texts,  
Ancient and Modern

Jo Heirman & Jacqueline Klooster (*eds.*)

**THE IDEOLOGIES OF LIVED SPACE IN LITERARY TEXTS,  
ANCIENT AND MODERN**



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# Introduction

## The Ideologies of ‘Lived Space’, Ancient and Modern

In the brief essay ‘Des espaces autres’, which was written in 1967 but published in 1984, Michel Foucault claimed that a historical outlook had dominated the nineteenth century but that the twentieth century would be the century of space (752). His prophecy has amply been fulfilled: the end of the twentieth century witnessed a spectacular ‘spatial turn’ in humanities (see e.g. Hallet-Neumann 2009). This may perhaps partly be ascribed to the sensibilities of scholars in an age of ever increasing globalisation.

This shift in attention from time to space is noticeable in particular in literary theory. Until recently space was usually neglected in favour of time as a parameter of literary analysis. As Buchholz and Jahn argue (2005: 551), this can be traced to the eighteenth century, when Gotthold Ephraim Lessing argued in his *Laocoön* (1766) that literature is essentially a temporal art, as opposed to spatial arts, such as painting or sculpture. Buchholz and Jahn also demonstrate that space in literary fiction has often been considered to have no function other than “to supply a general background against which the action takes place, something to be taken for granted rather than requiring attention” (2005: 551). From the end of the twentieth century onwards, however, space has increasingly become a serious concern of literary studies. Numerous monographs have appeared on space in a specific period, genre or author, from modern Arabic literature (Hallaq e.a. 2002) to Russian fiction (Joe 2007). One might imagine therefore, that there remains little to be said about the subject. But in classical studies, the study of space has only recently come to the foreground. Major initiatives include *Space in Ancient Greek Narrative*, a narratological project funded by the National Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) at the University of Amsterdam supervised by Prof. Dr. Irene de Jong, which has resulted in *Space in Ancient Greek Literature* (2012), volume three of the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*.

Starting from this research group, we, the editors of this volume, organised the colloquium ‘Space in Literature: Questioning Space in Fiction’ at the University of Amsterdam, May 26-27 2011, to encourage a fertile crossover between various disciplines in the humanities that engage with space in literary texts, ancient and modern. We felt that the study of space in modern literary fiction might benefit from the encounter with its classical counterpart, and vice versa. Four sessions were held over two days to explore *how* space is evoked in literary texts (‘Text and Space’ and ‘Time and Space’) and *why* space is described the way that it is (‘Lived Space’ and ‘Space and Imperialism’).

What emerged from this conference was above all the theme of the *ideological role of space*. Many of the papers explored how the experience of space is determined by dominant concepts (political, philosophical or religious) and, in turn, the description of spaces in literature is constructed to express, broadcast or deconstruct these particular experiences. In other words, the participants spontaneously focused on an approach to space that

both addressed the structural make-up of narrative texts and went beyond it by applying the discussion to real-world issues, namely human interaction with the environment, imperialism, dominating space and the consequences of these interventions. The discussion of the ideological role of space fell naturally into two parts, discussions of *lived space and society* and *lived space and power*.

The structure of the book respects this natural division. The first sections (1-3) comprise evaluations of and/or interactions with spaces on the scale of the individual or groups in society: it centres on emotional, psychological or cultural reactions to specific spaces. The last sections (4-5) focus on the way in which space is used in narratives of power and conquest and the effect (political) power has on the representation of spaces. To sustain the fruitful dynamics of the conference, we have opted for a thematic rather than a chronological approach since thematic echoes often provided stronger and more interesting links than diachronic developments. Most papers show instructive parallels and overlaps, or, conversely, oppositions in the approach to space, which we hope will enrich the experience of reading other spaces in other texts. That being said, there are many cases in which it is hard to determine whether a paper focuses more on the individual or group experience of space as related to society, or on space and the power structures (in that society) in a particular text.

There is a balance between pieces discussing ancient texts, i.e. texts written before 500 CE, and those discussing modern ones, i.e. texts written after 1800 (the era generally considered ‘modernity’). This was partly serendipitous and partly a result of our call for papers, but it proved to be a more enlightening way of looking at representations of space than we had imagined. A diachronic approach might certainly have been rewarding, but it would have required an entirely different kind of expertise and scope. The stark opposition between ancient and modern texts brings out clearly how our own worldview, the spatial sensations we share with our near-contemporaries, can be opposed, paralleled or juxtaposed to what we perceive as the ‘otherness’ of antiquity. It is in this opposition that interesting observations present themselves. This volume suggests some parallels and contrasts that arguably would not have come to light in other contexts.

For instance, the shrill opposition between ancient imperialist and post-colonial attitudes towards spatial appropriation is instructive. Equally so is the difference between ancient and modern attitudes towards ecological and environmental consciousness. Modern ecologists, brought to awareness through the long development from the Industrial Revolution through to nuclear power plant disasters, focus on the power of humans to destabilise vulnerable nature and so ultimately destroy life forms on the planet. Antiquity, unaware of any such technologies or its inherent dangers, saw the human attempt at mastery over nature as a moral issue, mainly in terms of hubris.

But there are also parallels. In antiquity as in modernity, man needs *lieux de mémoires*, symbolic spaces of remembrance in the form of monuments and graves, which are invested with their own spatio-temporal rules: time stands still and the remembrance becomes eternal (or, disturbingly, is unable to do so). Ancient and modern man create heterotopias, places where ‘they do things differently’; and the persistency of the phenome-

non of the chronotope, the specific way in which each literary genre couples time and space, is also evident. For these reasons, as editors of this volume, we have selected this combination of papers from experts in ancient and modern literature on the topic of space because we believe it has something distinctive to offer.

## Lived Space

All sections start from the important notion of space as ‘lived’, that is to say as experienced and valued by the narrator or (one of the) characters in an ideological, emotional, experiential relation to society and power, not as a number of coordinates on a geographical map. This concept of ‘lived space’ was first introduced as ‘*espace vécu*’ by the phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard (1981 [1957]), who applied it to the architecture of the house. According to Bachelard, a house is a source of all sorts of images that correlate to the emotional experience of the inhabitant. His focus lies on the positive effects of ‘felicitous spaces’ and ‘spaces of intimacy’ in the house, while ‘spaces of hostility’ are scarcely mentioned. Bachelard’s *espace vécu* was later picked up as *erlebte Raum* by the phenomenologist Otto Bollnow (1963). While Bachelard concentrated on the way one type of ‘lived space’ is experienced, Bollnow focused on the experiential as well as ideological implications in different types of ‘lived space’ when opposed to each other in a structuralist way.

The inner space of the house, for instance, is opposed in Bollnow’s theory to the outer space in the city (or village): the former is the private space of females, experienced as peaceful and intimate, the latter is the public space of men, experienced as dangerous and threatening. In discussing ‘lived spaces’ as polar opposites, Bollnow paved the way for the work of semioticians, such as Yuri Lotmann (1990) and Joost van Baak (1983), who discuss the cultural differences in spatial oppositions such as left-right, high-low and city-country-side. Differences between inner and outer space, for instance, are no longer considered universal, but culturally dependent: in some cases the house can become a hostile and fearsome space, for example in the case of incest, while the public space can be experienced in terms of freedom and liberation.

The phenomenological concept of ‘lived space’ was transferred to literary studies by the work of the German scholars Herman Meyer (1975 [1963]), Bruno Hillebrand (1971) and Gerard Hoffmann (1978). These scholars explored the way spaces in literary texts are experienced by the narrator or characters. As Hoffmann points out, these ‘lived spaces’ are not static but subject to change in the course of a literary text or in relation to the human subjects who experience them: one type of space can be experienced as intimate and reassuring by one character but as threatening by another character, the narrator or that same character later on. An example from ancient literature that nicely illustrates this inherent ambivalence is the cave of Calypso in Homer’s epic poem the *Odyssey* (5.55-74). While the cave with its flowery meadows, trees, vines and spring is experienced as an erotic place *par excellence* by the nymph Calypso, who inhabits that space, Odysseus experiences feelings of grief and nostalgia because he wishes to return to the barren, rocky island Ithaca, which means home to him.

The first two contributions of this book focus on mythical ‘lived spaces’, ancient and modern. The book opens with Emilie van Opstall’s discussion of two recurrent types of sacred mythical caves in Greek epic poetry from Homer (8<sup>th</sup> century BCE) to Nonnus (5<sup>th</sup> century CE): the caves of the nymphs and birth caves of divinities. The discussion of the epic tradition shows how literary imagination visualises the invisible mystery of caves. In these cases, bare rock is turned into the houses of divinities and thresholds and doors, vessels and looms become cosmogonic symbols, announcing a better phase in the history of the world with the birth of a new divinity out of Mother Earth.

Bart Keunen and Sofie Verraest, drawing on the work of Ernst Cassirer, explore mythical spaces which by violent emotions, poetic transport and ardent hopes and fears are spontaneously perceived as enchanting and acquire a magical, dreamlike glow. Because of the spontaneous impression of the extraordinary they evoke, seemingly enchanted places acquire the spatial form of ‘inside’ spaces, contrasting with an ordinary outside world, as case studies of Stefan Heym’s *The Architects* and Benoît Duteurtre’s *The Happy City* reveal.

This last contribution adheres closely to recent theories of ‘lived space’ in social theory and geography, developed independently from and with a more strongly ideological interest than the phenomenological theories discussed above. In *La production de l'espace* (1974), social theorist Henri Lefebvre developed a triadic model of ‘perceived space’ as the product of the senses, ‘conceived space’ as the product of the mind, and ‘lived space’ as the product of social relations and interactions. Focusing on urban space, he argues that the city is a social product of the leading class, a tool of control and domination in a capitalist society. In the wake of Lefebvre, Edward Soja (1996) offers another triadic model of real space (firstspace), imagined space (secondspace) and lived space (thirdspace) for the study of urban space. Unlike Lefebvre, however, Soja pays attention to urban spaces as products of both dominant and *marginalised* social relations: applying his model to the cities of Amsterdam and Los Angeles, he considers the former a space of tolerated difference and diversity and the latter a racist and sexist space.

Soja’s interest in marginalised ‘lived spaces’ in turn draws on Michel Foucault’s notion of *heterotopias*, spaces of otherness beyond those representing the dominant classes and their ideology, in which all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted (1994 [1967]: 753). An example is the *heterotopia* of deviation, such as the psychiatric hospital, where human behaviour is deviant from the norms of society.

We often see that spaces in fiction, be they heterotopes or not, are infused with a special sense of time: time flying, standing still, turning into quasi-eternity. The first to theorise on this phenomenon was Mikhail Bakhtin, in his famous essay *Forms of Time and the Chronotope* (1981). For Bakhtin it is the intersection of a specific temporal organisation with a particular spatial configuration that functions as a generative principle in narrative texts and thus produces various genres, such as the adventure novel, the fairy tale or the Romance.

The second section of the book focuses on such heterotopical spaces and chronotopes in ancient and modern cultures. Esther Peeren unearths the grave as a narrative and social site that appears dominantly spatial. Reading it through the lens of Bakhtin's chronotope and Foucault's heterotopia, however, she reveals that space cannot be separated from time, and that the grave possesses a pronounced temporal dimension that acquires particular importance in cases of non-burial and reburial. To demonstrate this, Peeren analyses four stories in which graves become sites of conflict: Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Tahar Djaout's *Les Chercheurs d'Os* and Assia Djebbar's *Algerian White*.

Paul van Uum's paper explores the heterotopical elements of the theatre of Dionysus, the performance space of drama, and the heterotopical aspects of the mythical (heroic) space of the tragic plot. The article studies Euripides' *Trojan Women* as an example of the ideological function of tragedy, by placing the play in its cultural and historical context and analysing its relation to the contemporary Athenian ideology.

Jo Heirman draws attention to the heterotopia of the symposium. His paper relates the ideological outlook of the heterotopia of the symposium to the way 'lived spaces', such as the countryside and the sea, are symbolically presented in poetry that was performed in symposia. Heirman argues that danger at sea is evoked to reinforce the internal cohesion of the sympotic group in opposition to forces that threaten it, while the erotic world of the countryside is envisaged to reflect the special erotic permissiveness of the symposium.

Finally, Henk van der Liet analyses the interplay between time and space in Henrik Stangerup's novel *The Road to Lagoa Santa* according to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin. He shows in particular how the author creates a stark opposition between time as it is lived by the protagonist Lund in the industrialised, scientific *Abendland* of Europe and as mythical, timeless and static in Brazil. The latter finally turns into not just a place or a space, but a state of mind.

The critical potential of 'lived space' (or thirdspace) explored by social theorists and urban geographers (see also, e.g., Tuan 1977 and Massey 2005) has more recently also been developed in the field known as *ecocriticism*. The growing exploitation of nature for commercial purposes in Western societies during recent decades has driven ecologically minded scholars from diverse fields to investigate human interaction with nature in societies throughout history in order to criticise modern attempts at altering (read: destroying) nature (see Garrard 2004). Although the works of Lefebvre, Foucault and Soja provoked a strong interest in the cultural-ideological implications of 'lived space' represented in literary texts (for instance, Viljoen-Van Der Merwe 2004; Kollin 2007), ecocriticism most deeply influenced literary investigations of the ideological implications of 'lived space', particularly in studies of nature writing from the Romantic to the postmodern era (for example, Glotfelty-Fromm 1996; Coupe 2000). The third section of this book concentrates on ecocritical spaces and shows illuminating differences between antiquity and (post)modernity.

Isabel Hoving uses the lens of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism to explore the question how the concept of lived space retains its critical force. She seeks an answer through a discussion of the way in which different poems and novels evoke spaces that are shaped

by human, animal, and plant life. Therefore, she focuses, amongst others, on the work of the Jamaican poet Olive Senior, who evokes the postcolonial, corrupted environment as a ‘taskspace’, a space that requires unsentimental and continuous labour to counter its going to waste (a specific form of ‘lived space’).

As Bettina Reitz illustrates, antiquity, however, focused on completely different anxieties than the ones that plague our modern world because the dangers of pollution and modern exhaustion of natural resources could not have been imagined. Attempts at the mastery of nature are evaluated by Romans with regard to issues as self-knowledge and the limits of human enterprise *vis-à-vis* the grand scheme of things. The fear that certain actions transgress the limits of human possibilities or are aimed solely at satisfying inane appetites for luxury is the greatest cause for concern for them.

Sections 4 and 5 of this book explore the ideological implications of ‘lived space’ in terms of the link between *lived space and power*, beginning from the questions of how power structures space and how this is endorsed or deconstructed in literary texts. Evidently much of the theory laid out in the previous paragraphs also applies to the issues discussed in this section, as space is experienced ('lived') by various hierarchically differentiated voices and structured accordingly in literary accounts. Depending on whether this voice is representative of the dominant class or of marginalised or subaltern classes, the evaluation and representation of particular spaces will differ.

This is especially clear from the way geography is dealt with in literary texts. The impulse to map spaces onto geographical records, to name them, to give them a specific meaning and significance broadcasts the will to master spaces, whether cognitive, psychological or physical, and bring them under a (usually centralised) power structure. Reflections of such attempts at mastery over (the significance of) space may be traced in historical as well as fictional and mythological narratives of exploration, colonisation, conquest, and the like.

Section 4 begins with a discussion of spaces that construct power. It becomes clear that the surviving literature from antiquity generally ideologically puts itself in service of a dominant culture, or even functions as propaganda for a ruler or regime. Four papers on ancient spaces illustrate this.

As for Roman imperialism, Suzanne Adema discusses the ideological Roman epic the *Aeneid* and shows how subtle linguistic markers of space and time contribute to the epic's message that the hero Aeneas fatefully changes the universe, not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Making use of a text-linguistic analysis of the Underworld episode, she argues that it may be interpreted as a means to suggest the lack of limits in time and space for Rome. In this interpretation, Aeneas experiences eternity in the space of the Underworld so that he is able to instigate eternity in the Upper world when he lays the foundations of Rome.

Jacqueline Klooster studies the imperialist and colonialising undertones present in the Greek mythical epic of the Argonauts. Why and how was this epic, which focuses on the meeting of Greeks with the East and foreshadows their colonisation of Northern Africa,

relevant for the dynasty of the Ptolemaic rulers in Alexandria, the cultural capital of the Hellenistic Age? Klooster argues that not only the trajectory of the Argo itself but especially the way its route is described (with many intertextual references to earlier literature and myth, all to be found in the great Alexandrian library) confirm the ideological claims of Greek power over the Hellenistic world of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Mathieu de Bakker explores the relationship between the content of funeral orations of the fifth-fourth century BCE and their spatial context. He demonstrates that the panoramic backdrop provided by the Ceramicus helps the orator to convey his message of the continuity of Athens' democratic ideals of individual and collective liberty and selflessness on behalf of the *polis* and of Greece as a whole. As orators spoke at a site where the cultural memory of the Athenians was collectively cherished, they continually referred to items that were part of this memory and which they endeavoured to harmonise with their overall political message.

Finally, Steven van Renterghem argues that the use of ancient Greek historical spaces in Panagiotis Soutsos' novel *Leandros* (1834) serves to build up a modern national Greek identity based on its ancient roots. By incorporating both the features of the Greek romance and European early romantic novels, and by consciously infusing the spaces of Greece's far and recent past with a symbolic meaning, Soutsos expresses a coherent nationalist message for the identity of the young Greek state and at the same time warns modern Greeks that current politics endanger their identity.

Even in antiquity, attempts at the mastery of space can be fluid rather than static, as the significance of contested or claimed spaces is subject to change with the intervention of different actors. Nevertheless, it is most often post-colonial accounts that deconstruct and question rather than endorse the way in which power has structured spaces (see, e.g., Fanon 1961, Said 1978 and 1993, Spivak 1988). In such accounts characters and narrators indicate the artificial and random nature of the spatial arrangements forced upon them by those in power. They also point to the fact that space is not the rightful possession of one class, race or regime, but the result of the unjust division of power over space and bodies, marginalisation and exploitation. The fifth section regards narratives of spaces that deconstruct power.

Murat Aydemir looks at Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988). On the one hand, the narrator sternly criticises the Western perspective on the Caribbean island of Antigua as 'a small place'. On the other hand, the narrator also expresses her own exasperation at the islanders' ignorance (or rejection) of the 'big picture' of modern history. So, how can big picture and small place, mainland and island, be re-imagined to 'hang together' in a modern and globalising world?

In the last chapter, Elton Barker, Stefan Bouzarovski, Chris Pelling and Leif Isaksen investigate the geographical concepts through which Herodotus describes the conflict between Greeks and Persians. Making use of network theory in combination with close textual study of book 5 of Herodotus' *Histories*, they offer a nuanced reading of the customary topographical vision of East-versus-West by drawing attention to the topological

network culture that criss-crosses the two. They focus on different features of lived space – time, agency and relation – to explore the tension between how the historian puts spatial ideas and concepts into words.

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Ghent-Amsterdam, May 2013 JH and JK

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PART 1

**LIVED SPACE AND SOCIETY**



## Cave and Cosmos

### Sacred Caves in Greek Epic Poetry from Homer (eighth century BCE) to Nonnus (fifth century CE)

Emilie van Opstall

Sacred spaces, both buildings (such as temples and churches) and certain natural sites (such as groves and caves) are places where a divinity is often felt to be present. Persons entering them can have the impression that they come into closer contact with a divine presence. This non-rational experience involving wonder or amazement, aesthetic enjoyment or mystical rapture, has been characterised in various ways: as the experience of ‘the sublime’ (Burke 1757) or ‘the numinous’ (Otto 1923), or as an emotion evoked by ‘hierophany’ (an act of divine power reaching into human life, Eliade 1965), or by the fact that a sacred place is always a ‘storied place’ (i.e., connected to a culturally important narrative, Smyth 2008). Through the ages, people have repeatedly sought to capture this experience in literature. Yet, although literary analysis is capable of elucidating such ‘storied experiences’, there are surprisingly few literary studies of how sacred spaces are experienced.

The present paper discusses sacred caves in Greek epic poetry from Homer (eighth century BCE) to Nonnus (fifth century CE) as ‘lived spaces’.<sup>1</sup> It will not only investigate the way sacred caves are presented and valued by the external narrator or the characters, but also pay attention to their symbolic meaning within the separate poems and within epic as a genre. I begin with a general introduction dealing with caves in Greek landscape and epic: whereas real sacred caves usually lacked religious furnishings because their religious aura was apparently sufficient to evoke the presence of a divinity, description of sacred caves in epic is often embellished by the literary imagination. In parts I and II, I concentrate on two recurring types of sacred caves in epic: the cave of nymphs (especially in Homer, Quintus of Smyrna and Nonnus), and the birth caves of divinities (in particular in Hesiod and Nonnus).<sup>2</sup>

#### Caves in the Greek Landscape

The Greek landscape is marked by innumerable caves. From the Neolithic period onwards, they were used by humans as shelters, dwelling places and graves. From the late bronze and early iron age onwards, some which were located in remote and scarcely visible places were turned into sanctuaries.<sup>3</sup> Their darkness, dampness and inaccessibility probably created the appropriately mysterious atmosphere for an encounter with the divine. Stalactitic formations reminded devotees of divine figures, and dripping water provided acoustic effects. The amount of light depended on the natural light penetrating

through the entrance and on the artificial light of lamps or torches introduced by the visitors.<sup>4</sup> While man-made sanctuaries were characterised by a delimited space or *temenos*, an altar and a cult statue, sacred caves were ‘naturally sacred’: ‘Apparently, the natural aura of holiness was sufficient, so that no conscious display was necessary. To put it differently: the more natural a space, the more it was experienced as sacred’ (Sporn 2007: 46, my translation).<sup>5</sup> Sacred caves, therefore, can usually only be identified by archaeologists through the presence of votive offerings (such as statuettes and reliefs) and inscriptions for divinities. Epic poets, as we shall see, tended to adorn such ‘naturally sacred caves’ with their literary imagination, enriching them with the description of various symbolic objects (such as bowls and looms) and architectonic features (such as doors and roofs).

Most of the sacred caves were used for private religious purposes by locals or travellers. Divinities that were frequently venerated there, often more than one at the same time, included the nymphs and Pan, Apollo, Hermes, Dionysus and Artemis.<sup>6</sup> Some of the caves served as larger supra-regional cult and oracular sites, as archaeological findings have demonstrated. The Corcyran Cave high on Mount Parnassus in Delphi and the Idaean Cave on central Crete are the two most famous examples. The Corcyran cave is described by Pausanias (10.32.2-7) in the second century CE as one of the most impressive sacred caves, dedicated from time immemorial to Pan and the nymphs, where women raved in ecstasy for Dionysus and Apollo. The Idaean Cave is the birth cave of Zeus, with an associated mystery cult of singing and dancing Kouretes (see below).<sup>7</sup> Sacred caves were also artificially constructed, sometimes as an integrated part of larger sanctuaries (especially from Hellenistic times onwards).<sup>8</sup>

## Caves in Greek Epic

Like the Mediterranean landscape, Greek epic abounds with many kinds of caves.<sup>9</sup> Although they serve different purposes, these caves have two sometimes overlapping functions:

- (a) the cave as a dwelling place:
  - for mythical monsters (Cyclopes, especially Polyphemus, and Titans, such as Typhon and Rhea, etc.).
  - for divinities: major gods (Zeus, Dionysus, Hades, Hermes) and minor gods (especially nymphs, such as Calypso).
  - for (wild) animals such as lions, bears, bats, etc.
  - for natural phenomena such as winds and dawn.
- (b) the cave as a hiding place:
  - for the isolation or imprisonment of e.g. Titans (Cronus and Japetus) or humans (such as Philoctetes, maenads, etc.).
  - for safety, to put something beyond reach or sight, for example infant gods (Zeus and Dionysus), humans (herdsman who seek shelter) or belongings (Poseidon’s horses and Odysseus’ gifts).

- for erotic unions (Cheiron and Polyphemus are conceived in a cave, Jason and Medea marry in a cave – called afterwards either ‘cave of the nymphs’ or ‘cave of Medea’; Zeus rapes Persephone in a cave).
- to give birth or to raise infants (for monsters or divinities, see above) or as place of death (as a grave or the entrance to Hades itself).

Perhaps not surprisingly, both categories are related to the ‘liminal’: category (a) contains mysterious, numinous, primordial and primitive (and therefore sometimes, albeit seldom, pastoral) elements, while category (b) is associated with danger and loneliness, birth and death. Both categories contain caves belonging to divinities, either as their dwelling place (see below, part I: the sacred cave of the nymphs) or as the place where they are born or raised as an infant, ‘in the womb of Mother Earth’ (see below, part II: birth caves of divinities). Some of them are explicitly called ‘sacred’ (*i(e)póς*), especially when described from a human point of view.

## Part I. The sacred Cave of the Nymphs

### *Homer (eighth century BCE)*

After years of travel adventures, the Phaeacians finally bring Odysseus to his homeland Ithaca. With the arrival of their ship in the bay of Phorcys, Odysseus leaves the fairytale world of the previous books. His adventures are still part of the heroic world, but their scale is more human. The passage (*Odyssey* 13.102-12) is a so-called ‘landing type-scene’, in which a spatially organised description of the landscape is usually focalised by one of the characters looking around.<sup>10</sup> In this case, there is no focalising character, as Odysseus is still fast asleep on the ship of the Phaeacians. The external narrator takes over:

αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἔλαιη,  
 ἀγχόθι δ' αὐτῆς ἄντρον ἐπήρατον ἡεροειδές,  
 ἵρδν Νυμφάων, αἱ Νηϊάδες καλέονται.  
 ἐν δὲ κρητῆρές τε καὶ ἀμφιφορῆες ἔασι (105)  
 λάϊνοι· ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα τιθαιβώσσουσι μέλισσαι.  
 ἐν δ' ἵστοι λίθεοι περιμήκεες, ἔνθα τε Νύμφαι  
 φάρες ὑφαίνονται ἀλιτόρφυρα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·  
 ἐν δ' ὕδατ' ἀενάοντα. δύω δέ τέ οἱ θύραι εἰσίν,  
 αἱ μὲν πρὸς Βορέαο καταιβατὰ ἀνθρώποισιν, (110)  
 αἱ δ' αὐτὸς Νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι· οὐδέ τι κείνῃ  
 ἄνδρες ἐσέρχονται, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὄδος ἔστιν. (Allen 1980)

At the head of the harbour is a long-leaved olive tree, and near it a pleasant, shadowy cave sacred to the nymphs that are called Naiads. Therein are mixing bowls and jars of stone, and there too the bees store honey. And in the cave are long looms of stone, at which the nymphs weave webs of purple dye, a wonder to behold; and therein are also ever-flowing springs. Two doors there are to the cave, one toward the North Wind, by which men go down, but that toward

the South Wind is sacred, nor do men enter thereby; it is the way of the immortals. (translation Murray-Wyatt 1924)

The external narrator describes the place in the present tense, as is the normal practice in *ekphraseis* (descriptions). It is a bucolic excursus: a sweet scenery with a natural cave, a tree and water. The atmosphere is ‘lovely and shadowy’ (or maybe ‘dark’) and the interior, with its quite peculiar characteristics, is a ‘wonder to behold’ ( $\thetaαῦμα ἴδεσθαι$ ):<sup>11</sup> there are stone vases containing honey, a stone loom on which the nymphs weave a purple cloth, and two entrances, one for men and one for the gods. Some two hundred verses later, Athena describes the cave of the nymphs to Odysseus in order to let him recognise his homeland and pray (lines 345ff.). As soon as the mist disappears, Odysseus indeed recognises Ithaca by this description and prays to the nymphs. The hero and the goddess then hide his belongings in the cave (see also *Odyssey* 16.232), roll a stone in front of one of its entrances and sit down beneath the olive tree to plan the death of the suitors.

Most modern scholars have discussed this passage in a general sense, often focusing on the degree of realism in the description. The positivist assumption that this cave must exist somewhere dates back to Antiquity, starting with the geographer Artemidorus of Ephesus (first century CE), and lives on into modern times: no fewer than twenty-three candidates for Homer’s Ithaca, including this cave, have been proposed. To mention two more examples from different periods of time: Heinrich Schliemann, inspired by his dream of identifying important places in Homer, had no trouble at all finding the cave of the Nymphs on modern Ithaca (1869: 21): ‘Die Örtlichkeit ist in der angeführten Stelle so genau beschrieben, dass man sich kaum irren kann’ (my italics). Only very recently, an interdisciplinary team of geologists, archaeologists and classicists reached an equally triumphant conclusion: Homer was right all along. Although ancient Ithaka has changed because of tectonic activity, the cave of the nymphs can still be found on the southeast end of the Atheras Bay of modern Ithaki.<sup>12</sup> Commentaries on the *Odyssey* are usually cautious: neither Stanford (1965) nor De Jong (2001) express any opinion about a possible location of Homer’s cave of the nymphs. Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989) wonder whether the poet got ‘his detailed and precise information’ by going in search of it himself, but conclude that the mixture of precise detail and lack of accuracy ‘may be typical of a poetic tradition.’ A topographical quest for the location of the cave of the nymphs does not seem to be very fruitful.

The cave of the nymphs represents different functions of ‘lived space’ for divine and human characters within the narrative: it serves not only as a dwelling place for the nymphs, but also as a landmark, a sanctuary and a hiding place for Odysseus.<sup>13</sup> It differs from other caves in the *Odyssey* in that it is not as threatening as Polyphemus’ cave (*Odyssey* 9), set within the eerily beautiful but primordial island of the Cyclopes, nor as overwhelming as the cave of the nymph Calypso (*Odyssey* 5), a *locus amoenus* with trees, water, birds, and sweet scents, full of undesired and suffocating loveliness. Nor does the cave of the nymphs serve as the setting for a new encounter with another mythical character. At this stage of the *Odyssey*, the mythical world becomes more distant and the real world comes closer: on Ithaca, no nymphs are actually present in the flesh, but mortals

have established a cult of them. Their sanctuary is a natural cave, presented as a pleasant place enhanced by literary imagination. However, the presence of the loom is curious: although in Homer the nymph-goddesses Calypso (*Od.* 5.61-62) and Circe (*Od.* 10.221-22) are also said to weave, the loom never belonged to the actual cult of the nymphs.<sup>14</sup> The loom seems to enhance the suggestion of the sanctuary as a dwelling place full of divine (female) activity.

### ***Porphyry: Homer poeta vates***

Already in Antiquity, Homer's cave of the nymphs and all its peculiarities, including the vases, the loom and the entrances, was interpreted allegorically. In his philosophical treatise *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, the Neo-Platonist philosopher Porphyry (third century CE) interprets the cave as an allegory of a higher truth. In some ways, Porphyry is wiser than the positivist scholars mentioned above, as he opens his treatise with a discussion of the relation between reality and fiction. In Porphyry's view, the question of whether Homer described a real cave or mixed reality with fantasy is irrelevant, as in both cases the cave has an allegorical meaning that deserves to be investigated. Before turning to the next epic example, I will briefly discuss Porphyry's treatise. Over recent decades his allegory has justly received more scholarly attention.<sup>15</sup> It stands in a long tradition of allegorical interpretation, already known in classical Antiquity, but especially popular in Late Antiquity: Stoics and Neo-Platonists searched for allegories with a hidden truth, with an underlying intention (*ύπόνοια*) referring not to subconscious patterns but to a higher reality. For them, Homer was a source of wisdom, a *poeta vates* (a fate shared by Homer's colleague Vergil). As Lamberton (1983: 5) puts it, Homer was 'the key to the mysteries of the structure of the universe and the fate of souls.'

Until quite recently, the allegorical tradition had not been considered as serious literary criticism. But we should realise that 'the critical commentary of any generation of readers more often than not seems outlandish to the succeeding one' (Struck 2004: 12). Surely, fifty years from now, after the next 'turn' in research, people will probably smile at the prolific growth in approaches to space over these last years. Perhaps Homer did not intend that all the hidden meanings suggested by Porphyry should be read into his cave of the nymphs, but let us take Porphyry seriously as an intelligent (and, like ourselves, biased) reader and compare his approach with our own way of interpreting texts.

According to Porphyry, the ancients considered caves on the one hand as symbols of the cosmos ('because of their rocky nature') and on the other hand as symbols of all invisible powers ('because of their darkness and indistinct essence').<sup>16</sup> The Homeric cave is dedicated to the water nymphs who represent the souls that come into being. The weaving of purple garments symbolises the clothing of the soul with flesh and blood. The honey in the mixing bowls stands for purity, conservation, and the pleasure granted to souls descending into the material world. The bees represent justice for living souls. The two entrances are linked to the tropics – the northern one (Cancer) for those souls coming into being, the southern one (Capricorn) for the immortals. The olive tree stands for the intelligible cosmos. As Larson puts it in her discussion of the cult of the nymphs in Greek lit-

erature (2001: 60): '(Porphyry's) analysis uncovers hidden transcendence in the cult tradition itself, a transcendence that he believed Homer, in the capacity of theologian, wished to express.' Moreover, Porphyry extends his interpretation to the whole *Odyssey*: Odysseus' travels are those of the human soul, materialised in the sensible world and gaining perfection through growing insight.

It is still common practice today to take particular elements of a story as representative of a work as a whole, both at a poetical and metapoetical level. Although modern interpretations of the *Odyssey* do not discuss the meaning of this particular cave, the Homeric landscape has been interpreted as a symbol for various kinds of travel: physical, mental, individual, collective, from the voyage of life to the writing process of the poet. A famous example of the creative reception of the *Odyssey* as an existential journey is, of course, Cavafy's *Ithaki* on the increasing maturity of the human soul sailing to Ithaca: 'As you set out for Ithaka / hope the voyage is a long one, / full of adventure, full of discovery / ... / And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you. / Wise as you will have become, so full of experience, / you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean' (translation Keeley-Sherrard 1992). A recent scholarly interpretation of Odysseus' journey as a *Bildungsreise* can be found in Giesecke's inspiring book *The Epic City*, in which the *Odyssey* is discussed in relation to the nascent idea of the *polis*: the hero travels from *dystopia* (nature, primitivism, lawlessness, isolation: the caves of the Cyclopes and the cave of Calypso), through a *utopia* (perfect Scheria), towards a *eutopia* (civilisation, justice, openness and progress: future Ithaca). Seen from this perspective, Porphyry's attempt to look for an allegorical meaning in Homer is not as strange as it might at first seem, but rather reflects the need of readers of any period to search for a deeper meaning in works of great literature, related to human existence in general.

### *Quintus' Demythologising*

The epic poet Quintus of Smyrna was probably a contemporary of Porphyry. His *Posthomerica* is a direct continuation of Homer's *Iliad*, adding with vivid cruelty a series of Trojan battle stories that Homer had 'omitted'. When Lassus, one of the Trojan heroes, is killed, Quintus honours him with a digression (6.468-91), just as Homer does with many of the minor heroes in the *Iliad*. Lassus is the son of the nymph Pronoé, who bore him in 'a wide and wondrous cave'. What follows is an extended description of this cave without further connection to the storyline. It seems a somewhat hybrid conflation of Homer's peaceful cave of the nymphs on Ithaca from the *Odyssey* discussed above (including the water, the vessels, the loom and the entrances, with numerous literal citations) and Apollonius' threatening entrance to Hades in Paphlagonia, in the second book of the *Argonautica* (although Quintus generally does not depend on Apollonius):<sup>17</sup>

Ἄλλον δ' ἀμφὶ καστιγνήτῳ κτάνε δήιον ἄνδρα  
Λάσσον, δν ἀντίθεον Προνόη τέκεν ἀμφὶ ῥεέθροις  
Νυμφαίου ποταμοῖο μάλα σχεδὸν εὐρέος ἄντρου, (470) (*Od.* 13.349)  
ἄντρου θητοῖο, τὸ δὴ φάτις ἔμμεναι αὐτῶν  
ἵρὸν Νυμφάων ὅπόσαι περὶ μακρὰ νέμονται (= *Od.* 13.104)

οῦρεα Παφλαγόνων καὶ ὅσαι περὶ βοτρυόεσσαν (AR 2.357-58; 4.300)  
 ναίουσ' Ἡράκλειαν· ἔσικε δὲ κεῖνο θεοῖσιν  
 ἄντρον, ἐπεὶ Ῥά τέτυκται ἀπειρέσιον μὲν ἴδεσθαι, (475) (*Od.* 13.108)  
 λαῖνεον, ψυχρὸν δὲ διὰ σπέος ἔρχεται ὕδωρ (*Od.* 13.109; *Od.* 13.366)  
 κρυστάλλῳ ἀτάλαντον, ἐνὶ μυχάτοισι δὲ πάντῃ (*Od.* 13.363)  
 λαῖνεοι κρητῆρες ἐπὶ στυφελῆσι πέτρησιν (*Od.* 13.105-6)  
 αἰζῆδων ὡς χερσὶ τετυγμένοι ἵνδαλλονται·  
 ἀμφ' αὐτοῖσι δὲ Πάνες ὁμῶς Νύμφαι τ' ἐρατειναὶ (480)  
 ἴστοι τ' ἥλακάται τε καὶ ἄλλ' ὅσα τεχνήεντα (= *Od.* 13.107)  
 ἔργα πέλει Θητοῖσι, τὰ καὶ περὶ θαῦμα βροτοῖσιν (= *Od.* 13.108)  
 εἶδεται ἔρχομένοισιν ἐσω ἱεροῦ μυχοῖ·  
 τῷ ἔνι δοιᾳὶ ἔνεισι καταιβασίαι ἄνοδοι τε, (*Od.* 13.109-12; AR 2.353)  
 ἦ μὲν πρὸς Βορέαο τετραμμένη ἥχηντος (485)  
 πνοιάς, ἦ δὲ Νότοιο καταντίον ὑγρὸν ἀέντος,  
 τῇ θητοὶ νίσονται ὑπὸ σπέος εὐρὺ θεάων·  
 ἦ δ' ἐτέρη μακάρων πέλεται ὄδος, οὐδέ μιν ἄνδρες  
 ῥηιδίως πατέουσιν, ἐπεὶ χάος εὐρὺ τέτυκται  
 μέχρις ἐπ' Αἰδονῆος ὑπερθύμοιο βέρεθρον· (490) (AR 2.353-56, 727-51)  
 ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν μακάρεσσι πέλει θέμις εἰσοράασθαι. (Vian 1966)

Then by his warrior-brother laid he low Lassus, whom Pronoë, fair as a goddess, bare beside Nymphaeus' stream, hard by a cave, a wide and wondrous cave: sacred it is men say, unto the Nymphs, even all that haunt the long-ridged Paphlagonian hills, and all that by full-clustered Heracleia dwell. That cave is like the work of gods, of stone in manner marvellous moulded: through it flows cold water crystal-clear: in niches round stand bowls of stone upon the rugged rock, seeming as they were wrought by carvers' hands. Statues of Wood-gods stand around, fair Nymphs, looms, distaffs, all such things as mortal craft fashioneth. Wondrous seem they unto men which pass into that hallowed cave. It hath, up-leading and down-leading, doorways twain, facing, the one, the wild North's shrilling blasts, and one the dank rain-burdened South. By this do mortals pass beneath the Nymphs' wide cave; but that is the Immortals' path: no man may tread it, for a chasm deep and wide down-reaching unto Hades, yawns between. This track the Blest Gods may alone behold. (translation Way 1962)

The *ekphrasis* (description; again in the present tense) demythologises the cave by presenting it as a natural phenomenon turned into a man-made cult place, a site for visitors (pilgrims or tourists), rather than a dwelling place of the nymphs. It is interesting to note that Quintus is much more evaluative than Homer: he includes the reactions of human visitors in accordance with the rhetorical rules for *ekphraseis* as described in the rhetorical handbooks (such as the *Progymnasmata* § 7 by Aelius Theon, first century CE). Whereas in Homer the poet simply adds that the looms of the nymphs are 'a wonder to behold', in Quintus' description it is amazement and wonder over the nature of the spectacle that pre-

vail: it is ‘a wondrous cave’ (471), ‘marvellously moulded’ (475), ‘a wonder for men who enter’ (482–483). Is it made by men, by nature or by the gods? This is ambiguous: it *looks like* the work of the gods (474) and it *seems* as if the bowls were wrought by carver’s hands (478–479). The text suggests that the objects mentioned in vv. 480–482 are man-made (482: ‘fashioned by mortal craft’). But while statuettes of gods and nymphs are typical votive offerings, looms and distaffs are not. Are we supposed to think that they are of stone too, like Homer’s looms? Quintus concludes his digression by explaining why the entrance is meant for gods but not mortals: it is an abyss. This cave represents two functions of ‘lived space’, a birth cave for a hero in the narrative and a sanctuary appreciated by visitors belonging to the time of the narrator. The isolated position of this matter-of-fact description with regard to the main narrative renders symbolic interpretation difficult. Even a scholar like Porphyry would have difficulty seeing a *poeta vates* at work here.

### *Nonnus’ New Cosmogony*

I conclude the first part of this article with a third example inspired by Homer’s cave of the nymphs: the cave of Persephone in the sixth book of Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca* (6.128–44). Nonnus wrote his enormous epic on the pagan god Dionysus in the fifth century CE in a predominantly Christian world trained in allegorical interpretation. The meaning and the quality of this vertiginous mythological poem are much debated. It is not merely an anti-quarian or encyclopaedic work, masterfully combining old stories and different genres. It also abounds with references to Orphic cosmogony, Neo-Platonic philosophy and Christian religion, recognisable to any educated reader in Late Antiquity, whether pagan or Christian.<sup>18</sup> Persephone’s cave is the setting for her rape by Zeus, and as such has an important function in the prehistory of Dionysus and for the interpretation of the *Dionysiaca* as a whole, as I will discuss later on. The first part of the description is focalised by Demeter: from high up in the air she has been looking for a stony place to hide Persephone. She has passed Zeus’ Dyctaeon cave on Crete from where the noisy dances of the Kouretes can be heard and eventually lands in Sicily, near a stream where she spots a remote cave to hide her daughter. It is a cave where nymphs usually work on a stone loom:

Καί, Κυανήν ὅθι πικνὰ ρόος χυτλώσατο κούρην  
 κρηναίῳ στροφάλιγγι χέων ὀπτήριον ὄδωρ,  
 γείτονα κόλπον ὅπωπεν ἰσοσταθέοντα μελάθρῳ, (130)  
 λαῑνέης ὀρόφοιο περιστεφθέντα καλύπτρῃ,  
 δὸν φύσις ἐθρίγκωσε χαραδραίῳ πυλεῶνι,  
 λάινον ἴστὸν ἔχοντα μεμηλότα γείτοσι Νύμφαις.  
 Καὶ θεδὲς ὀρφναίοιο διερπύζουσα μελάθρου  
 παῖδα πολυσφρήγιστον ἐνέκρυψε φωλάδι πέτρῃ· (135)  
 λυσαμένη δὲ δράκοντας ἐνπτερύγων ἀπὸ δίφρων  
 τὸν μὲν δεξιτεροῦ παρὰ πρητῶνα θυρέτρου,  
 τὸν δὲ λιθογλώχινα πύλης παρὰ λαιὸν ὄχῆα  
 στήσεν ἀθηῆτοι φυλάκτορα Περσεφονείης.  
 Κεῖθι δὲ Καλλιγένειαν, ἐήν εὔπαιδα τιθήνην, (140)  
 κάλλιπε σὺν ταλάροισι καὶ ὄππόσα θήλεϊ φύτλῃ

Παλλάδος εύπαλάμιο νέμει ταλασήιος ίδρως.  
 Καὶ ποσὶν ἡέρα τέμνεν, ἐρημονόμοις δὲ φυλάξαι  
 καμπύλα πετραίησιν ἐπέτρεπεν ἄρματα Νύμφαις. (Chuvin 1992)

And in the place where that River had often bathed the maiden Cyane, pouring his water in fountain-showers as a bridegift, she saw a neighbouring grotto like a lofty hall crowned and concealed by a roof of stone, which nature had completed with a rocky gateway and a loom of stone tended by the neighbouring Nymphs. The goddess passed through the dark hall, and concealed her daughter well-secured in this hollow rock. Then she loosed the dragons from the winged car; one she placed by the jutting rock on the right of the door, one on the left beside the stone-pointed barrier of the entry, to protect Persephoneia unseen. There also she left Calligeneia, her own fond nurse, with her baskets, and all that cleverhand Pallas gives to make womankind sweat over their woolspinning. Then she left her rounded chariot for the Nymphs to watch, in their lonely home among the rocks, and cut the air with her feet.' (translation Rouse 1940)

The external narrator then tells us that Persephone spins and weaves, sings and ... is raped by Zeus. This rape is an Orphic element in the story of Persephone, who is usually said to be abducted by Hades.<sup>19</sup> Nonnus' Persephone eventually gives birth to the equally Orphic baby-god Zagreus, 'the horned baby,' as Nonnus tells us, 'who by himself climbed upon the heavenly throne of Zeus and brandished lightning in his little hand, and newly born, lifted and carried the thunderbolts in his tender fingers', only to be dismembered by the Titans later on. To punish the Titans, Zeus inflicts a world flood on their mother, the Earth. In the narrative, the Zagreus episode concludes the prehistory of Dionysus, after which a new episode in his biography can begin.

In Nonnus, Persephone's cave is the setting for an important moment in the *Dionysiaca*. It is closely related to the cave of Zeus-the-father (with his famous Cretan mystery cult) and to the cave of 'the second Zagreus', Dionysus-the-son (with caves as cult sites scattered over the ancient world), a more successful 'saviour god' than his little half-brother and the main character of the *Dionysiaca*. All three divinities, Zeus, Zagreus and Dionysus, are significant for the history of the cosmos. In the *Dionysiaca*, the birth and death of Zagreus and the subsequent world flood not only close the prehistory of Dionysus' life but also that of man in general, after which a new and more technically evolved phase can begin: the era of Dionysus.

Persephone's cave is situated in the mythical world of nymphs, monsters and divinities. The cave is a remote and dark hiding place of solid rock, formed by nature but looking like a man-made structure: it is 'like a lofty hall' (134), with 'a roof of stone' (131), 'a rocky gateway' (132) and 'a loom of stone' (132), and 'doors' (137-138).<sup>20</sup> Some elements remind us of the Homeric cave of the nymphs, especially the presence of the stone loom and the weaving. Although Nonnus must have known Porphyry's treatise, his references to it are veiled. Nonnus' description can be explained symbolically in the following

way: caves, spinning and weaving are important in Neo-Platonic philosophy as well as in Orphic mysteries, where the cave is a place set outside normal space and time, while the spindle forms the axis around which the world turns and weaving symbolises the creation of the cosmos.<sup>21</sup> Nonnus' Persephone does not finish her *peplos*, nor does her divine child Zagreus ever fulfil his destiny: he will be followed by a second and more successful divine child, Dionysus. By integrating the Demeter myth and the Dionysus myth, Nonnus brings together two important mystery cults. It seems that Nonnus has used Homer's cave of the nymphs as well as Orphic and Neo-Platonic allegory in his own narrative, arriving at a new syncretic cosmogony adapted to the spirit of his time.

## Part II. Birth Caves of Divinities

Having discussed an example from the first category of caves, sacred caves as a dwelling places of the nymphs, I shall now continue with examples from the second category, caves where divinities are born or raised as an infant, 'in the womb of Mother Earth'. As I mentioned above, one of the most important cult caves in Greece was the Cretan birth cave of Zeus. It dated from Minoan times and began to flourish in the eighth and seventh century BCE. The number of its initiation rites grew until Roman times, when Zeus Idaeus became a chthonic god.<sup>22</sup> Its initiates were sometimes called 'Bacchoi of the Curetes' and followed Zeus into the earth for his annual death and rebirth, protecting and guiding the young god. Ancient mystery cults such as the Cretan Zeus cult, the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Dionysian mysteries have several (cosmological) motifs in common: the presence of an initiation or purification rite, a personal relationship with the divine, the hope or promise of a blessed afterlife;<sup>23</sup> and, more particularly, the birth of a divine child (Zeus, Iacchus, Dionysus) in a cavern, a dance with weapons and the death of the divine child.<sup>24</sup> In the following, I shall discuss how similar ideas figure variously in cosmogonical passages of epic poetry, where the birth cave is a recurrent motif, with its liminal character and its darkness generating new light.

Hesiod's *Theogony* tells the well-known story of baby Zeus received by Earth from Rhea, who hides her son in a Cretan cave (483: ὥντρῳ ἐν ἡλιβύτῃ) in order to save him from the jaws of his father Cronos. Baby Zeus in the cave represents the still fragile promise of a future era of justice, a new phase in the history of the world. His birth has to be kept secret until he is strong enough to present himself to the world. According to Graziosi and Haubold, preoccupation with cosmogony is not exclusive to Hesiod's epic, but shared by the entire archaic production of epic: to its contemporary audience, every single epic evoked a wider epic tradition and situated itself within a single cosmic-historical framework, encompassing the world from chaos to the present time.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the theme of cosmogony is inherent to the original function of poetry in general: 'religious song that brings order and harmony to the world'.<sup>26</sup> There are several descriptions in epic poetry of singers appeasing their audience with cosmogonic songs, such as Hermes trying to calm Apollo in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (427-433) or Orpheus trying to settle a fight between two Argonauts in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (1.496-1.518).<sup>27</sup>

As we have seen, the birth cave has a prominent role in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* not only for Zeus (whose birth lies outside the prehistory described in this epic, but is mentioned in book 28.309-344) and for Zagreus (as discussed above, in book 6), but also, and more significantly, for Dionysus. During his infancy, Dionysus is hidden in three different caves. The first, his birth cave, is located on Mount Draconus (9.16).<sup>28</sup> He is born from his father's thigh and is consubstantial with him. He does not need to be bathed and he is breastfed by the nymphs whose milk flows spontaneously. But when these nymphs are struck with madness by the jealous Hera, Hermes saves the baby by bringing him to Semele's sister Ino. Mystis, one of Ino's slaves, hides him in a second cave (9.101-9.110):<sup>29</sup>

Ἡ τότε Βάκχον ἔλοῦσα θεοτρεφέων ἀπὸ μαζῶν  
ἀπροΐδῃ ζοφόεντι κατεκλήσε βερέθρῳ.  
Καὶ Διὸς αὐτοβόητος ἀπαγγέλλουσα λοχείην  
μαρμαρυγὴ σελάγιζε κατανγάζουσα προσώπου·  
τοῖχοι δ' ἀχλυόεντες ἐλευκαίνοντο μελάθρου, (105)  
καὶ ζόφον ἔκρυψε φέγγος ἀθηήτου Διονύσου.  
Καὶ Βρομίῳ παῖζοντι παρέζετο πάννυχος Ἰνώ·  
πολλάκι δ' ἀστήρικτος ἀναθρώψκων Μελικέρτης  
χείλεσιν ἀντιτύποισιν ἀνέσπασε γείτονα θηλὴν  
εὗια παππάζοντι παρερπύζων Διονύσῳ. (110) (Chrétien 1985)

She then took Bacchus away from those godfeeding breasts, and hid him from all eyes in a dark pit. But a brilliant light shone from his face, which declared of itself the off-spring of Zeus: the gloomy walls of the house grew bright, and the light of unseen Dionysos hid the darkness. All night long Ino sat beside Bromios as he played. Often Melicertes jumped up with wavering steps and pressed his lips to pull at the other breast as he crawled close to Bacchus babbling "Eoui!" (translation Rouse 1940)

The dark cave is represented as a house with gloomy walls (105). In a typically Nonnian (contorted) turn of the phrase, the light of the invisible god renders the darkness of this hiding place invisible: Dionysus is born as a new light unto the world.<sup>30</sup> The scene of Ino and the two little children, her son Melicertes and the infant god Bacchus, in the cave is quite domestic. During the first period of his life, Mystis teaches Bacchus aspects that will belong to his own future mystery cult. But he has to leave this cave, too, because Hera has spotted him again. So Hermes, in the guise of the authoritative primordial Orphic god Phanes, for whom even Hera feels awe, brings the nine year old child-god to a third hiding place, the 'echoing lions cave' of the goddess Rhea in Phrygia. There, he will learn to dominate animals and get used to the sound of the Corybantes (13.8-15). Zeus orders Iris to convey the message to Dionysus that he must earn his place on Mount Olympus (just like Hermes and Apollo, see 20.94-96): in order to be deified, Dionysus must drive the unjust Indians out of Asia and bring festivities (*όργια*) and wine to men.<sup>31</sup> The severe, Homeric sounding, guest-type scene of Iris' arrival at Rhea's cave looks like a stern Byzantine court ceremony with Rhea as a hieratic empress, but it certainly has a light

touch. The cave must be large because it is echoing (9). Only two elements of the interior are described: a bowl and a table (15):<sup>32</sup>

Ἡ μὲν ἐρεσσομένων πτερύγων ἀνεμώδει ῥιπῇ  
δυσαμένη κελάδοντα λεοντοκόμου μυχὸν ἄντρου  
ἄψιφον ἔχνος ἐπηξεν· ἀφωνήτῳ δὲ σιωπῇ (10)  
σφιγξαμένη στόμα δοῦλον ὄρειάδος ἐγγὺς ἀνάσσης,  
ἴστατο κυρτωθεῖσα, καθελκομένου δὲ καρήνου  
χεῖλεσιν ἱκεσίοισι πόδας προσπτύξατο Ἄρεις.  
Καὶ τὴν μὲν Κορύβαντες ἀμειδέι νεύματι Ἄρεις  
θεσπεσίης ἀρέσαντο παρὰ κρητῆρι τραπέζης. (15) (Vian 1995)

She paddled her way with windswift beat of wings, and entered the echoing den of stabled lions. Noiseless her step she stayed, in silence voiceless pressed her lips, a slave before the forest queen. She stood bowing low, and bent down her head to kiss Rheia's feet with suppliant lips. Rheia unsmiling beckoned, and the Corybants served her beside the bowl of the divine table. (translation Rouse 1940)

The new god, the main character of this mythological epic, is born at a time when the world has difficulty recovering from cataclysms: it has suffered from Typhon's attacks turning the earth upside down and a deluge as a divine punishment for the Titans who killed his half-brother Zagreus. It is his mission to bring happiness to mankind. The liminal, undefined and primordial caves, housing a new divinity full of promises unknown to the world, again symbolise the coming of a new cosmological order. In spite of the sometimes antiquarian and encyclopaedic character of the *Dionysiaca*, these 48 books tell a vivid story that must have appealed to its Late Antique audience, whether pagans or Christians. While it is impossible consider the *Dionysiaca* a Christian work, it is intimately linked with several contemporary religious ideas common to both mystery cults and Christianity, such as the idea of a saviour god with a mission. One of their shared motifs is the divine birth cave: around the second century CE, an oriental version of the Christian nativity story was quite popular, as written sources and iconographical material overwhelmingly show. According to this version, Jesus was not born in a stable but in a cave. His birth was accompanied by light. The description of the nativity scene in the Greek *Protoevangelium of James* shows the obvious similarities (38.4-39.8):<sup>33</sup>

(...) καὶ ἔστησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ σπηλαίου. Καὶ <ἢν> νεφέλῃ σκοτεινῇ  
ἐπισικάζουσα τὸ σπήλαιον. Καὶ εἶπεν ἡ μαῖα· «Ἐμεγαλύνθη ἡ ψυχὴ μου  
σήμερον, ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὁφθαλμοί μου παράδοξα σήμερον, ὅτι σωτηρίᾳ τῷ  
Ἰσραὴλ γεγένηται.» Καὶ παραχρῆμα ἡ νεφέλη ὑπεστέλλετο τοῦ σπηλαίου, καὶ  
ἔφανη φῶς μέγα ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ ὥστε τοὺς ὁφθαλμοὺς μὴ φέρειν. Καὶ πρὸς  
ὅλιγον τὸ φῶς ἐκένον ὑπεστέλλετο, ἔως ἔφανη βρέφος· καὶ ἤλθεν καὶ ἔλαβε  
μασθόν ἐκ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας. Καὶ ἀνεβόησεν ἡ μαῖα <καὶ εἶπεν>· «Ως  
μεγάλη <μοι> ἡ σήμερον ἡμέρα, ὅτι εἶδον τὸ καινὸν θέαμα τοῦτο.»  
(De Strycker 1961)

(...) And they stood in the place of the cave, and behold a luminous cloud overshadowed the cave. And the midwife said: "My soul has been magnified this day, because mine eyes have seen strange things – because salvation has been brought forth to Israel." And immediately the cloud disappeared out of the cave, and a great light shone in the cave, so that the eyes could not bear it. And in a little that light gradually decreased, until the infant appeared, and went and took the breast from His mother Mary. And the midwife cried out, and said: "This is a great day to me, because I have seen this strange sight." (translation James 1924)

## Conclusion

In the Mediterranean landscape, sacred caves are either dedicated to major cults such as the cult of Pan and the nymphs (Delphi) and the cult of Zeus (Crete) or to the individual worship of various deities (proven by the presence of graffiti and terra cotta statuettes or reliefs, often including nymphs). This last category usually does not have specific boundary markers, architectural subdivisions, altars or cult statues. Sometimes, natural stone formations are used as an altar or as a cult image. In this article, I have discussed two types of sacred caves in epic poetry from Homer to Nonnus: firstly the cave of the nymphs in Homer, Quintus and Nonnus, and then the birth caves of divinities, particularly in Hesiod and Nonnus.

While real sacred caves are usually unadorned but highly suggestive places, literary sacred caves are often embellished by the imagination of the poet: rock is transformed into houses for divinities with gateways, halls, walls and roofs, containing bowls, vessels, looms and tables. Caves function on different levels as 'lived space'. They can be used as a setting for characters in a story and have symbolical implications. While for the nymphs the cave is a dwelling, for Odysseus it is a landmark, a sanctuary and a hiding place. Porphyry invests Homer's cave of the nymphs with Neo-Platonic meaning, interpreting it as an allegory for the voyage of the human soul. Quintus, on the other hand, demythologises it, turning the birth cave of one of the Trojan heroes into a contemporary sanctuary for pilgrims filled with votive offerings and 'wondrous to behold'. Nonnus' cave of the nymphs serves both as a setting for the characters in the story and a symbol: it is an unsafe hiding place for Persephone with wider religious-philosophical connotations, shared by other caves figuring in the *Dionysiaca*, namely the cave of Zeus and Dionysus. The dark and mysterious nature of caves, generating and hiding, as liminal places of birth and of death in close connection with the earth and with earth-related powers, seems to have invited epic poets to use the cave as a cosmogonic symbol. The cave of Zeus, the cave of Persephone, and the three caves of Dionysus are all places for the secret conception, birth or infancy of a new divinity who has to be protected, in anticipation of a new and better phase in the history of the world: Earth secreting a divine promise. As such, the cave echoes with the universal religious imaginary shared by pagans and Christians alike, as the example of the oriental Nativity story shows. All these different types of literary imagery may have resonated with the experience of entering a real sacred cave.

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## Notes

1. See Bachelard (1957) and Lotman (1990).
2. I would like to thank the editors of this volume, as well as Suzanne Adema and Pierluigi Lanfranchi for their stimulating comments on this article.
3. Within the boundaries of modern day Greece, over 10,000 caves have been counted, of which 130 functioned as sanctuaries (Sporn 2010). These flourished in the Archaic and Classical period but were less popular in the Hellenistic period. They regained popularity in the Roman period and especially in Late Antiquity (Sporn 2007: 42).
4. See Kerényi (1976: 17) and Burkert (1977: 55) for the interpretation of stone formations; see Sporn (2007: 42-44) for form, sound and light. The literary caves discussed in the present article confirm the visual impact of the stone formations mentioned by Sporn but do not mention the aquatic ‘lithophony’. Moreover, when light is described in epic, it is always supra-natural (see below part II).
5. See also Scully (1962: 10), Sporn (2002) and (2010) for the general absence of boundary markers, altars and divine statues with the one conspicuous exception of the Vari cave of ‘Archedemus the Nympholept’ (fifth century BCE). For the larger cult caves, such as the Corycian Cave and the Idaean Cave (see below), the situation is different. Architectural elements such as marble entrances were added only when natural caves are part of larger sanctuaries. Sometimes, statues or altars were placed outside, in front of the cave.
6. For the different kind of religious practices in caves, see Sporn (2007: 57) Ancient legends also tell us about caves used by individuals in quest of visionary wisdom, such as the Cretan seer Epimenides and the philosopher Pythagoras (both sixth century BCE) (see Dodds 1951: 110). Other examples are Elia who withdrew in a cave on Mount Horeb (eighth century BCE) (*1 Kings* 19) and the church father Hieronymus who retreated to a cave in the Syrian desert (347-420 CE). Many early Christian anchorites were said to have dwelled in caves by way of spiritual withdrawal from the secular world.
7. In Antiquity, two caves on Crete were seen as Zeus’ birth cave: the Idaean cave as well as the Dyctaean cave. For confusion between the two, see Call. *Hymn* I.4-6 and 47-51; Aratus 33-35; Apollonius Rhodius 1.509 and 3.134.
8. See Lavagne (1988) on caves from Sulla to Hadrian.
9. In major epic from the Archaic period to the Late Antique period, words for ‘cave’ (ἄντρον, σπέος, βέρεθρον) occur over a 160 times. To give an impression of the distribution in the corpus studied for this article: in Homer 57 times (ἄντρον: 12; σπέος: 43, often accompanied by γλαφυρός or εύρυς; βέρεθρον: 2), mainly in the *Odyssey* (book 5: Calypso, book 9: Polyphemus and book 13: nymphs); in Hesiod 2 times (ἄντρον: 1; σπέος: 1); in the *Homeric Hymns* 11 times (ἄντρον: 10; σπέος: 1), mainly in the *Hymn on Hermes* (see below); in Apollonius 15 times (ἄντρον: 10; σπέος: 3; βέρεθρον: 2); in Quintus of Smyrna 31 times (άντρον: 19; σπέος: 6; βέρεθρον: 6), mainly related to the cave of Philoctetes and to animal dens; in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca* 48 times (άντρον: 15, often accompanied by λεαίνης; σπέος: 10; βέρεθρον: 23, mostly related to Hades).
10. See De Jong (2001: 317-318).

11. In Homer, this expression is used for mortal focalisers, see De Jong 2001. There is one exception, though: Calypso's cave, admired by the god Hermes (*Odyssey* 5).
12. See <http://www.odysseus-unbound.org>, consulted 13.05.2011.
13. Caves functioning as mere landmarks or features of a landscape are very rare in epic: the cave in the harbour of the island of the Cyclopes (*Odyssey* 9.141); the Eileiuthyia cave on Crete (*Odyssey* 19.188); the island Aeolia 'rich in caves' (Quintus of Smyrna 14.475); a wood 'impenetrable like a cave' (Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 21.328); an abyss in a landscape (Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 2.70).
14. See Larson (2009: 61) on stone formations in caves of the nymphs suggestive of furniture. There is one exceptional finding of a 'bed of the nymphs.'
15. Pépin (1965), Verhoeven (1984), Lamberton (1983) and (1986), Agosti (1986), Larson (2001: paragraph 1.4.5), see also Finkelberg (2011: s.v. 'Allegorical interpretation', 'Allegory' and 'Porphyry'). In his commentary on the *Odyssey*, Stanford (1965) still condemns Porphyry's treatise as a fantastic allegorical interpretation, 'neglecting such otiose speculations, the stone mixing-bowls and two-handled jars in 105-107 (...) and the looms were probably stalagmite formations as often seen in caves and grottos.' Of course, but Stanford misses the point: stalagmite formations often arouse the imagination and are interpreted as divine figures or religious objects.
16. Porphyry corroborates this by mentioning the Allegory of the Cave of Pythagoras' / Plato's philosophy and the cave sanctuaries in the Mithraic cult (*De Antro Nympharum* 7).
17. Relevant citations and allusions are indicated between brackets next to each verse. Vian (2008: 391): 'It is hard to say whether he wished to give Apollonius' digression a Homeric turn or simply ignored it.' Vian (1959: 129 and 143) concludes that Quintus' descriptions seem to be based mainly on geographical and fictional works ('souvenirs de lecture', 'sans souci de l'exactitude', thus Vian). See also Larson (2001: 1.4.5) on Quintus' cave of the nymphs.
18. See the French edition by Vian et al., the Italian commentary by Gigli Piccardi et al., Shorrock (2001) and (2011), García-Gasco Villarrubia (2007) and (2011), Hernández de la Fuente (2011), etc.
19. In the Orphic tradition, the rape of Persephone and the birth of Zagreus are usually located on Crete. Chuvin remarks that the setting of this episode sprang from Nonnus' fantasy because he did not know the actual Sicilian landscape (1991: 73): 'Kyanè est un trou d'eau bleutée au milieu d'une plaine parfaitement plate'. It was described by some ancient writers as a stagnant swamp.
20. For similar imagery, see the *Homeric Hymn on Hermes*, where the nymph Maia gives birth to Hermes in a shady cave (ἄντρον παλίσκιον, v. 6, see also vv. 171 and 359) on Mount Kylene in Arcadia. This cave is described as a hiding place, but during the hymn, while Hermes changes from grumpy newborn outsider to accepted member of the Olympic pantheon, it assumes more and more architectural features. This is very rare in the case of sacred caves, as we have seen. Firstly, it is transformed into a human dwelling, with a threshold, high roof, courtyard gate, hall and door with keyhole, and then into a house of a god, bright and filled with tripods and cauldrons (first an instance of wishful thinking/singing), with even an

- ‘abounding inner shrine’. It is large and full of treasures ‘as are kept in temples’. Thus, the cave in this hymn is a hiding place transformed into a would-be temple.
21. See the excellent introduction to and commentary on books I-XII of the *Dionysiaca* by Gigli-Piccardi (2006: 16-17) and commentary on lines 128-144. The Orphic-Neo-Platonic interpretation is too complicated to discuss here in its entirety, as it extends to many other elements in the *Dionysiaca*. Weaving can also seen as a metaphor for the text itself (text < Latin *texere*), but I doubt if this metaphor is intended here. The passage recalls to a certain extent the description of Persephone’s unfinished *peplos* by Nonnus’ contemporary Claudian in his Latin *De raptu Proserpinae*, where Persephone is weaving, locked away and abandoned by her mother in an iron palace on Sicily. She does not finish her *peplos* and leaves the world, as it were, in an imperfect state. For *De raptu Proserpinae* and its relation to the Eleusinian mysteries, liminality and cosmogony, see Dirven-Gerbrandy (2010).
  22. See Burkert (1977: 393). Some spectacular votive offerings (ninth century BCE) have been found in the cave on Mount Ida: a bronze *tympanon* (shield) showing Assyrian-style demons holding cymbals, representing the Curetes trying to cover the cries of baby Zeus (although here Zeus is depicted as an adult man, ‘the Lord of the Animals’, i.e. lions). The cult was linked to a post-Hesiodean Cretan theogony. Two literary sources confirm the presence of a Zeus cult in Crete: the remaining fragments of Euripides’ tragedy *Cretans* and the *The Palaiastro Hymn* or *Hymn of the Kouretes*, a Hellenistic cult hymn for Zeus Dyctaeus as almighty and ever-returning divinity. This hymn mentions soldiers (probably the Curetes) singing and dancing around an altar, performing a kind of military dance, accompanied by thunder-like ecstatic-orgiastic sounds of their clashing shields. In the cave on Mount Ida, the remains of many cult objects have been found, from the eighth century BCE continuing into the fifth century AD (see Watrous 1996: 59).
  23. Tripolitis (2002).
  24. While the cult of Zeus and of Demeter have fixed locations, the cult of Dionysus is a ‘roaming’ cult. Caves are one of the possible settings for celebrations. Burkert (1977: 434): ‘Als Zeichen der geheimnisvollen, Geschlossenen, Jenseitigen tritt die bakchische Höhle auf’. See Boyancé (1961) on the importance of caves in Dionysian mysteries.
  25. See Graziosi & Haubold (2005): cosmogony begins with (a) primordial chaos, heaven and earth; (b) the birth of the gods, the first divine couples Ouranos and Gaia, Cronos and Rhea, Zeus and Hera (Hesiod’s *Theogony*), the younger Olympians (*Homeric Hymns*); (c) Heroes, Helena’s lovers (*Women Catalogue*), the Theban and Trojan war (*Homer, Epic cycle, Cypria*); and (d) the end of the Heroic era after the Theban and Trojan wars, the present day (*Works and Days*). See also Clay (1989).
  26. See Klooster (2011: 91).
  27. However, Zeus’ birth cave and his infancy remains a minor motif in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*: in 2.1231-41 Zeus’ birth cave is a mere indication of time and in 3.129-44 Aphrodite blackmails Eros, promising a beautiful ball from Zeus’ infancy which, judging by its description, is a symbol of the cosmos. But see Williams (1991) on Zeus as a prefiguration of the young Jason.
  28. Not Nysa > Dio-nysos. See also Theocritus 26.33.

29. This cave remains unspecified, possibly as a general reminder of initiation-caves in the Dionysian cult. See Gigli Piccardi (2006: 643): ‘probabilmente con lo scopo di sottolineare in via generale il ruolo della grotta nell’iniziazione dionisiaca’. In Oppian’s *Cynegetica*. 4.244-49 Ino, Autonoe and Agave take care of the newborn child, putting him in a cave.
30. See Gigli-Piccardi (2006: 648).
31. Dionysus’ adversaries can also be understood as the actual enemies of the Byzantine empire under Justinian and Heraclius, see Gonnelli (2008: 62-63).
32. Gonnelli (2008: 64-65).
33. For this parallel, see the commentary of Gigli Piccardi (2006) on lines 103-106. Other versions in Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Armenian elaborate even more on this theme, see the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew in Latin 13.2 (cave and light, because of the presence of Mary); the Gospel of the Nativity in Syriac Arabic 4.1 (cave and light, because of the presence of Jesus: ‘And the cave at that moment looks like a temple of a higher world, because celestial and terrestrial voices glorified and magnified the birth of the Lord, Christ’); the Gospel of the Nativity in Armenian 9.2-4): (cave and light, Maria = Eve, the first mother. Later on, Maria is presented as a second Eve and Jesus as a second Adam: ‘when I entered the cave I saw a nimbus of light that emanated from the cave, while from above the sound of voices and of hosts of angel choirs were being heard thanking and glorifying’). In archaic and classical Antiquity, the divine is already associated with light, in religious practice, iconography and literature. For examples of Greek divinities associated with light, see Parisinou (2000) on Zeus with his thunderbolt, Demeter with her torches and Dionysus with his celestial brightness (expressed in divine radiance, a golden or rayed crown or appearance as lightning) and torchlight. Birth in general is seen as a passage from darkness to light, but a divine birth in a dark cave accompanied by light is especially characteristic of mystery cults and has a cosmic significance. Gigli Piccardi (2006: 17) compares the second birth cave of Dionysus in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca* 9.55 with his cave of the Logos in his *Paraphrase* (1.1), where the light of the *Logos* illuminates the dark cosmos and the cave prefigures cosmic salvation.



# Space and Myth

## The Ideology of Utopian and Heterotopian Representations in the Contemporary Novel

Sofie Verraest and Bart Keunen

### Introduction

In spite of what the term seems to suggest, literary space is far from a static, monolithic, or straightforward phenomenon. In the living universe of the novel, space more often defines an experience than simply providing a backdrop. It is marked by a myriad of associations and meanings in the past, present and future. Taking this observation as its starting point, the present article aims to suggest guidelines for differentiating between the associations and meanings that colour literary space.

For this purpose, the philosopher Ernst Cassirer proves to be an excellent counsellor. The author of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, a three-volume study that was first published between 1923 and 1929, not only fully understood that the human environment is first and foremost a matter of mental modelling, but also gave a systematic account of three distinct types of such modelling. Departing from the fact that ‘every *apprehension* of a particular empirical thing or … empirical occurrence contains within it an act of *evaluation*’ (31; original emphasis), Cassirer goes on to discuss the three fundamental epistemological forms that spontaneously accomplish this act of evaluation on a daily basis: *Ausdrucksfunktion* (expressive function), *Darstellungsfunktion* (representative function) and *Bedeutungsfunktion* (significative function).<sup>1</sup> In a slightly different terminology, this article refers to them as the ‘affective’, the ‘representational’, and the ‘conceptual’ form and argues that all of them are at work when characters, narrators or narratees ‘take in’ literary space. Firstly, this article proposes that a Cassirerian approach to literary space not only helps us to distinguish between the panoply of emotions, associations, and meanings with which space is impregnated, but, by emphasising that spatial experience often merges more concrete with more abstract meanings, it also allows us to grasp spatial images in their multi-layered richness.

Secondly, this article also aims to shed light on a perhaps underexposed and certainly undertheorised facet of literary space that would be called ‘mythical’ in Cassirer’s terminology. In the second volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, the philosopher embarks upon an in-depth description of ‘mythical thought’, the most ancient and elementary form of thought that occupied centre stage in the ‘primitive’ perception of space. From a mythical perspective, the surrounding world was animated by magical powers; it appeared as an enchanted and dreamlike place that was out of the ordinary and filled with supernatural tokens and omens. Whereas more rational ‘receptions’ of space have far out-

stripped the magical one by now, mythical remnants nevertheless resurface in literary space when it becomes the stage of such intense emotions as astonishment, irrational fears, or vehement desires. In what follows, we intend to show how mythical remnants can be detected in literary space and why they can be understood as ‘ideological’ despite the implicit and pre-conscious level of awareness on which they operate.

With this in view, we adopt Walter Benjamin’s distinction between ideology in the strict sense of the word, as a discourse giving sense to the world in an explicit manner, and ideology in a broader sense, as phantasmagoria. In an outline of *The Arcades Project* (written 1927–1940) that he sent to a French publisher towards the end of his life, Benjamin stresses the omnipresence of phantasmagorical ‘dreamification’ in the modern era. Akin to the shadow plays of eighteenth-century popular culture, the modern world of technological feats of strength and consumer goods turns into a vaguely surreal space for its perceivers because of the desires and dreams with which they invest it. Man not only tries to make sense of these surroundings through rational, ideological reflection, but also through direct, affective ‘illumination.’ Modern objects undergo phantasmagorical illumination ‘not only in a theoretical manner, by an ideological transposition, but also in the immediacy of their perceptible presence’ (Benjamin 1999: 14). Inquiry into the ideology of literary space should include such phenomena, which are ideological in the broad sense of the term, and which, following Cassirer, can be considered contemporary manifestations of mythical thought patterns.

The third aim of this article is to propose a distinction between two kinds of mythically charged spaces, one privileging *conceptual* associations, the other *affective* ones. This contrast allows us to revisit Michel Foucault’s distinction between utopian and heterotopian spaces, as set forth in his famous article ‘Of Other Spaces’, and his claim that present-day space has not been entirely desanctified in practice. We intend to show how the perception of utopian spaces leans to political conceptualisation, whereas that of heterotopias inclines towards affective experience, substituting the political for an aesthetic outlook. The late modern context of the First World has indeed been the setting for such a gradual shift, as we intend to demonstrate.

For these three purposes, we turn to two novels in which literary space occupies centre stage: Stefan Heym’s *The Architects* (written in English between 1963 and 1965, and first published in German in 2000) and Benoît Duteurtre’s *La cité heureuse* (which could tentatively, and for lack of a better alternative, be translated as *The Happy City*, 2007). In both novels, we focus on a particular place in the fictional universe that is value-laden in a way as to acquire mythical overtones. In the first novel, that place is World Peace Road, an emblematic construction project in East Berlin shortly after the Second World War that is Heym’s fictional variant of the Karl-Marx-Allee. In *The Happy City*, which is set against the backdrop of an unspecified Central European town in the near future, the focal point is Town Park, a cultural theme park for tourists that has taken possession of the entire city centre. In a way reminiscent of the Paris of 2040 imagined in 1997 by Marc Augé in *Une ville de rêve* (‘A Dream City’, 173–185), Duteurtre’s novel paints a picture of how a multinational company remodels the different quarters of the centre into themed attractions.

## Ernst Cassirer's Epistemology and Literary Space

In our day and age, knowledge and thinking have a ring of consistency and logicality. Cassirer's epistemology shows, however, that such a form of thought is only the ultimate phase of a drawn-out and very gradual movement of abstraction, which introduces an increasing distance between perceiver and perceived. An array of anthropological studies backs Cassirer's claim that the earliest, most elementary form of thought is one that we would nowadays consider to be rather 'thought-less', but it positively moulded man's surroundings into a meaningful reality: the direct, emotional absorption of the environment became an affectively charged space. It is only through the introduction of abstraction that man sees not only a merely *affective space* (first step), but also a stable world of discrete objects that we could label *representational space*, meaning the visual perception of things, persons, buildings, or landscapes as we know it from daily life (second step). The world of emotional tonalities is now supplemented by a world of stable objects; so-called 'thing perception' sets in (1965: 118-141). Further abstraction brings us to the *conceptual knowledge* of the world (third step). Distancing ourselves even further from what we perceive, we no longer consider entities in and of themselves, but see them as mere instantiations of an abstract idea or conceptual system.

In sum, three kinds of increasingly abstract cognitive interventions mediate our contact with spatial reality and help us to give meaning to the world surrounding us, be it through emotions, 'thing perceptions' or concepts. While specific cultures privilege one or the other kind of cognitive intervention – for instance, the conceptual one in modern times or the affective one in the 'primitive' stage – all three are simultaneously operative in daily experience. If we are to do justice to this multifaceted richness of space, an analysis on the three levels is required. The analyses of World Peace Road and Town Park will thus set out to demonstrate how concrete representations (or 'thing perceptions') are coloured equally by affective and conceptual values.

Ernst-Wolfgang Orth was right to point out that artistic representations stand midway between mythical and scientific ones in Cassirer's philosophy (1995: 121). Literary and other artistic representations depict more intellectual experiences akin to scientific thought as well as emotional appeals to the recipient's (the character's, narrator's, or narratee's) most elementary form of knowledge. Literary and other artistic representations depict more intellectual experiences as akin to either scientific thought or emotional appeals to the recipient's (the character's, narrator's, or narratee's) most elementary form of knowledge. The latter aspect links literature up with mythical thought. While the knowledge domain, the 'symbolic form' (*symbolische Form*) in Cassirer's terminology, of literature (and the other arts) is different from that of myth, it nevertheless manifests a strong affinity with it. Spatial images in literature are indeed often permeated by the kind of affective experiences that are central to the mythical world. When looking into the ideology of space (understood in the broad sense), such affective associations are just as relevant as the commonly invoked theoretical and intellectual associations are. If we are to lay bare man's whole toolkit for making sense of the world, ideology in the narrow sense should be complemented by phantasmagoria.

## Affective Aspects of Mythical and Literary Space

If a dark forest seems to breathe a menacing atmosphere, or, conversely, a charming house projects conviviality and safety, this divergence is to be situated on the level of affective space. While we no longer pay much attention to the emotions that spaces stir up, they were particularly significant from a mythical (or ‘primitive’) perspective and possessed explanatory power. This is so because, from a mythical point of view, emotions did not originate from the person experiencing them; they were instead magical spirits taking possession of this person as well as certain objects or places. This is why trees, amulets and fetishes, for instance, were seen as truly animate entities. From a mythical angle, the world is not so much ‘a reality of things, of mere objects, but … a kind of presence of living subjects’ (1965: 62). Cassirer refers to this as the perception of a ‘thou’ rather than an ‘it’, an animated rather than an objective reality (1965: 63).<sup>2</sup> As long as no distance is introduced between perceiver and perceived, the subject does not distinguish itself from an environment of objects yet and perceives living subjects (spirits) rather than dead objects (inanimate matter). The mythical way to make sense of the world is thus in terms of magical presence. What strikes as meaningful from this perspective, is what is experienced as *extraordinary*: some spirit or magical force seems to be at work and directly affects the perceiver. Cassirer writes that ‘what seems to remain as the relatively solid core’ of the mythical ‘is simply the impression of the extraordinary, the unusual, the uncommon’ (1955: 77).

And this way of sense-making persists into the representational space of the mythical mind. Concrete objects and places are viewed in terms of the presence or absence of magical forces. Along the lines of this distinction, the environment is moulded into mythical representations. Some things and places manifest themselves to mythical consciousness with such extraordinary force that they seem magical or sacred, and their significant meaning makes them seem detached from their indifferent surroundings. As such, spatial representation distinguishes between enchanted, affectively charged, extraordinary places, on the one hand, and indifferent, profane ones, on the other: ‘All reality and all events are projected into the fundamental opposition of the sacred and the profane’ (1955: 75). Places that are considered to be sacred and magical are singled out from their profane surroundings as ‘inside’ spaces that are different from ‘the outside’. Cassirer writes that ‘[h]allowing begins when a specific zone is detached from space as a whole, when it is distinguished from other zones and … religiously hedged around’ (1955: 99). As such, mythical perception is characterised by a logic of ‘inside and outside’, ‘inward and outward’ (1955: 99).

It goes without saying that the affective experience of living spirits and the representation of magic inside spaces, which are both so typical for myth, ceased to make sense a long time ago. It is interesting to see what remains of them in a present-day, secular format, however. On the affective level, we need to invoke the persistence of what Cassirer calls an ‘expressive’ or ‘physiognomic’ understanding of places and landscapes, while, on the representational level, extraordinary inside spaces mostly persist in an aesthetic variant of the magical-religious original.

As regards the affective experience of space, Cassirer points out that while we do not believe in spirits anymore, we still spontaneously tend to ‘read’ the atmosphere of a specific place as a so-called ‘physiognomic character’ (1965: 68), a facial expression.<sup>3</sup> Even though we do not believe inanimate objects to be inhabited by spirits, we still subconsciously endow them with animate characteristics: we suspect something like a soul in what is mere dead matter. As physiognomers determined the characteristics of a person’s character or soul from the outside reality of their face, we are inclined to see inanimate objects as inspired and living when they stir certain emotions in us. For instance, we read a charming landscape as the expression of an inherent kindness, as if it, by nature, had a friendly soul. In response, we feel safe in the landscape, just as we would in the presence of a smiling face. In other words, the atmosphere seems to emanate from the place itself. This is why Cassirer speaks of affective ‘expressions’ rather than ‘impressions’: the affect indeed seems to spring from the perceived space rather than from its observer. Tellingly enough, common parlance tends to express violent emotions as springing from the outside world: one is ‘overcome by despair’, ‘engulfed by fear’ and ‘overwhelmed with happiness’. Likewise, in *The Architects*, protagonist Julia is affected by what seems to be the character or soul of World Peace Road, the project she is working on with her colleagues of the City Architects’ Bureau of Berlin:

The vista ... was astonishing ... the road stretched, wide, handsome ... Julia, who had seen it often enough ... never failed to be moved. There was poetry in the sight; ... not poetry you could put into words; but a poetry that converted itself from stone and space directly into emotion ... she pointed at the old slums to the left and on either side of the Road, the half-destroyed, grimy factory buildings, the bombed-out tenements that were waiting to be torn down. ‘It was all like that,’ she said. (Heym 102-103)

The impression of a certain poetry emanating from the place itself (‘stone and space’), and subsequently ‘converting itself into emotion’ is indeed an example of an expressive reception of space.

Moreover, the reference to a poetic experience is not without significance and brings us to consider the secularised variants of mythical inside spaces. Cassirer pointed to the fact that in the largely disenchanted context of modern societies, aesthetic experiences seem to have adopted the role that magic used to play (see O’Toole 1996): beauty still enchants. As profane remnants of animist powers, aesthetic stimuli seem to cast their spell so as to create extraordinary inside spaces that detach themselves from a banal and disenchanted world of technological functionalism and cold, utilitarian rationality. The aesthetic is at the basis of a new polarity between the sacred and the profane, between enchantment and disenchantment. While aesthetic contemplation evidently implies more distance from what is perceived than the mythical consciousness was able to take, it still evokes a direct affect of the extraordinary and, with it, an inside/outside contrast. While the mythical mind, to repeat Cassirer’s expression, ‘religiously hedged around’ spaces that were experienced as being out of the ordinary, the modern mind can be said to aesthetically hedge them around. In the quote above, for instance, it is clear that, to Julia, the ‘astonishing’

and ‘handsome’ beauty of the road differs from its surroundings as day from night. Its extraordinarily beautiful appearance makes it stand apart from the rest of the space, which is filled with ‘old slums’, ‘grimy factory buildings’ and ‘bombed-out tenements’.

In Duteurtre’s *The Happy City*, we similarly find an inside sphere that appears as immune to the ordinary outside: Town Park is described as a ‘magical enclave, protected from the misery of the world’ (230).<sup>4</sup> The longer the protagonist (who remains unnamed) lives in the Park, the happier he is with his decision:

(He is increasingly convinced that he made) the right choice staying in Town Park, as news coming from ‘the outside’ continues to worsen. Out there ... it is always the same litany of bankruptcy, refuse collectors being on strike, and crime-ridden districts. Behind our metal gates, we inhabit an enclave in the heart of chaos. (87)

Radiating the reassuring affective qualities of safety and security, Town Park appears as a place that is disconnected from the ordinary outside world and its problems. With a term from Zygmunt Bauman’s *Liquid Modernity* (2000), we could call it one of those ‘purified’ places that late modern public space is so abundant in, according to Bauman, and that is to provide a response to the widespread feeling of discomfort and the irrational fear of ‘stalked streets’ (93). In order to exorcise (rather than confront and negotiate) otherness, they commonly rely on two strategies that Claude Lévi-Strauss described in his *Tristes tropiques* (1955) and that are employed in Town Park. The first kind of measure to create purified spaces is called ‘anthropoemic’ by Lévi-Strauss. It aims to bar strangers that are felt to be *others*.<sup>5</sup> For this purpose, the Park is ‘protected by metal gates and surveillance cameras’ (Duteurtre 25). It is conceived as a ‘semi-autonomous territory, managed directly by the Company. All entrances (are) barred by security gates, so as to eradicate crime’, which is on the rise elsewhere in the city; ‘the only obligation (consists) of wearing one’s badge, as an employee or a resident’ (34). All of this in order to keep out ‘the outside, the crowd of indigents and vagrants’ (231).<sup>6</sup>

The Park, secondly, remains uncontaminated thanks to an anthropophagic strategy: one that consists of stripping strangers of their otherness as soon as they penetrate into the inside.<sup>7</sup> To this end, the Company has ‘animators’ posted on every corner of the street, ‘not ... only to inform the clientele, but also to supervise the townies who, for every participation in a costumed intervention, have points added to their electronic counter. They can also report offences by those who violate the regulations.’ (Duteurtre 90) The animators are aided in their task by the surveillance cameras, which equally fulfil the anthropophagic role of monitoring the inhabitants’ and employees’ behaviour. When the latter take to the streets because of the deterioration of working conditions, for instance, ‘(t)he spontaneous gathering (...) (is) harshly crushed by the security forces ... under the pretext of protecting the people from terrorist threat’, and the strikers are duly reminded that ‘interior regulations ... forbid demonstrations on the public highway’ (232). But the Company’s most effective means of controlling and homogenising behaviour is probably their own competitive version of a social system. A scoring system converts every contribution

to the smooth running of things into points. Their accumulation leads to preferential treatment by the Company's branches, which range from the only supermarket chain in town to health services. While the protagonist is critical of the 'rampant totalitarianism' of 'permanent monitoring' (12), he is nevertheless grateful that, thanks to such measures, 'we enjoy exceptional conveniences and security in Town Park' (12).

In brief, the positive affects the Park manages to convey issue from the closed character of space – in this case guaranteed by a disciplinary system of power that insulates the reality of the Park from ordinary shortcomings. The Park is a reassuringly predictable and manageable little world in itself, cut off from a volatile and dangerous outside world. It is no accident that Mikhail Bakhtin, who was unmistakably inspired by Cassirer (see Poole 1998), showed great interest for such enclosed spaces generating a reassuring regularity under the heading of 'idyllic chronotopes' in the book-length essay 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' (1982: 84–258). In this text, Bakhtin underlined that the enclosed space of the idyll can only be maintained by a regular, cyclical time rhythm (the cycles of the seasons, day and night, sowing and harvesting, death and rebirth). More generally, it is his conviction that the spatiotemporal organisation of the literary world is not incidental, but rather exerts a direct influence on scenes and events as well as, we may add, on their affects. Similarly, the regularity of time patterns in the Park is a part of the aesthetic, affective experience that it generates, just like the enclosure of space is, and both are inextricably bound up with one another. Affectivity of literary space is, in other words, closely connected with specific time-space structures. Spaces are isolated enclaves because their spatiotemporal framework contrasts with ordinary time-space, and thus produces a place that is *other*. Foucault seems to have understood as much: according to the fourth principle of his proposed 'heterotopology', heterotopias, as spaces that are other than the ones we daily traverse (cemeteries, cruise ships, cinemas, certain colonial cities, libraries), are 'most often linked to slices in time (...) they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies.' (26) Heterotopia being merely an 'effectively enacted utopia in which (...) all the other sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (24), both hetero- and utopia are marked by an inside/outside effect of contestation and inversion that, for Foucault, is also as much a matter of time as it is of space. However, this issue would merit an in-depth development that falls outside the scope of this article.

## **Conceptual Aspects of Mythical and Literary Space: Heym's *The Architects***

Spatial representations are also conned conceptually, not just affectively. As explained above, a conceptual outlook takes so much distance from the surrounding space that its entities are no longer considered for themselves, but as the visible symbols of some abstract, invisible concept, set of ideas, theory, or ideology in the strict sense of the term. Such is the case of World Peace Road, for example, when it is considered 'no longer solely a local street' because 'it (...) has grown into a symbol of socialist reconstruction and a leading example of our aesthetic conceptions in architecture' (Heym 44). The novel

being set in 1956, the Road is indeed of emblematic value for the young German Democratic Republic seeking to legitimise itself.

The earliest mythical conceptualisation of space can be exemplified by the augurs. They abstracted the area around the temple into four zones divided by two intersecting axes and sought to predict the future from the flight of birds, which bore their own symbolic meaning, over them (Cassirer 1925: 100). Our day and age bears few traces of such early conceptualisation. With time, however, myth stabilises in the well-wrought forms of religion, as another kind of conceptualisation sets in that tends towards the universal and results in the elaboration of an all-embracing body of thought that, once materialised in space, would bring redemption. From Cassirer's writings on the subject, we can distil two main characteristics of this pattern of thought: an allegorical reading of space and a teleological narrative structure.

The first feature ensues from the tendency towards the universal. When magical force universalises, it is no longer understood as a particular, instantaneous force acting on a specific place at a given moment because its radius is maximised up to the point of being universal: it is thought capable of laying its spell over the whole of reality, thus turning it into a single, all-embracing inside space. In the second volume of *Spheres* (a three-volume study first published between 1998 and 2004), Peter Sloterdijk refers to such metaphysical and universalised inside spheres as 'globes': 'the attempts of classical metaphysics to organize the totality of what exists as a concentrically organized monosphere' (2007: 53). If the magical spirit is universal, it is unique. It is considered the only spirit that can enchant the sum total of reality and serve as a panacea to all of its injustices and imperfections, following a logic that is well-known from monotheistic religions. As a consequence, the magical spirit acquires an undertone of irrefutable truth. The all-encompassing inside space it can create becomes a 'sacred order', the sole 'eternal order of justice and truth' (Cassirer 1955: 170). Once instantiated, this sacred order would bring ultimate redemption, while conversely, any reality preceding that moment can only signify the absence of sacred truth. Cassirer refers to such a reading of space, which verifies the presence of transcendent truth, as 'allegorical'. What it registers of reality 'is never its immediacy but the *transcendent meaning* which finds its mediated representation in this reality' (1955: 257; our emphasis).

In what seems to be a laicised, Marxist variant of an allegorical reading, Julia insists that it is 'obvious to any person of honesty and good will that ... the Road combined the spiritual essence of the people's aspirations with the best traditions of the past and symbolized something noble and worth the struggle' (Heym 21). And hers is not an isolated case: most architects on the team have interiorised the socialist teachings of 'how to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad' (56) in architecture. Since it 'is un-Marxist ... to separate form and content' (57), a one-to-one relationship links architectural forms to an inherently true or false meaning. Where the socialist body of thought applies, such a distinction is easy to make since only socialist-realist architecture 'rises organically out of the great experiences of mankind' (47). Other architectural styles can only attest to artificiality, mere appearance, or plain hypocrisy. The functionalist architecture of the West, in

particular, is discredited as being ‘in essence negative and soulless, anti-humanistic – repugnant to the healthy instinct of our working people’ (69–70), as Arnold, Julia’s husband and head of the City Architects’ Bureau, describes it. It is nothing but ‘petty bourgeois radicalism’ (69), ‘decadence, cosmopolitanism’ (209) and ‘mannerism’ (70) looking for cheap success through ‘the sensational, the outlandish, the experiment in form’ (47). Those who turn against socialist realism can only be ‘detractors and belittlers (...) revisionists and fault-finders’ (211).

A second characteristic of the mythical conceptualisation of space arises from the first one. In the final analysis, an allegorical understanding of space is always oriented towards an ultimate moment when the whole of space would perfectly materialise the transcendent truth, according to Cassirer: ‘there is *one* point at which the world of spiritual, transcendent meaning and that of empirical-temporal reality come into contact, despite their inner divergence’, and that is the point of ‘redemption’ to which ‘(a)ll allegorical (...) interpretation relates (...) as its fixed center’ (1955: 257; original emphasis).<sup>8</sup> This end point, the secular remnant of which we would call *utopian*, is the frame of reference for the allegorical reading of any reality preceding it. Cassirer goes on to explain that ‘(a)ll temporal change, all natural events and human action obtain their light from this center; they become an ordered, meaningful cosmos by appearing as necessary links in the (...) plan of salvation’ (257). The whole of reality is thus seen in terms of its utopian *telos*. From this conceptual angle, spaces tend to be envisaged from the angle of the broader socio-historical development of which they constitute a phase; they appear as functions of a telological narrative.<sup>9</sup>

This kind of traditional story arc progressing towards an ultimate equilibrium via a detour of struggle and adventure is, of course, particularly well known from structuralist literary theory (see Keunen 2011: 62 and 71). The conceptualisation of space can thus go hand in hand with such imagined stories or narratives that recount the general future of certain kinds of places, of the city in general, or ultimately, the whole of mankind. In other words, space may be, as Ricoeur would have it, ‘emplotted’ (see Keunen 2011: 14). In *Urban Planning and the Pursuit of Happiness* (2009), Arnold Bartetzky and Marc Schalenberg put forward that ‘(a)rchitecture and urban planning have played a prominent role in concepts aiming to achieve happiness by means of changing living conditions’, and that ‘(u)rban projects have often been conceived and staged as model islands, in anticipation of a bright(er) future for a city, a country or even the whole of humanity’ (7).<sup>10</sup> As a show-piece of the socialist society to come, World Peace Road is mainly envisaged from such a broad socio-historical outlook. If the Road has an unusual poetic glow for Julia, it is because she already catches a glimpse of its future guise: the site is laden with concepts of what a socialist world ought to look like. Because of her socialist education, Julia considers things ‘always with the common cause, the common goal in view’ (Heym 15). Similarly, her husband Arnold frequently repeats in front of his team of architects that the project of World Peace Road serves the higher purpose of a better future. The *telos* precedes the present, and the general conceptual values of the Road overshadow its specificity. ‘(H)ad Marx, Lenin, or Stalin ever promised that the road to socialism would be straight and well paved?’ (43), Arnold asks his fellow architects, indicating thereby that

any problems encountered along the way are but negligible hurdles in the broad socio-historical project of stimulating ‘man’s all-around physical and mental development’ (96).

It is because of such fierce rhetoric that Arnold is at one point described in religious jargon as a ‘sectarian zealot ready to cut down anyone unwilling to follow his major and minor prophets’ (209). Wollin, another architect, perceives Arnold in this way when Arnold is militantly defending the principles of socialist-realist architecture that had allowed him to make a name for himself. After Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin’s abuses, however, these principles are in jeopardy because of their ties with Stalinism. In desperation, Arnold tries to defend the teleological narrative of socialist-realist architecture, the backbone of his entire career, in a way that reminds Wollin of the relentlessness and the obduracy of the religious: he ‘continued railing; the spirit was upon him; he must defend his holy grail’ (209). Similarly, when Julia loses faith in socialist realism, she is described as ‘seek(ing) the oracle’ (126-127), which she ends up finding in a new, functionalist architecture at the service of a more humane socialism.<sup>11</sup>

### **Conceptual Aspects of Mythical and Literary Space: The Dehistoricisation of Space in Duteurtre’s *The Happy City***

While the logic behind Town Park is the economic one of a private company (simply called ‘the Company’) rather than the political one of an authoritarian ruler, it seems to be just as ‘totalitarian’. ‘(S)ince the end of the totalitarian regime (...) tourists from around the world came flocking in (...) at such an intensity that the whole centre got transformed into a tourist bazaar’ (Duteurtre 29), but the concept of Town Park announces yet another reality:

(W)ith such a project, something new was seeking to work its way through our minds: entrepreneurial culture, (...) the management of everyday life by a staff of executives, economic organisation controlling every crossroads, every boulevard, every alley (...) (29)

The protagonist is fully aware that ‘to accept (the Company’s) logic boil(s) down to subject our lives to the results of an enterprise and its strategic choices’ (36-37).

Driven by economic rather than political motives, the Company is much less concerned with the broader socio-historical development that their project would be part of than the City Architects’ Bureau of Berlin was. In a way, this is surprising, since the primary function of Town Park is the ‘valorisation of the common patrimony’ (29). While the conceptualisation of the Road in Berlin is more future-oriented and Town Park as a tourist sight is more past-oriented, one might nevertheless expect a comparable importance being attached to history. If this is not quite the case, it is because Town Park is ultimately designed to maximise the Company’s profits and should, consequently, attract the broadest possible public by providing an easily accessible kind of tourism. The Park should be entertaining while not being too confronting; it should distract people from their own concerns rather than pointing them to the local ones that have fostered the struggles of history.

Significantly, the management of the Park does not content itself with simply fencing off an area of the city that is particularly marked by history, but also constructs a typically postmodern delocalised collage of various historical epochs. By erecting themed façades in front of some of the real buildings, different quarters of the city are made to seem more in keeping with the era in which they were built, or, more accurately, with the clichés of those periods in collective memory. The medieval part of town, for instance, presents ‘a reconstruction of ancient Europe under the name of “Historic City”’ (33), and the industrial quarter is turned into ‘a living museum of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rechristened “Liberty City”’ (33), where visitors can ‘discover the history of modern art, the resistance of our town to totalitarianism, and plenty of jazz and rock bars’ (33-34). The Park should provide entertainment rather than giving the visitors a real sense of history. This is why, in Liberty City, a nineteenth-century square can be named ‘Impressionist Square’:

In fact, the impressionists have never frequented our town ... But one has to simplify the chronology a bit so that the lost visitor can savour, in the course of his walk through our district, an evocation of the great artistic movements – the most famous and the most popular of which is still impressionism. (21-22)

Stripping history of its less well known, troublesome and unsettling aspects, the Company turns it into an easily digestible spectacle, thus delocalising and depoliticising it. This way, the Park can offer the enjoyments of tourism while avoiding its downsides. It gives a sense of discovery, but within the strict sphere of noncommittal leisure far away from the socio-historical reality and its tribulations. On display in the Park is not the actual city where the vicissitudes of history left their traces and scars, but an artificial collage that stages a leisurely experience to be consumed by the clientele.

Far from being political, then, history is used for its aesthetic qualities and staged as a piece of scenery. It offers the alluring spectacle of a fairytale world that is unspoiled by ordinary reality. The term ‘spectacle’ is not randomly chosen in this context. Our protagonist is presented as an avid reader of Guy Debord’s work: *La société du spectacle* is mentioned as one of the books that once urged him into leftist political activism (Duteurtre 15), the same activism that initially prompted him to write a combative manifesto against the coming of Town Park. It is only after suffering defeat and coming to realise that his entire political past has been one of hopeless ‘Don Quixote battles’ (Duteurtre 15) that he decides to ‘stay and live in Town Park, this laboratory of the future, where History, entrepreneurial spirit, dream, and entertainment unite’ (19). He is thus well aware that this laboratory of the future is one of spectacle. And Debord himself is unequivocal as to the fate of history once the spatial organisation of cities is left to the capitalist society of the spectacle:

The capitalist need that is satisfied by urbanism’s conspicuous petrification of life can be described in Hegelian terms as a total predominance of a ‘peaceful coexistence within space’ over ‘the restless becoming that takes place in the progression of time.’ (45)

As the space of Town Park is ‘refashioned (...) into *its own particular décor*’ (Debord 45), history thus comes to serve the ‘peaceful coexistence within space’ rather than showing its struggles ‘in the progression of time’. The protagonist himself observes that ‘in certain details, it shows that we are not really living in the world anymore, but in a replica of it *on the spot*’ (91; original emphasis). As space turns into scenery, history degrades to a dehistoricised spatial collage and can no longer fulfil the role that was so crucial to the political narrative of World Peace Road.<sup>12</sup> If we are to believe Fredric Jameson, this collapse of the historical dimension is to be considered a basic trait of postmodern ideology (1983: 125; see also Keunen 2006: 236). In their introduction to *The Jameson Reader*, Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks assert that the ‘lack of historical consciousness is (...) the key to understanding some of the formal and aesthetic characteristics of postmodernism’ (16).

## Late Modernity and the Aesthetic Re-enchantment of Space

Peter Sloterdijk reaches a similar conclusion concerning the imagination and conception of inside spheres in a late modern context. In ‘societies conditioned in an individualist manner’ (2009: 432), inside spaces rarely take the form of the globes described above. Instead, they are increasingly conceived as ‘multitudes of loosely connected environment cells, in which each separate cell, by virtue of its own volume, has the weight of a universe’ (2009: 432). As such, the universalist, all-resolving globe – ‘the epic of the divine sphere’, as Sloterdijk calls it elsewhere (2007: 490) – makes way for a metaphorical ‘foam’ of situational ‘bubbles’: an ‘accumulation of egocentric, excentered points each with their environments’ (2007: 491). Once the collective project of a socio-historical development for the better is abandoned, spatial organisation increasingly comes to serve a less political project: that of retreating from socio-historical reality altogether and meeting one’s individual needs as best one can. This is why late modern man takes great pains over designing maximally enjoyable bubbles: ‘Significantly, our embedment thinking has suddenly depoliticized after 1945, and withdrawn from the lofty collectivist spheres.’ (2009: 371) Likewise, abandoning his political ‘Don Quixote battles’, Duteurtre’s protagonist decides to ‘accept the world as it is, and try to get to know (him)self instead (...) Is that not a more concrete and inspiring program around which, one day, the human species in its entirety could be mobilized?’ (18-19). He eventually finds himself all too happy to withdraw into the safe enclave of Town Park where he can keep to himself and carelessly enjoy what he likes most in life:

In the end, I never feel so equilibrated as when I keep to myself. I work in a certain security in my residence ... I can revisit the jewels of the past in peace and quiet: download Stravinsky’s integral work ..., reread Balzac ..., watch all the masterpieces and rubbish in film... All of that almost without getting up from my couch. These frequentations give me a permanent happiness... (40-41)

In his description of ‘foam city’ (2009: 422-470), Sloterdijk indicates that our contemporary cities are increasingly equipped for such withdrawal into bubbles, a conviction that

he shares with Lieven De Cauter, who gave a more detailed outline of this urban trend in *The Capsular Civilization* (2004). De Cauter speaks of ‘the rise of a heterotopian form of urban planning’ (63). He is convinced that ‘the heterotopia has become the norm in a capsular society’ (68) and considers the Disneyfication of the public domain, the ‘theme park city’, as a symptomatic case in point (58, 70). According to Sloterdijk, contemporary urbanism and architecture increasingly develop entire ‘experiential environments’ (2009: 468), which we could call ‘aesthetic’ in the etymological sense of the word (the Greek *aisthetikos*, meaning ‘sensitive’ or ‘perceptive’, derived from *aisthanesthai*, ‘to perceive’ by the senses or by the mind, ‘to feel’).<sup>13</sup> Rather than as a political experiment, contemporary urban space is more often set up for full-fledged, direct *experiences* these days: individual enjoyments shielded from all too complex outside conditions. Architectures offering self-contained experiential environments have already by far ‘outgrown the traditional forms of the city park or the greenhouse’, according to Sloterdijk: ‘The motif of encapsulation has become so powerful that it integrates ever vaster, previously external landscapes and urban complexes’ (2009: 468) in the way that Town Park absorbs entire city districts.<sup>14</sup>

The late modern crumbling of political optimism has evidently been described by many others before Sloterdijk, not in the least by Jean-François Lyotard, who put forward that postmodern epistemology is primarily characterised by the collapse of so-called ‘grand narratives’ (1979). Our protagonist, too, has taken note of this development over the years,<sup>15</sup> which ultimately brings him to give up on the ‘reforms through which (he) intended to save the world’ and that he, much like Arnold and Julia, used to defend ‘with the self-assurance, the logic, and the anger of the defenders of the truth’ (Duteurtre 17). Instead, he decides in favour of the ‘acceptance of the data of (his) era’ (44). No longer seeking to ‘build history against the tide’, he renounces the ‘detrimental tendency that sought to make politics the centre of (his) existence’ (18).

It would be wrong, however, to push the analysis only so far and prematurely conclude that late modern man is an utterly disillusioned and demythologised realist. True, idealist political narratives of the kind encountered in Heym’s novel are probably the most salient and visible mythical remnants, since they translate into wholly worked-out conceptual constructions and discourses. But space can be the object of a much more subtle mythical enchantment, one that functions on the less tangible, pre-reflexive level of direct, affective experience. As mentioned above, this is the most elementary form of mythical enchantment in Cassirer’s view, which thus has an all the more direct impact on the way we daily experience the world. With his concept of the ‘phantasmagorical’ or ‘auratic’ experience, Walter Benjamin was perhaps the most convincing theorist of such instantaneous re-enchantments of the pre-conscious kind. Underlining, like Cassirer, the physiognomic reading of objects and landscapes it entails, Benjamin writes in *Ueber einige Motive bei Baudelaire* that ‘(t)o perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return’ (*Die Aura einer Erscheinung erfahren, heißt, sie mit dem Vermögen belehnen, den Blick aufzuschlagen*; 1974: 646–647), as if it were animated and had a soul of its own. Such phantasmagorical effects are particularly triggered in consumer society. Consumer goods and leisure spaces indeed capitalise on pre-conscious

desires, needs and fears (see also Featherstone 1991). Sloterdijk, too, emphasises that the abundant production of affectively pleasing bubble spaces is primarily a matter of affluent societies and their consumer lures (2009: 547-596).

The protagonist of *The Happy City* is indeed not only disillusioned with grand political narratives, but he also relocates his strivings in the aesthetic domain (in the etymological sense described above). Because of his resolution to ‘stop thinking for humanity’ and instead ‘savour every moment and content (himself) with simple pleasures’ (23-24), the protagonist decides to stay in Town Park, a readily ‘dreamifiable’ place apt for phantasmagorical enchantment. The cathedral of Historic City, for instance, triggers such a phantasmagorical effect:

I love this narrow quarter where one only has to look up to see the medieval clock tower raised in the sky, with its crown of frivolous turrets. These vertiginous niches evoke a fairytale castle (...) This is probably why tourists from around the world seem enchanted: not to discover the real Middle Ages, but something that reminds them of Walt Disney. They look at the old stones as an imitation of children’s books (...) (93)

Marvelling at such fairytale effects, families in Town Park find themselves ‘happy to relax, determined to enjoy the week-end to the fullest, in this renovated, lustrous, golden décor that still maintains the magic of the real’ (95). Like Benjamin’s flâneur, our protagonist also increasingly manages to ‘find (...) a form of poetry in the whole tourist bazaar’ (96). Again, a lively, poetic glow seems to emanate from the material reality of the Park, as was the case at World Peace Road. But a shift of emphasis has occurred. Whereas both spaces are coloured by affective as well as conceptual associations, World Peace Road was overdetermined by more abstract conceptual meanings because of the political and socio-historical concerns connected with it. In Town Park, on the other hand, the more individualist and aesthetic matter of on-the-spot enjoyable experiences occupies centre stage: it mainly runs on the directly affective involvement of its visitors, and conceptual associations are secondary.

## Conclusion

If the collapse of grand narratives initially seemed to relegate inquiry into the mythical aspects of space to redundancy or insignificance, nothing appears to be further from the truth. Rather than a triumph of pure rationalism and pragmatism, the end of grand narratives may well have marked a return to more elementary layers of mythical experience, in which space is directly perceived in the light of a magical glow. Narrative fiction being a privileged medium for rendering the myriad associations that colour spaces, it proves a rewarding object of study for grasping spatial experience in all of its facets. This experience itself, moreover, is highly symptomatic for the more irrational and enchanting features of our times, which can be addressed as mythical remnants. By exposing the mythical colours of concrete spaces, we can procure insight into specific fears and desires that mark a certain era. This aspect constitutes a necessary complement to more traditional

literary-sociological approaches, which tend to overemphasise explicit ideological statements.

This may be of particular importance in an era in which many of the political problems manifest themselves in an unspoken, irrational manner (for instance, the aforementioned fear of ‘stalked streets’, supplemented with the desire for predictable and manageable public spaces). Cassirer had observed this tendency as early as the 1940s. In *The Myth of the State*, one of his final works in which he analyses the rise of fascism, he shows to what extent our analysis of the political situation is infused with affective imagination. Benjamin proves to share this view when he calls capitalism a ‘natural phenomenon’ that reactivates mythical forces that we believe belong to primitive cultures: ‘Capitalism was a natural phenomenon, which engulfed Europe in a new dream sleep, and, in this, a reactivation of the mythical forces’ (*Der Kapitalismus war eine Naturerscheinung, mit der ein neuer Traumschlaf über Europa kam und in ihm eine Reaktivierung der mythischen Kräfte*; Benjamin 1982: 494). Benjamin and Cassirer were right to be concerned about the irrational tendencies of our secularised, objectified, and rationalised world. In such a culture, the flip side of the coin automatically gains equal importance. According to Benjamin, humanity ‘will remain under the power of mythical fear as long as phantasmagoria has a place in that fear’ (Benjamin 1999: 939). That which fascinates in a mythical construction of knowledge equally possesses an element of terror. Uncovering affective fears and dreams in spaces may teach us more about the present condition than any explicit criticism of ideology could.

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## Notes

1. An overview of these three knowledge functions is found in the final volume of the trilogy, *The Phenomenology of Knowledge* (1965).
2. ‘The farther back we trace perception, the greater becomes the preeminence of the “thou” form over the “it” form, and the more plainly the purely expressive character takes precedence over the matter- or thing-character.’ (1965: 63)
3. Walter Benjamin hints at the same phenomenon with his notion of the ‘auratic’ experience of landscape in ‘Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit’ (‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’; 2002: 104-105), and so does Gilles Deleuze with his concept of the ‘visagéité’ (‘faciality’) of architecture in *Mille Plateaux* (1980: 211-212) and the description of the ‘visagéification’ (‘face-ification’) that the ‘image-affection’ operates in *Cinéma 1* (1983: 125). In a somewhat simplified version, the phenomenon reappears in Alain de Botton’s treatment of ‘Talking Buildings’ in *The Architecture of Happiness* (2006: 77-103).

4. Unless mentioned otherwise, all English translations from Dutch, German and French texts in this article are our own.
5. Bauman gives a few examples of this ‘exile or annihilation of *the others*’: ‘The extreme variants (...) are now, as always, incarceration, deportation and murder. The upgraded, “refined” (modernised) forms (...) are spatial separation, urban ghettos, selective access to spaces and selective barring from using them.’ (2000: 101; original emphasis)
6. At the end of the novel, the elements seeping in from the outside are indeed those strangers of the so-called ‘stalked streets’ that provoke fear: the management hires low-salary immigrants who speak no foreign languages as animators, and more and more vagrants wander around the Park.
7. Examples of such ‘suspension or annihilation of their *otherness*’ run ‘from cannibalism to enforced assimilation – cultural crusades, wars of attrition declared on local customs, calendars, cults, dialects and other “prejudices” and “superstitions”’ (101; original emphasis).
8. Cassirer also describes it as ‘the presupposition that the Logos itself descended into the sensuous world and there was incarnated in temporal uniqueness’ (1955: 257).
9. See also Bakhtin (1982: 148) and Lotman (1979) on eschatological narratives. For a commentary on both, see Keunen (2011: 54 and 83-84).
10. Sloterdijk establishes the link with such teleological, utopian narratives when he claims that the actualisation of the globe would mark the end of ‘the confusing human history’, and the beginning of ‘the post-historical ... the condition in which space has absorbed time’, the ‘simultaneous world’ of ‘relaxation in the apocalypse of space’ (2007: 427).
11. Julia’s quest constitutes the main driving force of *The Architects* because it is a near textbook example of a *Bildungsroman*. She progressively is disillusioned about the righteousness of the communist party and her husband’s implications in it, and, with every disappointment, grows into a new way of life. This gradual ideological shift from an authoritarian to a more humanist line of socialism eventually dictates changes in both her personal life (she leaves her patronising husband Arnold, for Wollin, with whom she is an equal) and her architectural career (she discards socialist-realist architecture in favour of functionalism). Throughout the novel, the key moments propelling this progressive transition are epitomised by her ever-changing perceptions and conceptions of World Peace Road, which signal her subsequent fears, hopes and dreams.
12. In the novel, the so-called ‘intellectual tournaments’ (Duteurtre 2007: 90) in the Park clearly mark the depoliticisation that follows such a collapse of the historical dimension. These tournaments are organised every Wednesday afternoon for the entertainment of the Park’s tourists. In them, the protagonist says, we ‘force ourselves to recreate the rebellious spirit of the years of resistance by debating the most topical matters in a total freedom of speech’ (2007: 91). The descriptions of these tournaments (2007: 90-91) would provide Zygmunt Bauman with an excellent illustration for his thesis of the public domain being reduced to mere spectacle in late modernity, while abandoning its political role of translating individual concerns into public ones. In Bauman’s view, the result is an era that combines absolute freedom of expression (or *de iure* autonomy) with a real deficit of truly emancipatory discourse (*de facto* autonomy) (2000: 16-52).
13. See <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=aesthetic>.

14. Sloterdijk emphasizes that such experiential ‘containers’ should not be mistaken for mere curiosities, but, instead, testify to a fundamental tendency in affluent societies (468).
15. ‘Perhaps society knew its own childhood when it envisaged the future as a horizon full of promises, a hope for discoveries, justice and prosperity pushing its limits ever further. Today, our world, having grown up, starts to discern the horizon of its own death – with its ... hopeless conveniences (...) (W)e continue a blind march, but the great dreams of history have collapsed.’ (Duteurtre 2007: 183-184) In these circumstances, the protagonist is convinced, we merely foster the ‘illusion of a political life, at a time when we have lost all control over the course of events’ because ‘(t)he new world is regulated by the laws of enterprise’ (2007: 186).

PART 2

## HETEROTOPICAL SPACES AND CHRONOTOPES



## Grave Stories

### (Re)Burial as Chronotope and Heterotopia in Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Tahar Djaout's *Les Chercheurs d'os* and Assia Djebar's *Algerian White*

Esther Peeren

'Once in the grave, the deceased has no more story'  
 (Segal 1993: 224)

Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the *chronotope* challenges both narrative models centred on temporality and proponents of the 'spatial turn' by insisting that time and space be considered in their interdependency. For Bakhtin, it is the intersection of a specific temporal organisation with a particular spatial configuration that functions as a generative principle in narrative texts on two levels: major or generic chronotopes drive literary history by producing various genres, while minor chronotopes or chronotopic motifs yield plot elements within literary works. With regard to space, this means that rather than constituting a mere background or being 'lived' by the way a literary text's narrator(s) or characters experience it, it is seen, in concert with time, to *give life* to the inhabitants of the fictional world, determining – before and in excess of any experience they may have of this world – who they are and what they can and cannot do. The characters, in other words, are not *in* space and *in* time as though these categories can be abstracted from their socio-ideological construction, but *of* the particular time-space that encompasses them.

Notably, despite arguing that 'in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole,' Bakhtin's essay on the chronotope prioritises time over space, as is clear from its tautological title – 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope' (1996: 84, 86). This privileging of time, though, is more a matter of convention – grounded in Lessing's famous association of narrativity with temporality in the *Laocoön*, which Bakhtin cites approvingly (1996: 251) – than a necessary aspect of the chronotope. While specific chronotopes may be dominantly temporal or spatial, neither dimension is in itself primary or can do without the other: instead of time generating space or vice versa, it is their convergence that produces particular narratives and, in the socio-cultural realm, forms of life.

Whereas the chronotope appears to place time before space, Michel Foucault's *heterotopia* – describing 'places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable' – is often regarded as speaking exclusively to spatiality (1998: 178). However, a closer

look reveals that this concept possesses a pronounced temporal dimension: ‘more often than not, heterotopias are connected with temporal discontinuities (*découpages du temps*); that is, they open onto what might be called, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronias’ (Foucault 1998: 182). From a Bakhtinian perspective, the question arises whether these two categories can in fact be so neatly distinguished or whether it would be more accurate to speak of *heterochronotopias*, as time only becomes perceptible in space and spatial relations cannot be experienced outside some form of temporalisation.

In this regard, it is significant that Foucault struggles to designate the precise relationship between heterotopia and heterochronia: he begins, in the passage cited above, by arguing that the first ‘opens onto’ the latter, but then writes that ‘the heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time’ (1998: 182). This placing of heterochronia before heterotopia, as its condition of fruition, is repeated in the description of the cemetery as ‘indeed a highly heterotopian place, seeing that the cemetery *begins with* that strange heterochronia that loss of life constitutes for an individual’ (1998: 182, my emphasis). Foucault’s attempt to order – in time or space – what are in effect structuring components of the same phenomenon is ultimately futile, as is shown by his subsequent lapse from speaking of ‘heterotopias and heterochronias’ as separate entities to distinguishing ‘eternity’ (museums and libraries) and ‘chronic’ (festivals and vacation villages) heterotopias where the temporal dimension is an inherent aspect of the designated place (1998: 182). The fact that all the heterotopias mentioned by Foucault – as well as the utopia and the societal shift he traces from the temporally dominant nineteenth-century order of chronology, history and spatial hierarchy to the new, spatial arrangement of simultaneity and localisation – could be analysed as what Bakhtin calls ‘the actual chronotopes of our world’ (1996: 253), leads me to suggest that heterotopias – as heterochronotopias – are always also, structurally, chronotopes, but ones assigned a specific ideological function. In relation to the larger, generic chronotope of a particular culturally and historically specific society, they may be seen as chronotopic motifs working to ‘suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented (*réflechis*) by them’ (Foucault 1998: 178).

To explore the consequences of this idea, and to further substantiate Bakhtin’s point that space and time cannot be thought separately, I take the grave – comprising burial or entombment sites for the dead, as well as the associated, ritualised processes of their construction, committal and maintenance – as a case study. In life and literature, the grave generates particular stories and is assigned vital cultural and ideological functions. Far from being exclusively spatial, moreover, it is linked, like the cemetery (which is essentially an organized arrangement of graves), to the temporal discontinuity of ‘loss of life’ and the ‘quasi eternity in which (the deceased) perpetually dissolves and fades away’ (Foucault 1998: 182). After examining, in general terms, the grave’s structure as chronotope and potential heterochronotopia, I briefly look at four specific grave stories: Sophocles’ *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Tahar Djaout’s *Les Chercheurs d’os* and Assia Djebbar’s *Algerian White*. Bringing together classical and contemporary texts that depict the place of burial as a site of contention highlights not only the historical and cultural specificity of the grave as chronotope and heterochronotopia, but also its evaluative dimension – its

association with (sometimes contradictory) emotions and socio-ideological norms. The contended burial sites in Sophocles' plays are seen to stage the tension inhabiting the chronotope of the grave as simultaneously a site of closure in relation to biographical time and one of openness towards religious, historical and/or personal memorial afterlives that are not always compatible. In the contemporary novels of Djaout and Djebbar, this tension forms the basis for a trenchant critique of the way reburial is used in post-Independence Algeria to turn the chronotope of the grave into a compensatory heterotopia that works, ideologically, to arrest time, unify meaning and privilege the deceased's reified afterlife in national history over its more dynamic persistence in personal and communal memory. Looking at these texts through the lens of the chronotope and heterotopia not only elucidates the relationship between these two concepts, but enables a systematic comparative analysis of the functions the grave takes on in the narratives.

### **The Grave as Chronotope and Heterochronotopia**

Of what type of time and space is the grave as chronotope constituted? In temporal terms, I argue that it participates in what Bakhtin calls 'the historicity of castle time,' which, in some literary works, bears 'a somewhat antiquated, museum-like character,' but can also (as in the oeuvre of Sir Walter Scott) be animated by emphasizing how the past lives on in the castle's architecture, furnishings and present inhabitants (1996: 246). Thus, while it may treat the past as a closed chapter, this historicity may also actively recall and mediate the past in the present. In graveyards, this happens, for example, by the way the names of living community members echo those inscribed on the headstones.

In addition, the grave is entangled with biographical time, the individual life course of which it signifies the ending. It does not, however, necessarily remove the deceased from all temporality or narrative potential, as it may launch him or her into a literal (spiritual/religious) and/or metaphorical afterlife (the inscription of the dead in personal memory and/or history).<sup>1</sup> Robert Pogue Harrison, in *The Dominion of the Dead*, calls that which is liberated upon the proper disposal of the physical remains 'the afterlife of the image' (2003: 142). The dead *live on* as images to be utilized by the living. This survival requires a ritual detachment from the corpse as 'the connatural image, or afterimage, of the person who has vanished' which 'embodies or holds on to the person's image at the moment of demise' (Harrison 2003: 148). At the same time, it may remain tethered to the grave as the designated space-time of commemoration/conjuration: at specific intervals, individuals, communities or nations pay tribute to the dead – and revive their image – by attending (to) their resting place. The chronotope of the grave, then, is characterized by a transitional temporality that, at the moment of burial, closes off biographical time to open onto a potentially complex, multiple survival in the cultural imagination, which can be divided into religious/spiritual time (for example, a form of eternity), historical time (which may musealise or re-animate) and personal memory.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of their spatial organisation, graves presuppose, possibly universally, a location in a familiar place: one ought to be buried where one is from or somewhere one knew and loved rather than in a foreign land or at sea. Conventions of where exactly graves should

be placed within familiar space vary historically and culturally, yet some distinction between ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ places of burial is usually maintained. The location of the grave is, if not necessarily public, at least accessible to the descendants of its occupant, the ability to return to the site being central to its commemorative function. Graves also tend to be fundamentally hierarchical spaces: distinctions of class, gender, race and religion determine where a person’s grave will be, what it will look like, and whether or not it will be marked. Finally, the grave is a sacred space, not only because it commonly marks the deceased’s religious affiliation, but because it is a space not to be disturbed. Any encroachment is considered a desecration, as the space of the grave is supposed to be non-interchangeable, stable and exclusive (only family members should be buried together and mass graves are an abomination).

On the basis of the above, the chronotope of the grave is characterized by *a transition from biographical time to religious, historical and/or personal memorial time occurring in a familiar, proper, accessible, hierarchical, sacred, non-interchangeable, stable and exclusive space*. Far from terminating a character’s narrative potential, it facilitates further stories of the dead, both *as dead* (in whatever afterlives the cultural framework foresees) and *as living on* as their image becomes available to the living. There are some stories, however, the chronotope of the grave has difficulty accommodating: non-burial, for example, is problematic because it prevents the transition from taking place and forecloses mourning and commemoration, while reburial multiplies the supposedly unique moment of transition and challenges the sanctity and non-interchangeability of the gravesite. Only when the imperative to leave the dead in peace is trumped by the need to bury them in a more familiar, proper or accessible place in order to (re)inscribe them into history or memory more effectively is reburial sanctioned within the evaluative framework of the grave chronotope. The stories I analyse below all involve infringements of the grave’s usual temporal and spatial determinations in their particular cultural setting. These infringements, through the strong emotions they incite, only serve to reinforce the normative (and relatively stable) nature of the grave chronotope’s narratological and social function in determining what stories the dead should (and should not) partake in.

Before turning to the literary texts, the grave’s ideological function as heterochronotopia needs to be specified. Significantly, the cemetery is used by Foucault to illustrate how the same heterotopia can operate in various ways, in different cultures or periods. He charts the development, in Western-European culture, from the sacred, centrally located cemetery as a site of Christian resurrection to the secularised cemetery with its individualised graves that was considered a site of disease and removed to the outskirts, where it paradoxically gave rise to a ‘cult of the dead’ (1998: 181). While Foucault does not specify the function of the cemetery heterotopia, I suggest it is a *heterochronotopia of compensation*, which aims ‘to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill-constructed and jumbled’ (1998: 184). The modern cemetery and grave in particular are places where the dead are actually decomposing, but where this decay is disavowed through distance and compensated for by the solid presence of gravestones that keep the dead in their proper, separate place and, in their orderly, hierarchical arrangement, counteract the chaos of everyday life.

As Jacques Derrida insists in *Specters of Marx*, keeping the dead in place is essential to facilitate mourning in the Freudian sense of a finite process in which affective ties to the deceased are gradually severed to make room for a new love object: ‘Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one *has to know* who is buried where – and *it is necessary* (to know – to make certain) that, in what remains of him, *he remain there*. Let him stay there and move no more!’ (1994: 9). In order to successfully complete the mourning process, it needs to be confirmed that ‘the beloved object no longer exists’ (Freud 2005: 204). Graves provide this confirmation by confining the remains to a particular, static place and precisely dating their demise. As heterochronotopia of compensation, this final resting place is supposed to remain impervious to the flow of time. Much like the museum heterotopia described by Foucault, it is associated with ‘the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself out of time and inaccessible to its ravages’ (1998: 26).<sup>3</sup>

My reading of the grave as chronotope associated it with the historicity of castle time, which entails a ‘danger of excessive antiquarianism’ but may also emphasize the way the past continues to affect the present (Bakhtin 1981: 246). When the grave chronotope acquires the ideological function of heterochronotopia of compensation, however, the ‘museum-like character’ of the grave as a site of closure and disappearance is heightened, crowding out its relation to the open-ended temporalities of *living on* (Bakhtin 1981: 246). In the context of the grave as heterochronotopia of compensation, non-burial and reburial disturb, I will show below, because they prevent the enclosure of the past in the past and reveal the sense of order associated with the grave to be illusionary, artificial and temporary.

### **Uncertain Graves in Sophocles’ *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus***

Sophocles’ *Antigone*, perhaps the best-known western narrative of non-burial, illustrates the need for the grave, as chronotope, to signify the end of biographical time and transition to other temporalities. For the ancient Greeks, burial confirmed the deceased’s transferral to a separate realm: ‘Hades (from *Aides*, “the Invisible”) was the place where the shadow images of the dead lived on. Released from the body at death – either through the breath or through an open wound of the body – the *psyche* of the person became, precisely, an *eidolon*, or image’ (Harrison 2003: 148). At the same time, burial marked the beginning of the process in which, Charles Segal argues, the deceased was held up as ‘an exemplar of cultural values among the living’ (2003: 215). In *Antigone*, Creon’s refusal to inter his disloyal nephew Polynices, who waged war on Thebes, is explicitly presented as a prohibition on lamentation and a withholding of honour that prevents Polynices from being commemorated and entering Hades. The anomaly of his ‘unhappy corpse’ being left ‘unwept for, unburied, a rich treasure house for birds as they look out for food’ incites his sister Antigone, in the name of familial duty and divine natural law, to try to bury him (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 7). As the seer Tiresias reveals, the non-burial has indeed angered the gods and disrupted the natural order: ‘the gods are no longer accepting the prayers that accompany sacrifice or the flame that consumes the thigh bones, and the cries screamed

out by the birds no longer give me signs (...) for they have eaten fat compounded with a dead man's blood' (1998: 97).

Far from remaining absent, Polynices' grave is central to the play, staged as a drawn-out sequence of construction/deconstruction/reconstruction: first, he is given a shallow scattering of dust by Antigone – 'the body is buried and yet not buried' (Jacobs 1996: 901) – only to have this earth removed by Creon's men. After a second, unsuccessful attempt by Antigone to bury him, Creon eventually allows Polynices' remains to be disposed of according to the reigning customs: 'we washed (the corpse)' with purifying water, and among newly uprooted bushes burned what was left. And we heaped up a tall burial mound of our own earth' (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 113).<sup>4</sup> The transition from the realm of the living to that of the dead – and the accompanying shift into an 'idealized representation' in cultural memory (Segal 1993: 215) – is forestalled as Polynices' burial is stretched out in time and situated on ground that is, as a result of Creon's proclamation, rendered insecure, improper, inaccessible and profane. While the entombment of Eteocles, the brother who defended Thebes, exemplifies the normative chronotope of the grave in this particular historical context – 'in accordance with justice and with custom he has hidden beneath the earth, honoured among the dead below' (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 7) – Polynices' fate perverts the grave's temporal and spatial determinations and turns it into a site of profound conflict.

This conflict derives, in part, from the challenge Creon's prohibition poses to the grave's potential function as heterochronotopia of compensation. That the grave, in classical Greece, took on this role is suggested by the way the realm of Hades, onto which it opens, is seen to 'socialise and civilise death (...) by turning it into an "ideal type" of life' (Vernant, quoted in Segal 1993: 215). However, in *Antigone* the perfect, meticulous and well-arranged space the heterochronotopia of compensation should oppose to the chaotic everyday world is muddled by the way Creon 'kept here something belonging to the gods below' (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 103). Its lengthy postponement marks Polynices' grave, even after it has been constructed, as a disorderly time-space not 'utterly different from all the emplacements they reflect or refer to,' but resembling them (Foucault 1998: 178). The same goes for the tomb in which Creon secures Antigone. His blasphemous move of 'having hurled below one of those above' blurs the spatial divide between the living and the dead, which is not supposed to be subject to human rule (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 101-102). From a Foucauldian perspective, Creon negates the distance and separation essential for a chronotope to function as heterochronotopia of compensation. If the dead can remain unburied while the living are entombed, neither the grave nor Hades can provide reparation for the troubles of Thebes.

In *Antigone*, the grave, rendered multiple and heterogeneous in Derrida's sense of being '*more than one/no more one* (*le plus d'un*)' (1994: xx), defies order and delays commemoration. A similar disruption of the grave as a chronotope supposed to signal an unequivocal transition from life to other temporalities and to provide the mourner with a means of '*identifying the bodily remains and (...) localizing the dead*' can be discerned in *Oedipus at Colonus* (Derrida 1994: 9). There, the moment of burial is not extended through

deferral but through being pulled forward into Oedipus' life, who, old, blind and exiled, pleads with the Eumenides – the goddesses whose 'sacred' place, Colonus, he has entered – to 'grant me a passage and a conclusion of my life' (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 419, 425). The way he already refers to himself as *eidolon* or 'ghost' preposterously marks him as one of the dead (1998: 425). Since it has been prophesied that Oedipus' tomb will offer protection to those near it, the tragedy revolves around the location of his interment. Oedipus, in accordance with the grave chronotope's normative spatial determinations, wants to be buried on familiar ground, at home in Thebes, but the Thebans will only condone his presence, as 'a parricide and a man impure,' outside their borders (1998: 521). Angered by this exclusion, Oedipus asks Theseus, ruler of Athens, to protect him and allow him to be buried at Colonus, where, in the event of a future attack by the Thebans, it shall cause their defeat: 'Then shall my dead body, sleeping and buried, cold as it is, drink their warm blood' (1998: 487).

The grave, therefore, functions less to mark the end of Oedipus' biographical time (which seems to have run out already) or to facilitate his transition to Hades than as a place from which his body will continue to act as part of human history rather than just an afterimage to be manipulated by the living. In essence, the play charts Oedipus' inscription into historical time through the chronotope of the grave, but with the burial site marking this inscription before death has even occurred. Harrison associates Oedipus' grave with a foundational act: 'Athens needed the presence of Oedipus's grave in its vicinity to assure its founding and good fortune into the future (...) we may perceive in its myth a poetic character of the founding power of the hero's grave' (1998: 23-24). Since Athens has already been founded, it is more accurate to say that Oedipus' grave *consolidates* it, confirming the Athenians' collective cultural identity.

But of what precisely does Oedipus' grave consist? When Zeus' thunder tells Oedipus that 'the end of life that was prophesied has come upon this man,' he tells Theseus he will lead him to the place where he must die to locate 'the sacred tomb where it is fated for this man to be hidden in this earth' (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 569, 575). There, 'the things that are taboo and that speech must not disturb' will be revealed to Theseus and become his to guard, with their location only to be revealed to his successor (1998: 573). What will be found and what exactly will offer protection (the sacred tomb, Oedipus' remains, the mysterious 'things') remains ambiguous. Moreover, the moment of identification/localisation never arrives as Oedipus' death, recounted by a messenger, evades knowledge and perception: 'when we had departed, after a short time we turned around, and could see that the man was no longer there, and the king was holding his hand before his face to shade his eyes, as though some terrifying sight, which he could not bear to look on, had been presented' (1998: 583). Oedipus' demise is miraculous and mysterious, and while Theseus refers to 'the sacred tomb that holds him,' Ismene suggests that 'he descended with no burial, apart from all!' (1998: 597, 593). Thus, the grave appears, in Andreas Markantonatos' words, only as a 'narrative gap,' a site of uncertainty, confusion and deferment (2007: 115).

Oedipus' enigmatic fate disrupts the normative chronotope of the grave: he dies on alien land unattended by and inaccessible to next of kin, while the rituals supposed to facilitate

his transition to Hades are curtailed and conducted before his death.<sup>5</sup> Personal mourning and memory are invoked when Oedipus takes leave of his daughters and they lament his impending death together, but cannot fully be indulged as the site of localisation/identification remains foreclosed; when Antigone asks to ‘see the home beneath the earth’ where her father rests, Theseus tells her it is not permitted (Lloyd-Jones 1998: 591). Moreover, Oedipus commands himself not only to the memory of his daughters but also, more emphatically, to that of Theseus: ‘Come, dearest of strangers, may you have good fortune, yourself and this land and your attendants, and in prosperity remember me when I am dead for your success for ever!’ (1998: 575). This confident statement invokes Pierre Nora’s description of ‘an integrated, dictatorial memory – unself-conscious, commanding, all-powerful, spontaneously actualizing, a memory without a past that ceaselessly reinvents tradition, linking the history of its ancestors to the undifferentiated time of heroes, origins, and myth’ (1989: 8). The way the logic of the play requires Antigone to relinquish her wish to see the grave signals that memory here is not individualised but social, collective and ultimately non-separable from history as not yet historiographical but still a ‘tradition of memory’ (Nora 1989: 11).

In chronotopical terms, the secret grave can never conclusively mark the terminus of biographical time and, as such, hinders personal-familial commemoration. It is, however, effective in inscribing Oedipus into historical-memorial time, as knowledge of the site of his death is bound to the Athenian succession. Oedipus’ resting place becomes a historical force – not just a force *in* history or something locked in the past, but a force *of* history capable of influencing the outcome of future events. In this elaboration of the grave chronotope, then, its participation in historical time (here intimately connected to the divine temporality of prophecy and to collective memory) is made primary.

As in *Antigone*, the grave’s potential function as heterochronotopia of compensation is complicated. On the one hand, the distant location of the gravesite renders it utterly ‘other,’ while prophesy assigns it an explicit compensatory function (the grave will reward Theseus for helping Oedipus). On the other hand, it is questionable whether a grave of which the reality cannot be affirmed, which is not ‘actually localisable’ except by Theseus (and even he seems unable to bear its sight), and which does not remain separate from but is thoroughly embroiled with messy politics (of which it becomes the stake) can provide the sense of order and comfort the compensatory heterochronotopia presupposes (Foucault 1998: 178).

### **Reburial in Djaout’s *Les chercheurs d’os* and Djebbar’s *Algerian White***

While *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus* stage the tensions between the different temporalities the grave chronotope can open onto and reveal its precarious as a site of order, Djaout and Djebbar underscore the potency, in the emerging nationalist context of post-Independence Algeria, of the ideological impetus for graves to close off signification and take on the role of heterochronotopia of compensation. In their novels of reburial, graves are voided as markers of the terminus of biographical time and the commencement of personal commemoration as the impulse to enshrine the deceased as national heroes is made

paramount, in a much less ambiguous manner than in *Oedipus at Colonus*, where the cultural context does not sanction a complete separation of divine, historical and personal temporalities. In terms of the grave as chronotope, the enshrinement of the dead in Djaout's and Djebbar's novels is effected by combining an antiquating form of historicity with a spatiality that emphasizes localisation over identification. The ideological aim is to make the grave guarantee a fixed, partisan account of history that ousts memory as 'a perpetually actual phenomenon,' lacks ambiguity and thus compensates for the instability of the new nation and the ambiguities of the struggle for independence (Nora 1989: 8).

These graves, then, constitute *lieux de mémoire* emerging from history's besiegement of memory; they are 'moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned, no longer quite life, not yet death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded' (Nora 1989: 12). Nora specifically lists cemeteries, graves and funerals as *lieux de mémoire*, which are themselves grave-like in that their main purpose is 'to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial' (1989: 19).

As *lieux de mémoire*, graves convey not merely a blessing of the land – as Oedipus' tomb does – but a way to 'take possession of a place and secure it as one's own' (Harrison 2003: 24). To achieve this, the grave is marked as excessively as possible and placed in a central location that is not merely considered appropriate, but seen as the only suitable place. This central location is, moreover, explicitly cordoned off from the larger social sphere and serves to provide it with a perfect mirror image. Leaving the venerated dead elsewhere, especially where they remain invisible, is coded as sacrilegious and legitimates the otherwise profane displacement of the dead. Far from signifying a *living on*, then, the politically motivated reburials in these novels inaugurate a second, immobilising death that illustrates the heterochronotopia of compensation's tendency to subordinate individual interests and evaluations to a collective need for (a semblance of) order.

Djaout's novel, published in 1984 and set in early 1960s Algeria, is mostly told from the perspective of an unnamed 14-year-old boy from a Berber village, who departs on a journey with an elderly relative to recover the body of his brother, a resistance fighter killed in the struggle against the French colonial forces. Their mission is part of a nationalist political movement that has sent convoys of so-called *chercheurs d'os* ('bone seekers') across the country.<sup>6</sup> The post-independence government has elevated all fallen resistance fighters to national heroes and retrieving their bones and giving them *une sépulture digne de citoyens souverains* ('a dignified sepulchre as sovereign citizens') is presented as the proper way of honouring them (Djaout 1984: 10). The novel, however, reveals less noble motives underlying the official rhetoric: the living want to alleviate their guilt for surviving the war and enjoying the freedom independence has brought them, and the skeletons of the fallen must be recovered to provide material proof of their entitlement to financial compensation. For the boy, therefore, bringing the bones back and burying them in the newly created war cemetery, which occupies *la parcelle la mieux située du village* ('the best-situated plot in the village'), is less about honouring the dead than about preying on them like vultures (Djaout 1984: 13).

The aim of the reburials is not the *living on* of the dead, but their permanent immobilisation in a staid, antiquated historicity. While the secrecy and enigma surrounding Oedipus' grave is what guarantees its continued power to act in the present to take history forward, here the very centrality and conspicuousness of the graves serves to consign them to the past and remove them from the flow of time. What the bone seekers bring back to their villages are docile bodies whose wanderings are brought to a definitive halt by burying them not according to the traditional village rituals but in service of the ideological aims of the post-independence regime. From the boy's perspective, the reburials seek to inter the bones even deeper and more thoroughly than they already were in order to make sure the dead will remain dead and cannot return to demand their share of the spoils or contest the (largely made up) stories the living tell about their part in the war.

Thus, the reburials serve to keep the dead in their place. However, the identification Derrida considers a precondition for achieving this is absent. Because in their function as guarantors of the new nation the dead need not be individualised, it does not really matter whose bones end up in the war cemetery: localisation trumps identification. When the boy and his relative arrive at the place where his brother died, an old man helps them dig up several makeshift graves: the first holds a skeleton with a gold tooth, which cannot be the brother, while the second reveals a dead animal. The third contains bones that are taken home as the brother's, even though there is no positive proof of identity. In the end, this is irrelevant as the brother's remains only serve to signify war heroism and are not sought to facilitate personal mourning.

As they dig, the bones are described as *ubiquiste* ('ubiquitous') and *farceur* ('mischievous'), while the uncovered skull appears to taunt them with a smile (1984: 144, 140). As long as the bones are not yet appropriated, they possess an ambivalent, uncanny agency that affects those personally tied to them: during the journey, the boy is haunted by memories of his brother and, as the bones are revealed, he experiences an *angoisse insoudable* ('unfathomable anguish') (1984: 145). However, as soon as the bones have been gathered together in a sack, they are *captif* ('captive') and thus secure, safe (148). This is the first step towards getting rid of them (and all the associated memories and feelings) once and for all through reburial.<sup>7</sup> On the journey back to the village, the bones are said to sound like *pièces de monnaie* ('coins') (147) as they bounce around in a sack on the donkey's back. The transformation of human remains into currency aptly conveys their impending part in the heterochronotopia of compensation (which, as indicated, here has an explicit monetary dimension) constituted by the war cemetery.<sup>8</sup>

The second burial, which places the brother *là où même le souvenir ne pourra plus les retrouver* ('there where even memory can no longer retrieve them'), prevents him from *living on* in personal memory and encases him in the singular, mortifying historical signification of the mythical collective death that inaugurated the Algerian nation (1984: 149). He can be commemorated, but not mourned as an individual member of a family and community. Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* discerns a 'hierarchy of grief' that assigns different degrees of grievability to subjects depending on the degree of humanity they are assigned in a particular society (2006: 34). In Djaout's novel, what is at stake is not a hier-

archy of who can be grieved, but a hierarchy of forms of grief in relation to the same corpse. The bones in Djaout's novel are eminently grievable, but only as part of the nationalist narrative: the grave's chronotopic signification of a dynamic, potentially tension-filled transition from biographical time to memorial and historical time is perverted into a static, singular inscription into a rigidifying historicity, where graves become interchangeable and signify only collectively, in number. Although their new graves *ne pouvait échapper au regard d'aucun voyageur* ('cannot escape the look of any traveller'), the corpses in Djaout's novel end up, in a sense, deader than dead; their solidification in the form of clean, unidentifiable bones robs them of precisely the precarious bonds with and vulnerability to others that Butler delineates as the possible basis for a common, more ethical humanity. The political drive towards musealisation, in accordance with Nora's notion that 'history is perpetually suspicious of memory and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it,' assigns the gravesites their collective compensatory function (in multiple senses) at the price of personal relationships (1989: 9). As such, it saps the life out of the dead *and* the living; approaching the village with the bones, Djaout's boy-narrator records how *l'âne, constant dans ses efforts et ses braiments, est peut-être le seul être vivant que notre convoi ramène* ('the donkey, constant in its efforts and its braying, is perhaps the only living being our convoy is bringing back') (1984: 155).

Assia Djebar's *Algerian White*, originally published in 1995 as *Le blanc de l'Algérie*, also deals with the politicisation of death in Algeria, focusing on the War of Independence and the violence of the early 1990s, when radical Islamists killed a number of journalists, writers and intellectuals, among them Djaout, who was assassinated in 1993. Djebar recounts the final days and moments of the dead, emphasising both the political and historical links between their stories and each story's specificity. The book is a record of her attempt to mourn the dead differently, at both an individual and a collective level, not through a Freudian labour of detachment and substitution, but as a continuing, evolving relationality conceptualised, as in Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, as a form of haunting:

Sometimes they come and sit above my bed in a circle, like saints in naive pictures, no halo around their heads – sometimes solitary silhouettes, one rather than the other, whispering some memory or another, giving the once suspended or uncertain meaning back to it, sometimes in that conversation which is tangled and braided and palpitating – fringing my fore dawn exit from sleep – I no longer know who is speaking – of me or the person approaching; I no longer know who is the phantom – myself, in turn, beginning to float horizontally in the ether, ears gaping, eyelids hardly closed, and smile peaceful in the half-light – or the first among them, with his usual look, M'Hamed, if really it's him I pick out from his stiffness, his bony brown face (...) I'm no longer sure whether this is happening as it did twenty years ago in his office (...) (1994: 19)

Djebar's friends re-appear as ghosts that are present but always unpredictably so: they exist (or not) on the fringe of sleep, their conversation is 'tangled,' 'braided' and 'palpitating,' and while Derrida is always able to distinguish himself from the spectre, Djebar

radicalises his notion of living *with* the ghost in her inability to decide whether the phantom is she herself or one of her friends. Although she suspects her conversations are really ‘a monologue,’ thus acknowledging that the dead can ultimately only speak through the living, her narrative never completely brings her friends’ voices and stories under control (2003: 27). The memories their commemoration provokes in Djebab and others are alive, multiple and ambivalent, so that no single account can sum them up and definitively consign them to the past.<sup>9</sup>

Like Djaout, Djebab stages the conflict between what Nora calls ‘true memory’ – ‘which has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body’s inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories’ – and ‘memory transformed by its passage through history,’ which is ‘experienced as a duty, no longer spontaneous’ (1989: 13). *Algerian White* points to the danger of ideological, historicising discourses instrumentalising the grave and crowding out personal mourning and memory. To counter this danger, Djebab asserts the wishes of the deceased and their family with respect to their burial and commemoration against the political-historical need to appropriate the dead in a monolithic way. Official funeral ceremonies, whether Islamic or nationalist, are critiqued for turning the grave into an ordered site directed at closure and exorcism, and designed to function as heterochronotopia of compensation. Instead, Djebab calls for improvisation, a varied practice of remembrance that comprises multiple languages, rituals and practices, and that allows the grave to mark the transition from biographical time to a living on in both personal memory and political history, where these two forms are not seen as mutually exclusive. For Djebab, the deaths of her friends and all the others memorialised in the book are as incomplete as Algeria’s journey into independent nationhood: ‘I don’t believe in their deaths: for me, their deaths are works-in-progress’ (2003: 218). These deaths – written as ‘unfinished’ (2003: 219) – did indeed occur, as Djebab’s painstaking reconstructions emphasise, but they are never consigned to an irreversibly closed off past.

Djebab imagines what I want to call *undying deaths*, as opposed to the redoubled, stultifying death Djaout sees the post-independence regime impose on the corpses it reburies as war heroes to guarantee (through their compensatory function) national identity. The spectral bodies that haunt Djebab’s account never truly die, because their lives and deaths continue to signify in multiple ways. Thus, what marks an undying death is not the absence of a grave, but the acknowledgment, acceptance and facilitation of the grave’s chronotopic function as a site of transition opening onto the unpredictable afterlife of the image, to recall Harrison’s term.

In contrast, the politicised practice of reburial, as depicted by both Djaout and Djebab, can be seen as an attempt to stilt this afterlife made possible by the ritual separation of the image from the corpse. By once more uncovering the body and reinforcing its signification as the one true image of the deceased (its ‘real’ likeness), the image that was able to float relatively freely is imprisoned in the new grave. The second burial, in other words, enables those political actors who undertake the reburial to impose a singular meaning (selected from the multifaceted significations accumulated by the image in the cultural

imagination) that then becomes *the* meaning of the corpse because the central location, excessive marking and obsessive commemoration of the new grave binds the image to the corpse rather than severing the bond between them. Reburial becomes a kind of *un*burial in undoing what Harrison considers the main task of inhumation.<sup>10</sup> We see this happening most clearly in Djaout's novel, where the quest for the brother's skeleton produces a flow of memories, a true interaction with the image that allows the boy to re-member both his brother's life and his own. This dynamic interface with the past breaks down, however, as soon as the bones are dug up and confined to the sack.

Djebar, too, perceives politically motivated reburials as attempts to constrict the afterlives of the dead. Towards the end of *Algerian White*, she invokes the case of Algeria's national hero emir Abdelkader el-Djazairi, who fought the French invasion in the 1830s and was originally buried in Damascus, in accordance with his wishes. In 1966, his body was brought back to Algiers at the initiative of the then government; Abdelkader was reburied in an imposing mausoleum in Martyr Square at the El-Alia cemetery. Djebar recounts how the authorities had to gain permission to move the body from Abdelkader's grandson, who imposed one condition: the remains of his grandfather would be exchanged for the freedom of his son, imprisoned in Algeria for communist sympathies. According to Djebar, in agreeing to this, the grandson must have realised that returning the bones did not mean returning Abdelkader himself. A truly meaningful and complete return would only be possible if the Algerian nation learned to respect not just Abdelkader's material remains – in accordance with archival memory's reliance on 'the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image' (Nora 1989: 13) –, but also the afterlife of this image, consisting of his varied and indomitable intellectual and spiritual legacy.

Both Djaout and Djebar suggest that political reburials concentrate on the materiality of the corpse and the spatial aspect of the grave in order to monopolise and monologise the deceased's legacy and enclose it in the past. The secure possession *of* the dead as static objects kept in place and out of the flow of time is preferred over the numinous possession *by* the dead envisioned by Djebar. As Katherine Verdery suggests, it is the static materiality of the corpse, its indisputable *thereness*, which makes it so suitable a symbol for national unity. Corpses, like graves, appeal to a fantasy of fixing meaning outside time for all time. But this illusion of certainty is undermined by the corpse's fragile, decomposing nature and the frequent impossibility (even in the age of DNA) of absolute identification: 'among the most important properties of bodies, especially dead ones, is their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy' (Verdery 2008: 306). This applies equally to graves, which rarely last forever and are likely to tell multiple stories.

While Djaout and Djebar critique attempts to suppress the grave's status as a transitional time-space that not only closes off but can also open onto various afterlives, Sophocles highlights this transitional nature by rendering Oedipus' resting place a supreme enigma and stretching out Polynices' interment; in his plays, moreover, it could be said that the graves not only *trigger* the afterlife of the image, but themselves become part of it. In our time, Sandra M. Gilbert has discerned a 'democratization of grief' in the transition from static

monuments to ‘transient’ and ‘makeshift’ memorials that ‘happen over time, as tokens of memory accrete and find appropriate places in a complex whole’ (2006: 282). Such practices, if applied to graves, would place more emphasis on its chronotopical association with a certain (literal or metaphorical) living on, could enable personal memory and historico-political commemoration to coexist more harmoniously, and would expose the grave’s ideological function as heterochronotopia of compensation, predicated on its semblance of order, as illusory.

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## Notes

1. Harrison writes that ‘the grave domesticates the inhuman transcendence of space and marks human time off from the timelessness of the gods and the eternal returns of nature’ (2003: 23). My chronotopical analysis bifurcates ‘human time’ into biographical time – which is indeed ‘mortalized’ (Harrison 2003: 23) – and historical/memorial time, which, because of its scope and duration, remains alive, open to change.
2. The chronotopical association of the grave with a transitional time accords with anthropological perspectives that consider mortuary rituals in terms of rites of passage taking place in sacred or liminal time (Robben 2008: 10).
3. It is no coincidence that many graveyards have come to be regarded and operated as museums, complete with gift shops, guided tours and maps. Père Lachaise in Paris is a prime example.
4. On the critical discussion among classicists surrounding the repeated burial, see Griffith (2010: 376).
5. Markantonatos notes how ‘according to Greek practice, the funerary preparations were preferably conducted by the next of kin’ and how, in Oedipus’ case, ‘in essence, the familiar three-act drama of the Greek funeral – that is, the laying out of the body, the funeral cortège and the interment – is replaced here by an exceptionally shortened *prothesis* of someone still alive’ (2007: 6, 137).
6. All translations from Djaout are my own.
7. Mustapha reads *Les Chercheurs d'os* as a tale of postcolonial haunting in which the present is unsuccessful in controlling the ghosts of the past, while Geesey posits that ‘as the bones are dug up and reburied deeper and deeper, the multiple perspectives and discourses on the war’s events proliferate’ (2007: 276). I argue that both haunting and the proliferation of meaning are confined to the stage of searching for the bones; as soon as they are found, and even more when they will be reburied, the bones are deprived of their ability to signify beyond the unitary heroic nationalist narrative.
8. The idea that locating and identifying the dead renders them less troublesome motivates the opposition of the Argentinian Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to the exhumation, identification and re-burial of their children, who disappeared during the Dirty War (1976-1983). While others welcomed the sense of closure and opportunity to mourn these exhumations offered, the Mothers felt that ‘reburials destroy the living memory of the disappeared, and inter them in an enclosed remembrance’, so Robben (2008: 144).
9. For a more elaborate account of *Algerian White*’s reconceptualisation of mourning and testimony, see Hiddleston (2005).
10. The attempt to arrest the image is, of course, most explicit when the corpse is never buried, but preserved and put on display, as in the notorious cases of Lenin and Mao.



## The Theatre as *Heterotopia*

### The Questioning of Ideology in Euripides' *Trojan Women*\*

Paul van Uum

Greek tragedy has always been regarded as a source of timeless values and lessons for human life. However, at its first performance in Athens tragedy was firmly embedded in its social and political context and was in constant dialogue with contemporary Athenian ideology. This article analyses the ideological function of Greek tragedy, using Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* as a framework.<sup>1</sup> First, the article explores the heterotopical elements of the theatre of Dionysus, the performance space of drama. Next, it focuses on the heterotopical aspects of the mythical space of the tragic plot. The last part of the article studies Euripides' *Trojan Women* as an example of the ideological function of tragedy, by placing the play in its cultural and historical context and analysing its relation to the contemporary Athenian ideology.

#### Performance Space: the Theatre of Dionysus

Tragedy offered a visual representation of traditional Greek stories, such as the Trojan War or the vicissitudes of Oedipus. It was performed in the theatre of Dionysus, which was built in the city centre of Athens on the southern slope of the acropolis. The original fifth-century theatre has completely disappeared nowadays, but archaeologists have demonstrated that it belonged to a large sanctuary of Dionysus including a temple and an altar. The theatre and sanctuary were used during the City Dionysia, the annual festival of Dionysus held at the end of March.

The Dionysia were organised by and conducted on behalf of the Athenian *polis* – the state and community of the Athenians. This follows for example from the fact that the *archon eponymus*, the supervisor of the public cults and sanctuaries, selected three tragedians for the dramatic contest of the festival. He also appointed rich Athenian citizens who had to pay the *choregia* – a special tax – to support the production of the plays. During the festival itself, the Athenian *polis* likewise occupied a prominent position. For example, the Athenian *political* leaders, the *strategoi*, made libations to the gods on behalf of the community, which was normally done by official, publicly appointed priests. The Athenian citizens who attended the assembly and had direct influence on the politics of the city

\* All dates in this article are before Christ, except for the date 1998, the year of the movie *Saving Private Ryan*. I wish to express my gratitude to professor Irene de Jong, Niels Koopman and the editors of this volume for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. Needless to say, I take responsibility for any flaw in the argument.

were also present in the theatre. The 500 members of the Athenian Council even had special seats.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its firm connection with Athenian politics, the Dionysia at the same time had a carnival atmosphere and provided relief from political life. During the festival conventional values and structures were suspended, questioned and – occasionally – criticised. The theatre, the location of the festival and the performance space of tragedy, can thus be considered a *heterotopia*. Foucault distinguishes several features of a *heterotopia* which all apply to the theatre of Dionysus:

(1) According to Foucault, a *heteropia* is part of a society, but allows transgressions and deviation from norms. The fact that the *polis* of Athens occupied a prominent position in the festival, shows that the theatre of Dionysus was ‘part of the society’. Deviation from norms is shown by the fact that the festival and theatre were open to non-citizens, who were normally excluded from civic discourse. The state generally made a strict distinction between male citizens and other groups, such as metics – foreigners residing in the city – and women. The adult, male citizen was socially and politically active and participated in the council, the assembly and the courts of the city. Women and metics were essentially excluded from political discourse. During the City Dionysia, however, distinctions between citizens and others were suspended. Non-citizens were permitted to attend the festival and were allowed to play an active part in the celebrations.<sup>3</sup>

Deviation from norms and the questioning of conventional values are prominent in the dramatic performances of the festival. In addition to tragedy, the theatre also hosted the performance of comedy. Tragedy and comedy are both ‘genres of transgression’ and dramatise problems of the democratic state. In comedy, characters overtly ridicule contemporary politicians and try to solve problems of the state in a fantastic way. For example, in Aristophanes’ *Wasps*, the Athenian Anticleon, whose name means ‘Against-Cleon’, openly accuses the political leader Cleon of corruption and fraud. Similarly, in the *Lysistrata*, the women of Greece exhort their men to settle the Peloponnesian War by denying them sexual gratification. Tragedy more indirectly stages contemporary problems of the state.<sup>4</sup> The third part of this article will present Euripides’ play *Trojan Women* as an example.

(2) *Heterotopias* are often of a temporary nature: after a short period of license, the social and political order is restored again.<sup>5</sup> This corresponds to the situation in Athens, where the questioning of ideology was restricted to the time of the festival, which lasted of only six days.

(3) *Heterotopias* often have a system of opening and closing, which usually consists of (purifying) rituals. The opening ritual signifies the transition of the community to ‘another world’, where deviation from norms and the questioning of ideology is permitted. The ritual of closing indicates the return of the community to the normal world. In the case of Athens, the Athenian community held a procession to the sanctuary of Dionysus on the festival’s first day, whereupon a priest of Dionysus sacrificed several bulls to the god on behalf of the community. Moreover, before the dramatic performances a bleeding piglet was carried round the orchestra, the performance space, to ritually purify the theatre.<sup>6</sup>

After the Dionysia, the theatre was taken over by the Athenian assembly for one day. This meeting of the assembly emphasised the authority of the male citizens over the other sections of the Athenian population. During the festival the theatre had been open for all members of the community, but in the end the social and political order was restored again. We might thus say that the ‘heterotopical’ space changed into a ‘normal’ space again.<sup>7</sup>

The heterotopical nature of the festival can be explained by the transgressive nature of Dionysus, the patron god of the festival. In his myth and cult, the god is often presented as transgressing boundaries and defying definition. The god for example has a fluid identity and adopts features of both sexes: in Euripides’ *Bacchants*, Dionysus is presented as a youth ‘with golden curls’, but also as a ‘female in shape’ (236, 354); on Greek vases, he is often depicted as wearing the *mitra*, the headband of the maenads, his raging female followers. Similarly, Dionysus transgresses boundaries between man and animal: in the *Bacchants*, the maenads invoke the god in his manifestations of a bull, a serpent and a lion (1017-9); on vases, he is often depicted with a leopard skin; the satyrs, Dionysus’ male attendants, are likewise a combination between man and goat. The fluid identities of the god are also related to his manifestation as the patron god of the theatre and the actor. Dionysus oversees the actor’s transition to a new identity when he puts on the mask of a dramatic character. On vases, Dionysus is often represented with a mask in his hand or, symbolically, as a mask on a pole wrapped in a garment.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the performance space, the mythical space of the tragic plot is a *heterotopia* too. The questioning of ideology is not only confined to the space of the theatre, but is also projected into ‘another world’.

## Mythical space

At the start of the fifth century, historical events sometimes provided subject matter for tragedy. For example, in 493 the playwright Phrynicus staged a play about the Persian capture of the city of Miletus in Ionia. In the 490s, the inhabitants of that city had revolted against the Persian king Darius, who had increased his influence in the region. The Athenians, who were allies of the Milesians, had supported the revolution by sending ships and soldiers. The Persian king nevertheless struck back and in 494 he captured the city and deported the inhabitants to Susa. Herodotus says that during the performance of Phrynicus’ play the whole of the Athenian audience burst into tears, as they were reminded of ‘their own troubles’ (6.21). They fined Phrynicus a thousand drachmas and did not allow the play to be performed again.

Spectators can be emotionally affected by the events brought on stage. In his *Poetics* (1449b25-30) Aristotle states that the suffering of the protagonists and the horrible events onstage make the audience feel pity (*eleos*) and fear (*phobos*). As Phrynicus’ play shows, these emotions can become very fierce. This happens when the spectators recognise the events onstage as their own. We can compare this with the vehement reactions of the World War II veterans, who were asked to watch the movie *Saving Private Ryan* in 1998.

A quarter of the men left the room ten minutes after the start of the movie. They were emotionally shocked by the events on the screen, which offered a rather too realistic representation of the Normandy Landings.

Vehement emotions of the spectators can be mitigated when distance is created between the world of the drama and the audience, or in other words, when the spectators are not reminded of ‘their own troubles’. As for tragedy, this distance is provided by myth, since the mythical world is not identical with the world of the audience. From the start of tragedy, mythical stories were by far more popular as subject matter than historical events. In the course of the fifth century, moreover, the staging of historical events even came to a complete halt. The possibility of a too vehement reaction of the audience might have contributed to this change.

Tragedy often showed problems of the state and transgressive deeds that were not allowed in everyday life. By presenting these in a world different from that of the audience, the spectators would not be too strongly affected by the events of the play. In this sense the mythical world of tragedy can be regarded as a *heterotopia*, as it provides the setting for transgressions and deviation.<sup>9</sup>

The distance between the mythical world and the audience is *chronotopical*: that is, *temporal* (1) and *spatial* (2).

(1) The mythical world belongs to the distant past of the Greeks, the so-called heroic age. Tragedy sometimes explicitly refers to the temporal distance between the heroes and the audience. For example, in Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, the Trojan queen Hecuba laments the fall of Troy. She attempts to console herself with the thought that her misery will inspire poets ‘of later generations’ (1246). The plot of the play is distanced from the present, as these poets live in the time of the audience and have not yet been born in the age of Hecuba.

(2) The plot of a tragedy is usually set outside Athens (the space of the audience), for example in Troy, Thebes or Argos.<sup>10</sup> Troy is the other place *par excellence*, as this city was largely a ruin in the time of the audience. In this case, the world of drama optimally differs from the world of the audience.<sup>11</sup>

Even though dramatic places are *temporally* and *spatially* detached from fifth-century Athens, in their physical aspects they resemble cities from the world of the audience. For example, the city of Troy in *Trojan Women* resembles a fifth-century Greek city. Troy contains temples of stone, dedicated to Zeus, Artemis and Athena (539-40, 552, 1061), a gymnasium, provided with a race-track and washing places (833-4), golden statues (1074) and monumental altars, placed on a platform and flanked by steps (16-7). Apart from these fifth-century elements, Troy also has typical ‘Trojan’ features, known from epic poetry, such as the river Scamander or Mount Ida in the plain.<sup>12</sup> The same tendency is visible in Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, which takes place in front of a temple for Artemis in Tauris. Although Tauris lies in the Black Sea region, the temple resembles an ordinary Doric-Greek temple, present in Athens and other Greek cities. It consists of columns, high walls, a gold-decked frieze, and doors that can be closed by large, bronze bolts

(96-7, 99, 128-9, 405-6). The only *couleur locale* that is reminiscent of Tauris are the Symplegades, the clashing rocks at the entrance of the Black Sea (241).<sup>13</sup>

I summarise the first two parts of this article. On the level of the tragic plot, the questioning of contemporary ideology is projected into the world of myth. On the level of the performance, this process is confined to the space of the theatre during a civic festival. Thus, the mythical world and the performance space form a double *heterotopia*. With this double safeguard transgressions can safely be presented. The next part of the article presents a clear example of questioning ideology in tragedy. It focuses on Euripides' *Trojan Women*, a play performed during the City Dionysia of 415. What aspects of Athenian ideology does this play discuss?

## The *Trojan Women* and ideology

*Trojan Women* takes place on the day after the fall of Troy. The Greeks have captured the city and killed the Trojan men (511-67). The Trojan women and children are divided among the Greek soldiers and led away to Greece as slaves and concubines. The protagonist of the tragedy is Hecuba, the former queen of Troy who repeatedly witnesses how her female relatives are led away from the Trojan land. Hecuba is accompanied by a chorus of Trojan women, who share in the same reversal of fortune.

The Trojan women voice their view on the Trojan War. They primarily react to the sorrows that the Greeks have caused them. For example, Hecuba laments the death of her husband Priam and grieves at the prospect of slavery in Greece (192-6). She also reminds the audience of her former royal status and her happy life in Troy. She says that she was of royal descent, had married into a royal house, and gave birth to children who surpassed the other Trojans in excellence (474-8). The singing of her former happiness emphasises the reversal of her fortune and makes her present suffering more poignant.<sup>14</sup> According to Athenian ideology, women had to be silent and remain in the background (Thucydides 2.45). In *Trojan Women*, by contrast, women enter the public domain and speak with much more extremity than was actually allowed in society.<sup>15</sup>

The misery of war is particularly highlighted by the presentation of the destruction of Troy. The Trojan women lament the spaces in the city which have been destroyed by the Greeks, such as the gymnasium, the golden statues, and the sanctuaries of the gods (15-6, 833-5, 1074). They also deplore their loss of the beautiful environment of Troy. They state for example that they will never see the Ida again, the mountain near Troy, with its lovely streams of melt water and ivy-clad vales (1066-70). The fact that they have lost a very *beautiful* country, enhances their misery. This misery is even more emphasised, when the women present the shores of Troy as *crying* for them (828-30). This is an instance of *pathetic fallacy*, as space is given human emotions: the fate of the Trojan women is so unfortunate that even nature pities them.

The theme of the misery of war is not only evoked by the presentation of the destruction of Troy – it is also emphasised by the creation of a negative image of the Greeks, who are presented as behaving very rudely during the fall of Troy. Euripides uses techniques of

characterisation to put the Greeks in bad light. I will first show how he creates this negative characterisation, after which I will explain how the theme of the misery of war and the negative portrayal of the aggressors relates to Athenian ideology.

In representations of the Trojan War, the capture of the Troy is often accompanied by outrages and sacrileges of the Greeks, which can be stressed to a greater or lesser degree.<sup>16</sup> *Trojan Women* highlights these acts in order to enhance the wickedness of the Greeks and to augment the misery caused by war. The following examples make this clear:

(1) The goddess Athena is angry, since Ajax has dragged Cassandra ‘by force’ from her temple (70). This act implies sacrilege, since the prophetess enjoyed the protection of the goddess in her sanctuary. In the *Sack of Ilion*, an epic poem about the fall of Troy, the Greeks take Ajax to court and decide to stone him for his act. Ajax then takes refuge at an altar of Athena – the goddess whom he himself has dishonoured. The Greeks decide to leave him there, as they are anxious to commit sacrilege themselves.<sup>17</sup> In *Trojan Women*, by contrast, this episode is suppressed. Athena says that Ajax has not been punished or censured by the Greeks (71). Euripides thus implicates the whole army of the Greeks in the sacrilege of Ajax, as they have not tried to punish him.

(2) Neoptolemus, too, has committed sacrilege. He has killed Priam at the altar of Zeus, where the Trojan king had taken refuge as a suppliant (16-7). Greek epic told several stories about the death of Priam. In the *Little Iliad*, Neoptolemus drags Priam from the altar and kills him at the gates of the palace. This version of the murder mitigates the sacrilege of Neoptolemus, as he does not kill Priam at a sacred place. *Trojan Women*, by contrast, follows the version of the *Sack of Ilion*, where Priam is murdered at the altar.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Euripides does not mitigate the sacrilege, but shows it in full force.

(3) Agamemnon, the general of the Greeks, has insulted the god Apollo by choosing the virgin Cassandra as his concubine. He has committed sacrilege (43-4), since the virginity of Cassandra is dedicated to the god (253-4). This presentation of Cassandra’s virginity is probably an innovation by Euripides.<sup>19</sup> As a consequence, the play expands the outrages of the Greeks and emphasises their impiety.

(4) Andromache informs Hecuba that her daughter Polyxena has been sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles. Andromache has seen Polyxena’s body lying near the grave and has mourned it and covered it with clothes by way of a burial (626-7). In Euripides’ *Hecuba*, performed in the 420s, the sacrifice of Polyxena is also presented. In this play the ghost of Achilles appears to ask for the sacrifice as a gift for his tomb (115-6). He says that the sacrifice of Polyxena will bring the Greeks a favourable breeze and will allow them to sail home. The Greeks obey Achilles, but they pity the Trojan princess (567). For example, during the sacrifice Neoptolemus is said to raise his sword ‘reluctantly’ (566). Similarly, after the sacrifice the Greek soldiers erect a pyre to pay Polyxena the last honours (574-6). In *Trojan Women*, by contrast, the order of Achilles is absent, the Greeks show no pity, and the soldiers do not arrange a burial. The corpse of Polyxena is buried by Andromache, who happens to pass the tomb where the corpse has been left. This is probably an innovation in the myth of the fall of Troy,<sup>20</sup> in order to present the Greeks as more cruel and ruthless.

The list of Greek outrages during the fall of Troy could be even more expanded, for example by the execution of the infant Astyanax (725) and the murders of the Trojans at the altars and statues of the gods (562, 599). On the whole, the cruelties conjure up a negative characterisation of the Greeks and emphasise the misery caused by war.

The negative image of the Greeks is created in still another way. After the announcement of the execution of Astyanax, Andromache reproaches the Greeks for their malice and calls them the ‘inventors of barbarian deeds’ (764). This remark is striking since it was generally the *Greeks* who called all *non-Greek* peoples ‘barbarians’. This designation usually had a negative connotation, as Greeks considered themselves to be superior to non-Greeks. This feeling of superiority had been enhanced by their successful war against the Persians at the start of the fifth century. The Greeks attributed all kinds of negative, stereotypical features to non-Greek peoples. They generally regarded Easterners as slavish, effeminate and decadent, and Northerners as violent and ferocious. This negative appraisal of barbarians is to a certain degree also projected into the mythological world. For example, in *Trojan Women*, the Trojans are given stereotypical eastern features. Troy is ruled by a tyrant (1169), the city is laden with gold (994-5), and the inhabitants have a preference for refined clothes (991-2). However, the polarisation between Greeks and barbarians is inverted as well. Andromache, a ‘barbarian’ woman from a Greek point of view, has always shown herself to be a virtuous wife and has lived according to *Athenian* standards: she always stayed inside her house (650), was averse to ‘female gossip’ and obedient to her husband (651-4). The Greeks, by contrast, are presented as cruel and excessive and are given stereotypical barbarian traits. The Greek woman Helen for example embodies several kinds of (negative) eastern features: she has a preference for gold (1107) and demands prostration from the Trojans like an Oriental empress (1021). Andromache, moreover, unambiguously calls the whole army of the Greeks ‘barbarians’. Thus, *Trojan Women* shows that barbarians can be noble and that Greeks can behave reprehensibly. We might say then that the play examines the Greek-barbarian polarisation of the fifth century and questions the superiority of Greeks to non-Greeks.<sup>21</sup>

The Greeks are not only given a stereotypical Trojan (barbarian) characterisation, they are even set on equal terms with the Trojans, who are the losers of the war. The prophetess Cassandra states that the war has not only caused misery for the Trojans, but for the Greeks as well. She says that the Greek men were deprived of their women and children during war (371-2, 377), that they died one after another on the battlefield (369), and that their graves will not be tended by their relatives (380-1). She predicts moreover that the surviving Greeks will not return home triumphantly: Agamemnon will be murdered by his wife upon arrival (357-66) and Odysseus will roam the sea for ten years (433-43). Likewise, the gods Athena and Poseidon, who feature in the prologue, predict that they will cause the Greeks sorrow on their way home as punishment for their outrages after the fall of Troy. The gods state that they will stir up the Aegean Sea, strike the Greek ships with thunderbolts, and fill the shores of the Greek islands with corpses (78-81). Thus, after their victory in war, the Greeks will nevertheless perish themselves.<sup>22</sup>

How does this all relate to fifth-century Athenian ideology? According to this ideology, success in war was glorious. The Athenians praised their military achievements orally –

in public (funeral) orations (Thucydides 2.36) – as well as visually – on public monuments, such as the sculptures on the sanctuaries of the acropolis. They compared contemporary military successes with wars from epic to elevate the dignity of recent victories. Epic was of paramount importance in Athenian education and generally presented victory in war as glorious.<sup>23</sup> The presentation of war in the *Trojan Women* contrasts with Athenian ideology, since the Greeks are not given praise but are set on equal footing with the losers.

The presentation of war in *Trojan Women* questions the Athenian war ideology of the late fifth century, when Athens conducted an aggressive and imperialistic policy in Greece. On the initiative of Athens, several Greek cities formed an alliance called the Delian League, which dealt with the defence of Greece after the Persian Wars. The members of the League paid taxes (in the form of money or ships) to the treasury on Delos. In 454, however, Athens appropriated the treasury whereupon the League gradually became an empire of the leader. The Athenians imposed their laws on the allies and used their funds for prestigious building projects in Athens, such as the sanctuaries on the acropolis, to show the glory of the Athenian community. Athens also forced independent cities to join the League and to contribute to the treasury. This policy stirred up ill-feelings among the members of the alliance who sometimes rose in rebellion to cast off the yoke of Athens (for example Mytilene in 427 and Scione in 421). These rebellions were harshly suppressed by Athens. The Athenians besieged the rebellious cities, killed their male population, and enslaved women and children.

Due to their imperialistic policy the Athenians came into conflict with the Spartans, who formed a power block against their empire. Sparta was the leader of the Peloponnesian League, which was an alliance of cities on the Peloponnese and acted as a counterpart to the Delian League. During their conflict, which went down in history as the Peloponnesian War, Athens and Sparta did not shun violence in order to curtail each other's power. For example, in 422 the Athenians attacked the city of Torone, a member of the Peloponnesian League, where they killed all Spartans who defended the city. This aggressive form of warfare was new in Greece: before the Peloponnesian War losing parties (or their prominent representatives) were not killed but exiled from their cities (*anastasis*). The Peloponnesian War thus witnessed a rise of excessive violence and aggression in Greece.<sup>24</sup>

The Athenians justified their imperialistic policy by presenting themselves as the educators of Greece (Thucydides 2.41). They claimed to have offered the Greeks law, democracy, and freedom from the Persians. They composed elaborate public speeches to praise their empire and military achievements as well as the warriors who had died for their city. *Trojan Women* shows the other side of war. Euripides does not present military successes as providing glory, but only misery – for victors and losers alike. The aggressors moreover are put in bad light by the emphasis on their outrages after the fall of the city. The negative presentation of war questions the dominant ideology of Athens. *Trojan Women* invites the audience to reflect on the aggressive policies of the state and on the outrages of the Peloponnesian War, for which the Trojan War is used as an equivalent. The aggressive behaviour of the mythical Greeks at Troy can be compared with the violent actions

of the Athenians (and Spartans) in fifth-century Greece: as the Trojan War caused grief in the mythical age, so the Peloponnesian War produces misery in the fifth century.<sup>25</sup> We might thus conclude that in the *heterotopia* of tragedy, war is not glorious but only miserable.

## Epilogue

*Heterotopias* are often *utopias*, ideal places where the problems of the community are absent, or *dystopias*, places where the problems of the society reign supreme.<sup>26</sup> Both places show transgressions of norms and deviations from the dominant ideology of the community. In *Trojan Women*, Troy becomes a *dystopia*, as the positive status of war in Athenian ideology is completely suppressed. The performance of *Trojan Women*, however, did not change the dominant ideology of the society or bring a halt to the aggressive, imperialistic policy of Athens. On the contrary, in 415 the Athenians sailed to Sicily to expand their territory and to increase their influence in the West. This renewed the hostilities between Athens and Sparta, since the Spartans came to the support of their allies on the island. The questioning of ideology, then, remained restricted to the festival of Dionysus and the space of the theatre. After the Dionysia the social and political order was restored again and the dominant ideology was reaffirmed. Success in war became glorious once more and the imperialistic ambitions of the Athenians could revive.

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## Notes

1. Foucault ([1967] 1986: 22-7).
2. Rehm (2002: 50-2); Mastronarde (2010: 17).
3. Rehm (2002: 55-6). The Athenian society was male dominated in the sense that only men were involved in politics. Women, however, could contribute to the well-being of the Athenian community, for example by performing agricultural duties or by participating in the religious life of the *polis*.
4. Goldhill (1990: 114-29); Croally (2005: 65-6).
5. Holt (1999: 687-90). For the relation between the civic festival and the anti-civic discourse see: Goldhill (1990: 97-129).
6. Rehm (2002: 45-50).
7. Rehm (2002: 53).
8. Seaford (2006: 23-4); Guettel Cole (2007: 327-35). On vases the personification of tragedy (*tragoidia*) is sometimes depicted as a female follower of Dionysus. Yet tragedy was also performed at festivals of other gods. For example, in Delphi tragedy was staged at a festival of Apollo, the patron god of the oracle (Scullion 2005: 34-5).

9. Croally (1994: 40; 2005: 67-8). Foucault only regards real spaces as *heterotopias*. The use of the concept is here broadened so as to include fictional spaces too. Greek tragedy not only confines transgression to the real space of the theatre, but also the fictional space of myth.
10. For the distance of the mythical world see: Croally (2005: 67); Mastronarde (2010: 20). In tragedies that use Athens as a setting, questioning of ideology and deviation from norms is normally reduced. For example, in Euripides' *Suppliants*, the Athenians are praised for their democratic constitution, freedom of speech and equality among citizens (427-63). The questioning of ideology in a setting that is (more or less) identical with the world of the audience, would damage their self-image. In that case, the spatial distance is lacking and the spectators would recognise the dramatic world as their own.
11. Zeitlin ([1986] 1992) claims that only Thebes serves as 'other place' in tragedy. In Thebes, problems and transgressions are pushed to the extreme, as a consequence of which the city always ends in chaos and destruction. By projecting problems and transgressions onto Thebes, the self-image of the Athenians is not damaged. Croally (1994: 38-40), by contrast, argues that every city can function as 'other place'. In his view, all mythical cities have 'fictional' status and therefore differ from the world of the audience. It seems, moreover, that Troy was more often used as setting than Thebes, when one surveys the surviving tragedies.
12. Likewise, in the *Iliad*, the city of Troy resembles a city from the time of the poet – that is, the early seventh century. For example, Troy has temples that resemble those of the seventh century, as they have a stone foundation (*Iliad* 9.404) and a roof of thatch (1.39). The story of the Trojan War goes back to earlier traditions, but has changed in the course of time. Cf. Crielaard (1995: 253).
13. For an elaborate analysis of the Taurian landscape see: Wright (2005: 166-93).
14. Luschnig (1971: 11). In a metapoetical remark, Hecuba herself explains the rhetoric of her lament: 'First, it is my desire to sing of my happiness, for in this way I shall raise more pity for my woes (472-3).'
15. Croally (1994: 85-6). Questioning of ideology is mitigated not only by projecting it into 'another world', but also on 'other characters'. Tragedy is populated by characters who are 'other' from the point of view of the Athenian citizen, such as women, slaves, and barbarians. In *Trojan Women*, questioning of ideology is put into the mouths of women. If a (politically active) Athenian citizen would question ideology, the self-image of the Athenian men could be damaged and vehement reactions could be provoked (Croally 2005: 66-8). According to Mendelsohn (2002: 224-33), Euripidean tragedy presents two kinds of women: the suffering woman and the transgressive woman. In tragedy, women repeatedly suffer by the decisions of men. Tragedy, however, enables them to express their grief or to rebel against men. According to Mendelsohn, Euripides opts for a society where women are incorporated in the public discourse. His tragedies show that marginalisation of women only causes them misery and grief, as a result of which they can rise in rebellion.
16. The sacrileges can also be wholly suppressed. For example, in an ode of the sixth-century poet Ibucus (fragment 1a Page [1962] 1967), the Greeks are *praised* for having captured Troy. The heroes are compared to Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos, to whom the ode is dedicated. In this case, a negative characterisation of the Greeks would diminish the praise of the addressee of the ode.

17. The date of composition of the *Sack of Ilion* is discussed – either early seventh century (simultaneously with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) or sixth century. For an overview of this discussion see: Burgess (2001: 7-46). The *Sack of Ilion* has not been passed down to us, but a summary of the poem is preserved in the *Chrestomathy* of the philosopher Proclus (second or fifth century AD). For the sacrilege of Ajax see: *Chrestomathy* 261-5. For more details see: Anderson 1997, 50-1.
18. The *Little Iliad* has not been passed down to us, but a reference to the episode of the murder (as treated in this epic) is made by the geographer Pausanias (second century AD) in his *Description of Greece* (10.27.2). For the story of the murder in the *Sack of Ilion* see: Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 257-8.
19. Meridor (1989: 27).
20. Petersmann (1977: 158).
21. For the questioning of the Greek-barbarian polarity see: Hall (1989: 202-21); Croally (1994: 103-15).
22. Luschnig (1971: 8-10).
23. Leahy (1974: 8-9).
24. For an overview of Athenian and Spartan cruelties see: Kuch (1998: 149-50).
25. In the past, several scholars argued that *Trojan Women* reacted to the aggressive Athenian invasion of the island Melos in the winter of 416/5 (e.g. Lee 1976: ix-x). Van Erp Taalman Kip (1987: 414-9), however, has shown that the time span between the Melian invasion and the City Dionysia in March was too short for Euripides to produce the play and train the chorus and actors. He must therefore have started the production of the play *before* the Melian invasion. It is more likely, then, that *Trojan Women* reacts to the general violence of the Peloponnesian War (Kuch 1998: 149-50).
26. Keith Booker ([2005] 2008: 624-5).

# Symbolic ‘Lived Spaces’ in Ancient Greek Lyric and the Heterotopia of the Symposium

Jo Heirman

## Introduction

This paper looks at the presentation of space in ancient Greek lyric poetry of the seventh through the fifth century BCE and its ideological function in the cultural-historical context. This poetry, by authors including Sappho, Solon and Pindar, comes after the Homeric epics about Troy and Odysseus (eighth century BCE) and precedes the Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides (fifth century BCE). The first part of this paper, based on theories of ‘lived space’, will argue that space is foremost symbolically presented in the lyric poems. The second part will then explain the symbolism of space by embedding the poems in the cultural-historical performance context of the symposium, which will be defined in terms of Foucault’s *heterotopia*.<sup>1</sup>

## The Symbolic Presentation of ‘Lived Space’ in Ancient Greek Lyric

In literary theory the role of space has often been confined to that of narrative setting, of a scenic backdrop against which the narrated events take place.<sup>2</sup> Setting is, of course, a basic role of space that can also be observed in ancient Greek lyric poetry, especially in mythological narratives of poems by the lyric poets Pindar and Bacchylides of the fifth century BCE. In these mythological narratives space often serves as the background setting against which the heroic deeds of the mythological heroes are recounted. These deeds in turn serve to glorify the addressee of their praising odes, that is to say the victor at an athletic contest. Examples include the city or plain of Troy as setting in stories related to the Trojan saga and the sea as setting in mythological stories about Theseus or the Argonauts.<sup>3</sup> However, space does not function only as setting in ancient lyric poems, but is above all *symbolic*, as this paper seeks to set out.

To discuss the symbolism of space in ancient Greek lyric I will draw on theories of ‘lived space’, in particular those by Herman Meyer (1975), Bruno Hillebrand (1971) and Gerard Hoffmann (1978),<sup>4</sup> which address the question how literary space is experienced and valued by the narrator or a character. In ancient Greek lyric two types of space in particular are symbolically presented as ‘lived spaces’: the sea and the countryside.

## The Sea as Space of Danger and Fear

The sea is above all a symbol of danger. This is illustrated by a fragment (105) of Archilochus, a poet from the seventh century BCE:<sup>5</sup>

Γλαῦχ', ὅρα: βαθὺς γὰρ ἥδη κύμασιν ταράσσεται  
πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ' ὑκρα Γυρέων ὄρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος,  
σῆμα χειμῶνος· κιχάνει δ' ἐξ ἀελπίης φόβος.

Look, Glaucus! Waves are already disturbing the deep sea, and a cloud stands straight round about the heights of Gyrae, a sign of storm. From the unexpected arises fear. (text and translation from Gerber 1999)

Through the imperative ‘Look!’ the speaker immediately urges a man called Glaucus to draw attention to the stormy sea scene. By bringing forth an image of the sea before an imminent storm the speaker evokes an atmosphere of impending danger. That the storm seems to be perceived from the ship rather than the coast is suggested by the contrast between the deep sea beneath and the clouds round over the heights of Gyrae above. The location reminds of the mythological story of Ajax, who was crushed by rocks from the heights of Gyrae on his return to Greece following the Trojan War, as told in the *Odyssey* (4.500-511).<sup>6</sup> That a storm arises precisely around these heights strengthens its danger and explains why the speaker says that it causes fear. The connection between danger and fear makes relevant the theories of ‘lived space’: through its associations with danger the sea turns into a ‘lived space’, as it correlates with the emotions of fear by the human subjects at sea.

In some ancient lyric poems a ship in a storm at sea is metaphorical for a particular group or a whole city troubled because of certain socio-political upheavals. A good example is a poem by Theognis of the fifth century BCE (lines 667-682), famous for his homoerotic and aristocratic-political poetry:

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <p>εἰ μὲν χρήματ' ἔχοιμι, Σιμωνίδη, οἵᾳ περ ἥδη<br/>οὐκ ἀνιώμην τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσι συνών.<br/>νῦν δέ με γινώσκοντα παρέρχεται, εἰμὶ δ' ἄφωνος<br/>χρημασύνη, πολλῶν γνοὺς ἀν ἄμεινον ἔτι,<br/>ούνεκα νῦν φερόμεσθα καθ' ἵστια λευκὰ βαλόντες<br/>Μηλίου ἐκ πόντου νύκτα διὸ δνοφερήν,<br/>ἀντλεῖν δ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν, ὑπερβάλλει δὲ θάλασσα<br/>ἀμφοτέρων τοίχων. ἦ μάλα τις χαλεπῶς<br/>σώιζεται, οἱ' ἔρδουσι· κυβερνήτην μὲν ἔπαυσαν<br/>ἐσθλόν, ὅτις φυλακὴν εἶχεν ἐπισταμένως·<br/>χρήματα δ' ἀρπάζουσι βίηι, κόσμος δ' ἀπόλωλεν,<br/>δασμὸς δ' οὐκέτ' ἴσος γίνεται ἐξ τὸ μέσον·<br/>φορτηγοὶ δ' ἄρχουσι, κακοὶ δ' ἀγαθῶν καθύπερθεν.<br/>δειμαίνω, μή πως ναῦν κατὰ κῦμα πίῃ.<br/>ταῦτά μοι ἡινίχθω κεκρυμμένα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν·<br/>γινώσκοι δ' ἀν τις καὶ κακός, ἀν σοφὸς ἦ.</p> | 670<br><br>675<br><br>680 |
|--|---------------------------|

If I had wealth, Simonides, such as I once had, I would not feel distressed in the company of the noble. But now I am aware that it passes me by, and I am voiceless because of need, although I may know still better than many that we

are now being carried along with white sails lowered beyond the Melian sea through the dark night, and they refuse to bail, but the sea is washing over both sides. In very truth, anyone has much difficulty saving oneself, because they are doing such things: they have deposed the noble helmsman who skillfully kept watch; they seize possessions by force, and discipline is lost, no longer is there an equal distribution in the common interest; the merchants rule, and the base are above the noble. I am afraid that perhaps a wave will swallow the ship. Let these be my riddling words with hidden meaning for the noble; but even a base man, if he is wise, can recognise (their meaning). (text and translation from Gerber 1999)

The metaphorical nature of the image of the ship is made manifest in the final two lines, where the poem is said to be a riddle for the ‘noble’, the aristocrats to whom the speaker addresses his poems.<sup>7</sup> The socio-political overtones of the metaphor are brought to the foreground in the second part of the metaphor, i.e. the situation on board ship (lines 675-679). The speaker, who is in the company of his fellow aristocrats (see line 668), is distressed because his companions have made an end to the orderly rule of the helmsman, who was probably some sort of tyrant:<sup>8</sup> this has provoked chaos and injustice on the ship, that is to say in the city, and has enabled the merchants, presumably the *nouveaux riches*, to gain power. The image of a ship in a storm in the first part of the metaphor (lines 671-674) is then the result of the shift in power narrated in the second part. This reversed order reveals the socio-political content gradually and emphasises the immediate danger of the situation. A sense of danger is evoked by the particular way the storm is perceived by the speaker *at the moment it takes place*. Firstly, in lines 671-672 an image is evoked of sailors as passive victims of a storm, lacking control over their ship. The danger is reinforced by the time (the dark night makes it impossible for the sailors to view what is happening) and the place (out of the Melian Sea, around the treacherous Cape Malea with its high cliffs and powerful storms).<sup>9</sup> Secondly, in lines 673-675 an image of bilge-water in the ship points to the mortal danger of a sinking ship. This is particularly poignant because it results from the sailors’ unwillingness to bail it out, who represent the speaker’s aristocratic companions, to whom the poem is directed. Finally, in line 680 another reference is made to the imminent risk of sinking with a description of a wave that is about to swallow the ship. At this point, the dangerous sea turns into a ‘lived space’, as it is connected to the emotions of fear the speaker experiences. These are, however, not shared by his companions: distancing himself from the other aristocrats, the speaker criticizes their behaviour and hopes that the metaphor he offers them will lead them to understand the calamity of the situation for which they are held responsible.

## The Countryside as Erotic Space

The countryside has a symbolic-*erotic* value in ancient Greek lyric. Meadows and gardens have erotic associations, for instance in the literary motif of the ‘meadow of love’, which usually involves a young and innocent virgin being seduced by a man, and the *locus amoenus*, where a meadow or garden sometimes alongside with water, trees and shade forms

the erotic place *par excellence*.<sup>10</sup> Fields, too, have erotic associations, as is clear from a fragmentary poem by Sappho (fragment 96), a poetess of the sixth century BCE, famous for her homo-erotic poetry for a circle of girls:

Σαρδ.[..]  
πόλ]λακι τυίδε [ν]ῶν ἔχοισα  
ώσπ.[...].ώομεν, [...]..χ[...] -  
σε θέαι σ' ἵκέλαν ἀρι-  
γνώται, σᾶν δὲ μάλιστ' ἔχαιρε μόλπαι.  
5  
νῦν δὲ Λύδαισιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναί-  
κεσσιν ὡς ποτ' ἀελίω  
δύντος ἢ βροδοδάκτυλος σελάννα  
πάντα περρέχοισ' ἄστρα· φάος δ' ἐπι-  
σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ' ἀλμύραν  
ἴσως καὶ πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραις.  
10  
ἀ δ' ἔέρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά-  
λαισι δὲ βρόδα κάπαλ' ἄν-  
θρυσκα καὶ μελίλωτος ἀνθεμώδης·  
πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταισ', ἀγάνας ἐπι-  
μνάσθεισ' Ἀτθιδος ἴμέρωι  
λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[α]ρ[τέρω<ι>] βόρηται.<sup>11</sup>

Sardis...often turning her thoughts in this direction...(she honoured) you as being like a goddess for all to see, and she took most delight in your song. Now she stands out among the Lydian women like the rosy-fingered moon after sunset, surpassing all stars; and its light spreads out over the salty sea and the flowery fields alike. The dew is shed in beauty, and roses bloom and tender chervil and flowery melilot. Often as she goes to and fro, when remembering gentle Atthis doubtless her tender heart is consumed by strong desire...(text and translation from Campbell 1982)

In this poem Sappho speaks to a girl called Atthis about a woman who has moved away from their circle to Lydia, but who deeply misses Atthis. A simile in which the beauty of the Lydian woman is compared with the brightness of the moon turns into a description of fields covered with dew and rich in flowers.

That these fields have erotic associations is suggested by the reference to dew and flowers. In Sappho's poetry, flowers are associated with female desire. This applies especially to roses because they are connected to the goddess of love Aphrodite. An example is Sappho 94, in which the speaker reminds a girl of the good times they spent together, putting garlands of flowers, roses included, around their necks and satisfying their desire. The sweet, seductive smell of the melilot, a subspecies of the lotus, might underscore the erotic associations the lotus has in early Greek poetry. These symbolic overtones are suggested by a

scene in Homer's *Iliad* (14.348) in which lotus and other flowers spring up as a result of the erotic encounter between Zeus and Hera. Chervil is described by the adjective 'tender', which elsewhere in Sappho's poetry refers to (body parts of) women in an erotic atmosphere: in fragment 94 it describes a girl's neck around which garlands are placed, while desire is satisfied; in 82 a girl called Gyrinno, who is compared to the more shapely Mnasidica; in 126 the bosom of a female companion. Besides the flowers, dew, too, is erotically charged:<sup>12</sup> in Hesiod fragment 26 the virginal daughters of Porthaon find themselves amid dew and flowers that reflect their latent sexuality; in *Iliad* 14 dew appears as a result of the erotic activities of Zeus and Hera; in some (badly preserved) fragments of Sappho (23, 71 and 73) dew is mentioned in connection with love and female beauty.

The erotic symbolism of the flowers and dew indicate that the fields are presented as a place symbolic for the fulfilling of erotic desire, to the extent that the fields turn into a 'lived space', as they reflect female longing. The intriguing question is: whose desire? In the first place it seems to be that of the Lydian woman for the girl Atthis, as the Lydian woman's heart is said to be consumed by strong desire in the stanza that follows the description of the fields. However, it could also be that of Atthis for the Lydian woman: since Sappho is the speaker who addresses the girl and describes the woman in erotic terms, she might project erotic desire for the woman onto the addressee. In any case, a sense of pain is established by their separation because it is impossible to fulfil the desire. This sense of painfulness ultimately shows that the poem is based on a tension between proximity and intimacy on the one hand and separation and distance on the other, which is reinforced by the combination between second person and third person of Atthis:<sup>13</sup> while Atthis is consoled by the thought that the Lydian woman still remembers her and longs for her, at the same time an erotic union in the fields is impossible.

Another poem which demonstrates that fields are 'lived spaces' reflecting the erotic desire of females is a fragment by Anacreon (346<1>) of the sixth century BCE, in which the speaker addresses a girl called Herotime throughout:<sup>14</sup>

οὐδε...[.]σ.φ..α..[...]..[  
φοβερὰς δ' ἔχεις πρὸς ἄλλων  
φρένας, ω̄ καλλιπρό[σ]ωπε παίδ[ων].

καὶ σε δοκεῖ μὲν ἐ[ν δό]μοισι[ν]  
πυκινῶς ἔχουσα [μήτηρ  
ἀτιτάλλειν. σ[.].[....]...[  
τὰς ὑακιν[θίνας ἀρ]ούρας  
ἵγνα Κύπρις ἐκ λεπάδων  
.....] [...]α[ς κ]ατέδησεν ἵπους.

5

.....]δ' ἐν μέσωι κατῆ<i>ξας  
.....]ῳ δί' ὕστα πολλοὶ<sup>10</sup>  
πολ]ητέων φρένας ἐποέαται·  
λεωφ]όρε λεωφόρ' Ἡρο[τ]ίμη.

...nor...but you have a timid heart as well, lovely-faced girl. And (your mother) thinks that she tends you (at home), keeping a firm hold on you. But you (long for?) the fields of hyacinth, where the Cyprian tethered her mares with yoke straps. And you darted down in the midst (of the throng?), so that many citizens find their hearts excited by passion; Herotime, public highway, public highway. (text and translation from Campbell 1988)

From line 6 onwards the scene shifts from the indoor space of the house, in which the girl's mother believes that she keeps a firm hold on her, to the outdoors space of the 'fields of hyacinths'. The reference to the hyacinth flowers endows the fields with erotic associations, for in early Greek poetry hyacinths are linked with Aphrodite, probably because of their seductive colour and smell: in *Cypria* fragment 4 Aphrodite is clothed in perfumed garments of flowers, including hyacinths; in *Iliad* 14.348 hyacinths spring up together with other flowers due to the erotic encounter between Zeus and Hera; in Alcaeus 196b Aphrodite is present with youths garlanded with hyacinth; in Sappho 194 girls are led into the bridal room together with Aphrodite, whose hair is bound with hyacinths. In Anacreon's fragment, too, the hyacinths are connected with Aphrodite, who 'tethered the mares with yoke straps'. In lyric and tragic poetry similar images of taming and yoking mares are used as *metaphors* for the loss of virginity of girls: in another poem by Anacreon (417) the wish of a charioteer to put the bit on a filly, that is to say to tame her, represents the desire of the male speaker to deflower the girl; in Euripides' *Hippolytus* 546-554 Aphrodite 'yokes' a girl called Iole, who was previously an 'unyoked filly', before her marriage with Herakles. In Anacreon 346<1> the image of tethering mares with yoke straps by Aphrodite seems to be metaphorical for the girls' loss of virginity<sup>15</sup> and might turn the hyacinth fields into a 'lived space', rendering it as an imaginary space for Hero-time's own desire of defloration; this would be further underscored if the verb lost in line 6b expressed her longing for the fields. In this way, the outdoors scene of the fields is paralleled to that in the city in the following stanza (lines 10-14), which conveys the *outer*, erotic *effect* of the girl on the citizens, many of whom are excited by passion as she darts in their midst. This leads the speaker to hyperbolically mock the girl by the use of the double vocative 'public highway' in juxtaposition to her lofty first name Hero-time ('honoured by the hero' or 'honour of the hero'), as it renders an image of a whore.<sup>16</sup>

## The Ideological Functions of 'Lived Space' and the Heterotopia of the Symposium

In the second part of my paper I wish to explain why space is most often presented as symbolic 'lived space' in ancient Greek lyric poetry, that is to say as a space of danger (sea) or an erotic space (countryside). The explanation I wish to suggest resides in the cultural-historical *performance* context of the lyric poems, which has received considerable attention in lyric scholarship since the past few decades.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike modern lyric poetry, which is silently read, ancient Greek lyric poems were orally performed for various audiences of listeners and in different modes, from recitation to

song with music and dance. The poems discussed in this paper were most likely performed in the symposium,<sup>18</sup> an intimate and convivial after-dinner drinking party involving discussions, performances of lyric poetry, verbal and physical games and erotic activities.<sup>19</sup> To better understand the position of the symposium in ancient Greek society, we may consider it an 'other space' or *heterotopia* as defined by Michel Foucault in his famous essay 'Of Other Spaces', as it was a real space that formed part of society but was at the same time distinct from it, with its own norms of entertainment and its own rituals and drinking codes that were meant to reinforce the cohesion of the social group. In other words, the symposium constituted a micro-universe with its own norms of entertainment and its own rituals and drinking codes that were meant to reinforce the cohesion of the social group.<sup>20</sup>

Considering the symposium a *heterotopia* may also give us a better understanding of the reason why symbolic 'lived spaces' are evoked in ancient lyric poems performed at symposia. As Foucault states, a *heterotopia* is particularly able to create other spaces (the so-called 'third principle'): applied to the symposium, this would mean that the drinking group disengages from the physical location of performance and imagines other worlds, created by the performance of lyric poetry and stimulated by the consumption of wine. This might explain why worlds of danger at sea and of love in the countryside are evoked in ancient lyric poems performed in the symposium. To begin with the sea, it is noteworthy that in ancient Greek literature, including lyric poetry, an image of a ship at sea was sometimes metaphorical for the sympotic group (see, e.g., Pindar fragment 124a and Dionysius Chalcus fragment 5). As Sean Corner (2010) argues, the metaphor served to reinforce the internal cohesion of the group, whose gathering and drinking together is represented as a collective 'sea journey'.<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the metaphor is playful, namely when the drunkenness of the sympotic group is represented as a shipwreck (see Choerilus fragment 9 and the story of Timaeus 566F149, told in Athenaeus 2.37b-d). This also applies to archaic Greek vase paintings that connect sympotic drinking with sailing at sea. For instance, the sixth century Exekias vase (Munich 2044) depicts Dionysus reclining on board ship as if on a couch at the symposium, with dolphins beneath him and grape-vines around the ship's mast above him, and a sixth-century Attic vase (Boston 03.783) shows the *kottabos* game being played on a ship.<sup>22</sup> In other cases the metaphor of the sympotic group as a ship at sea is politically charged, as is clear from its use in sympotic lyric poems of Theognis (lines 667–682, discussed above) and Alcaeus (fragments 6 and 208). Here the image of a ship in a storm at sea stands for the unity of the aristocratic, sympotic group being threatened by socio-political upheavals such as the rise of tyrants. The metaphor may shed light on the frequent evocation of danger at sea in sympotic lyric poetry: by imagining itself as a group of sailors at sea, facing danger on their journey, the sympotic group attempts to strengthen its internal cohesion in opposition to external forces that threaten it.<sup>23</sup>

The erotic world in the countryside can also be explained by the heterotopic performance context of the symposium. In this respect, we need to bring in Foucault's opening definition of a *heterotopia* as a space in which 'all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (1984: 24). To connect

this definition with the symposium, we need to take into account that the symposium was an erotic space: symposiasts were involved in all sorts of erotic activities and erotic games, such as the *kottabos*, i.e. the flinging of wine lees at targets while calling the name of the beloved and receiving a kiss of the beloved when successful.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the symposium had its own erotic *mores* which revealed a high degree of sexual permissiveness. This might explain why, as Eva Stehle (1997: 250-257) observed, lyric poetry performed in symposia often depicts erotic activities other than those related to marriage or the begetting of children, i.e. beyond the communal interests of the *polis* (city-community): while the communal interests of the city are marriage and procreation, the symposium creates a space where erotic actions which go against the normative demands of the city-community are envisaged. If we relate this to my observation that these erotic situations are envisaged in the countryside, we may say that erotic activities beyond the communal interests are projected on a space outside the *polis*, i.e. on fields, meadows and gardens.

## Conclusion

In this paper I looked at the presentation of space in ancient Greek lyric poetry. I showed that space is above all symbolically presented, based on literary theories of ‘lived space’. While the sea is a symbol of danger, reflecting the fear of the human subjects at sea, the countryside is an erotic symbol, often mirroring someone’s desire. In a next step I tried to explained the symbolism of space by drawing a connection with the performance context of the poems, i.e. the symposium. Defining the symposium in terms of Foucault’s *heterotopia*, I argued that the world of danger at sea could serve to reinforce the cohesion of the sympotic group, while the erotic world in the countryside could reflect the erotic fantasies of the sympotic group, which went beyond the norms of the city.

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## Notes

1. This paper is a modified version of that published in *Comparative Literature and Culture Web* (Heirman 2012), which also focuses on space in ancient Greek lyric in relation to the *heterotopia* of the symposium, but discusses other poems and does not make use of theories of ‘lived space’. I would like to thank Jacqueline Klooster, Irene de Jong and the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments on the content of this paper.
2. E.g. Chatman (1978: 138-139); Bal (1997: 133-141); Ronen (1986); Buchholz-Jahn (2005).
3. See, for instance, Bacchylides 13 (Trojan War), Bacchylides 17 (Theseus), Pindar’s *Pythian* 4 (Argonauts). All these poems are discussed in Heirman (2012).
4. See also the introduction to this volume.
5. The poem has been cited by Heraclitus (*Homeric Allegories* 5.2, first century AD) as an allegory for war, but nothing in the fragment we possess refers to war. It could be that there was a sequel to the fragment that dealt with war, but this is mere conjecture.
6. See Clay (1986).
7. For metaphor as riddle see Aristotle’s *Rhetorica* 1405b4-5 (and 1458a26).
8. I owe this interpretation to André Lardinois. It goes counter to the common opinion (e.g. Van Groningen 1966: *ad loc.*) that considers the helmsman to represent the aristocrats. The problems with this opinion are that the aristocrats are already represented by the ‘noble men’ who accompany the speaker on board ship and that is implausible that one helmsman would represent a group of aristocrats.
9. See *Odyssey* 3.286-90; 4.514-8; 9.79-81; 19.186-7.
10. For the meadow of love see Anacreon 417 and Archilochus’ *Cologne Epode* (the motif is discussed in detail in Motte (1971: 38-48 and 208-213), Calame (1999: 165-74)). For the *locus amoenus* see Ibucus 286, Sappho 2 and Theognis 1249-52 (discussed in Heirman [forthcoming]). For the motif in general see Schönbeck (1962) and Hass (1998).
11. The fragment continues for another ten lines, but these scattered remains are hardly legible.
12. See Boedeker (1994: 54-60).
13. Cf. Sappho 94, with the discussion in Greene (1994: 44-50).
14. Cf. e.g. Serrao (1968: 43-51) and Rosenmeyer (2003: 173-177). Some scholars (e.g. Campbell 1988: *ad loc.*) believe that the speaker addresses a boy in line 3 and that the address to Herotime in line 13 marks the beginning of a new poem. This belief has been rejected because the noun in line 3 does not necessarily refer to a boy. In epic poetry (e.g. *Iliad* 1.20 and 443; 3.175) and archaic lyric poetry (e.g. Anacreon 348.2, of Artemis; Sappho 132.1, of

Cleïs) the noun refers to a girl, and the only other time the noun is combined with the epithet ‘lovely-faced’ is in reference to a girl (Philoxenus 8, of Galatea).

15. Most scholars, e.g. Serrao (1968: 43) and Calame (1999: 165) believe that lines 8-9 are about horses ranging free, conveying a sense of promiscuity. However, this does not explain the tethering of the horse.
16. The image of the whore seems to contradict the statement at the beginning of the fragment that the girl has a timid heart. Two suggestions have been put forward to solve this problem: one holds that the fragment presents a sequence of events in the life of Herotime in which she changes from timid girl to public whore (Serrao 1968: 43-51; Rosenmeyer 2003: 173-177), and the other that two girls, a timid girl (tentatively called Smerdeis, a girl mentioned in Anacreon 366) and a whore (Gentili 1958: 181 and 193-194), are set in opposition to each other. The former is unlikely in light of the use of present tenses at the beginning and end of the fragment, and the latter because there is no clear indication of an addressee shift. In my view, the contradiction can only be solved if we consider the beginning ironic in light of what follows and the end hyperbolic.
17. For the performative turn cf. Budelmann (2009: 15); for performance of ancient Greek lyric see especially Gentili (1988); Herington (1985); Stehle (1997).
18. Sappho’s poetry was probably performed in a female variant of the predominantly male symposium: see e.g. Stigers (1981) and Stehle (1997: 262-318). The latter refutes the hypothesis of Lardinois (1994) and (1996) that Sappho’s erotic poetry was performed for a larger audience than that of her circle.
19. The symposium in ancient Greece has been amply discussed (on the basis of ancient Greek lyric poetry and vase paintings); among the most important contributions are the papers collected in Vetta (1983) and in Murray (1990).
20. For the symposium as a micro-universe see, for instance, Murray (1990) (introduction) and Pellizer (1990).
21. Slater (1976) and Davies (1978), on the other hand, interpret the image in terms of an escape of the sympotic group from everyday life.
22. On the vase paintings see especially Lissarrague (1987: 104-118).
23. Lesky (1947: 188-214) suggested that the danger of the sea reflects the poets’ fear that they or their relatives would suffer misfortune at sea because many of them were islanders (e.g., Archilochus of Paros, Semonides of Amorgos, Alcaeus of Lesbos). However, lyric poems do not necessarily or directly render the poet’s own emotions or thoughts. Moreover, his hypothesis is undermined by the remarkable progress in technological innovations in shipping in archaic Greece, as faster and safer ships were produced which enabled Greeks to sail across the Mediterranean Sea and build up commercial contacts with East and West (Morris 2000: 259).



# Producing Utopian Space

## Brazil in Henrik Stangerup's *Vejen til Lagoa Santa* (*The Road to Lagoa Santa*, 1981)

Henk van der Liet

The interplay between scientific approaches to the world – especially prospecting, mapping and measuring the world – in order to unravel its structural and spatial principles, has deep roots in Danish literary history. For obvious reasons geographical and other themes related to spatiality (expedition reports, exoticism, science fiction, etc.) received new impulses in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when they were fuelled by new scientific methods, paradigms and technological progress. There even exists an intimate relationship between the acceptance of scientific positivism as a quintessential methodology and technological development on the one hand, and the emergence of modern literature in Scandinavia, on the other (Rossel 1992: 263). An early example of this interdependency is the multi-volume novel *Lykke-Per* (1898-1904, English: *Lucky Peter*), by the Nobel Prize laureate Henrik Pontoppidan (1857-1943).<sup>1</sup> In this novel, engineering, designing and modeling space are crucial issues for the protagonist, who as a matter of fact is trained as a professional surveyor. In general terms, scientific approaches and models, various concepts of representing knowledge, encyclopedic literary traditions and the (re-)deployment and probing of (quasi)scientific forms of discourse recur frequently in twentieth century Danish fiction. Thus, science and scientific approaches that question the relationship between textual representation, space and time are by no means limited to modernist or post-modern literature only.

In this chapter I would like to draw attention to one particular work in the oeuvre of the Danish author and filmmaker Henrik Stangerup (1937-1998), i.e. to his chef d'oeuvre *Vejen til Lagoa Santa* (English: *The Road to Lagoa Santa*), which was first published in 1981 and translated into English in 1984. *The Road to Lagoa Santa* deals with a subject that relates directly to some of the issues relevant in the context of this volume: 1. How space can be represented in novelistic discourse. 2. How the delicate interdependency between space and time is reflected in fiction. 3. The critical dialogue in which literature engages with earlier nineteenth century scientific forms of discourse on time and space.

### Back in Time ...

*The Road to Lagoa Santa* is above all a historical novel, and therefore has time as its *sine qua non*. The book's narrative itself is situated in the nineteenth century and does not directly deal with the author's own time, nor for that matter with places he might be expected to be intimately acquainted with, as much of the story takes place in Brazil.

Stangerup's protagonist is the natural historian and scientist Peter Wilhelm Lund (1801–1888), a Dane who lived for most of his life in Brazil.<sup>2</sup> In the middle of a brilliant international academic career, Lund unexpectedly disappeared from public life and settled down in an insignificant village in the Brazilian *outback*. There he spent the second half of his life, without ever returning to Europe – or his native country Denmark. According to the novel Lund became a rather enigmatic and mysterious figure. Stangerup's literary remodeling of Lund's life story has most certainly made it more dramatic and mysterious than it possibly could have been in real life. And, not surprisingly, Stangerup's interpretation has been criticized and nuanced by recent scholarship, especially within the field of history of science (Holten, Sterll, 2010: 12). However, *The Road to Lagoa Santa* is a work of art and not a scholarly biography, and Henrik Stangerup, the literary artist, reconstructs and interprets Lund's life in order to build a suggestive literary narrative on his particular version of the reasons why Lund's career suddenly came to a halt. Was it a conscious choice to live the rest of his days far away from his homeland? And what made him decide to withdraw from public life in the middle of a brilliant academic career? Is there a link between Lund's story, the narrator's ideological presuppositions and our own days?

*The Road to Lagoa Santa* proposes answers to these questions, on the one hand on the basis of publicly available historical and biographical source material, and on the other hand answers originating from the author's own imagination, ideas and idiosyncrasies. So, although *The Road to Lagoa Santa* is based on the author's digesting of quite substantial amounts of historical source material, the text itself does not engage with the past for its own sake; the past rather serves as a vehicle to draw attention to certain aspects of the present. In other words, the historical material mirrors the present, offering the author a way to address contemporary moral and political issues, and a way to criticize developments in his own time – albeit mediated through fiction. In the case of Henrik Stangerup, the contemporary issues he is most interested in are philosophical and cultural-politic questions concerning contemporary European culture and society. Stangerup is a passionate (and notoriously polemic) critic of the post-war Scandinavian welfare state ideology, i.e. the so-called 'Scandinavian model', which was widely discussed in Scandinavia and abroad.<sup>3</sup> This explains why for example Stangerup's essays often criticize, debunk or simply make fun of ideas and opinions that run counter to his own liberal – and sometimes even libertarian – ideology. In the case of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, Stangerup's criticism primarily has a more fundamental philosophical bearing, as he implicitly criticizes Western intellectualism and lack of zest for life.

Thematically speaking one might say that the novel's motifs are a mixture of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and the contemporary German author Daniel Kehlmann's novel *Die Vermessung der Welt* (2005) (English translation: *Measuring the World*, 2006). *The Road to Lagoa Santa* is about a nineteenth century European scientist from the intellectual circles around the Von Humboldt-brothers, who sets out to map and describe the world (Kehlmann-theme), and becomes fascinated, or maybe even engulfed, by an alien, tropical world, for better and for worse (Conrad-theme).

From a literary point of view a number of aspects of Stangerup's novel are highly interesting. Apart from the way the author deals with his sources and remodels them into a

novelistic discourse, it is also fascinating to study how he uses certain temporal and spatial techniques. Especially because these techniques are not only deployed literally to bridge the gap between the past and the present, but also to ‘implode’ the text’s spatial dimensions by charging space with ideological, often conflicting, meaning and content. Before taking a closer look at these textual features, a summary of the novel’s plot structure and narrative will be given in the following section.

## Text and vignettes

*The Road to Lagoa Santa* structurally consists of three parts, each separated by a full-page charcoal drawing, which offers a sketchy impression of some kind of landscape. These drawings function as vignettes, i.e. they can be seen as visual resting points in the textual and narrative structure and, as it turns out, they do not merely signal temporal and narrative transitions, but they also mark transitions between the topographies and spaces described in the text itself. In other words, these drawings are references to the structural composition of the novel, and to the backdrop of the narrative, i.e., the landscapes and places the textual reality relates to. Technically speaking these graphic representations can be understood as references to (or loans from) the early days of cinema, especially from the era of the silent movie.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the ‘vignettes’ play multiple roles, preluding and referring to spatial and temporal transition and transgression, while they also establish visual manifestations of these narrative ‘points of passage’.

The three sections that *The Road to Lagoa Santa* consists of are quite different in size. Section 1, is only 12 pages long, section 2 counts 142 pages, whereas the last section comprises 104 pages.<sup>5</sup> If we take a look at how the narrative is organized, it becomes apparent that the sequential order of the sections is not following the chronology of the events described in the text. As a matter of fact, the short first section should have been in the middle, if the text would have been organized chronologically. Stangerup has employed this constructive principle a number of times in his oeuvre, and I suppose it is a remainder of the author’s cinematic background, just as the vignettes just mentioned.<sup>6</sup> Wilfried Hauke has pointed out that Stangerup often starts his novels by offering the reader the novel’s climax, or its most crucial scene at the very beginning of the book. He describes this technique as follows: ‘*The Road to Lagoa Santa* starts with the culmination of a crisis – a method which puts the reader form the very beginning in a privileged position of foresight’ (Hauke 1987: 120-134). I understand this method primarily as a narrative strategy to first overwhelm and then involve the reader actively, while Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht probably would describe this technique as a mode to produce intensity and ‘presence’, or at least a way to introduce a set of ‘deictic gestures’ in the text, to reach the same effect: enhancing the reader’s engagement (Gumbrecht 2004: 95).

After offering his readers the crucial scene in the opening section, which starts *in medias res*, Henrik Stangerup then uses the second section to tell what happened earlier, before the climax in the beginning, explaining the events that lead to this turning point. Finally, the last section of the novel covers the time after the climax.

Obviously the beginning of the novel, especially the first section, is worth extra attention. In this section we meet the main character Peter Wilhelm Lund, who has been on a scientific expedition to the Brazilian inland, to collect artifacts, i.e. mainly archaeological material (especially fossils, samples of plants and animals) related to his project. The prime objective of this scientific enterprise is to develop better and more refined theories on the natural history of life and the geomorphology of the earth. He records, measures and systemizes the natural world. But at the beginning of the story, i.e. in the year 1845, Lund is about to return to Europe after years of fieldwork and hardship. Together with his companion, the Norwegian artist and libertine P.A. Brandt (1792-1862), he is about to pack his instruments and the collected material to take them with him to Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Lund and Brandt had been based for some time in the Brazilian village of Lagoa Santa, and in the opening scene Lund pays a farewell visit to one of the caves which he has studied meticulously over the years. In the text something dramatic happens during this final visit, which in effect causes the foundations of Lund's entire scientific world-view to crumble and fall apart, and as a consequence the preparations for his return to Europe stop immediately. In this particular cave, where Lund has previously collected numerous important archaeological objects, he seems to experience a kind of epiphany. Clearly the scene depicts a crucial event, and what happens is described in terms of a thunderstorm or an earthquake, but the reader is left in the dark about the exact nature of what happens in the cave:

Dr. Lund is not afraid. He convinces himself that it is a violent unseasonable thunderstorm. But when the sounds continue, while the candles begin to flicker, although there is no hint of wind, he thinks of an earthquake and rises. He can barely rise, and when erect at last, his body is so stiff that even the slightest movement is painful. (...) The candles do not flicker anymore. Everything is as it was an hour ago, except for the ache in his body, from the back of his neck to the tips of his toes. His insides have tightened into knots and only by summoning up all his energy does he manage to place one foot in front of the other and wrest himself from the hypnotic power of the shadow. He arrives at the passage leading upwards to the outside. He howls in pain and his howl echoes everywhere. (...) He is breathing freely again, and yet it feels as though everything in him has slackened, as if his body is disintegrating within. (1981: 22-23)<sup>8</sup>

Stangerup interprets what happens here to Lund as a fundamental, even ‘existential’ experience, which causes him to view life from a radically different and unexpected perspective.

## The Hand of God

The epiphany has a deep impact on Lund’s personal views, as well as major consequences for the principles of his scientific work. In both fields the prominent position of religion, especially of the religion of his youth and early adulthood, loses much of its authority. The

God of his youth and early adulthood, who until then had guided him through life and had been the touchstone of his academic work too, is suddenly no longer able to help Lund in understanding himself, or the world around him. The entire opening section revolves around the fact that Lund experiences this fundamental crisis as a human being and a scientist. In this particular cave, which during earlier visits had offered him a glimpse of God's creative genius, he now physically feels his world disintegrate. The experience even leads to Lund's partial blindness and temporary paralysation. For the pains Lund feels seem not to be caused by something outside of him, but primarily by an 'internal' intellectual collision of conflicting ideas, ideologies and worldviews.

One of these ideologies is Lund's personal religious conviction, which on the one hand is based on traditional Christian mythology, and on the other hand is scientifically supported by the – still – authoritative theories of scientists such as Georges Cuvier and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (Rudwick 2005). The other, contesting, modern worldview is a consequence of contemporary positivist scholarship, notably epitomized by Darwin's hypotheses about natural selection and evolution, as well as the work of critical philosophers and theologians like Søren Kierkegaard, Ludwig Feuerbach and others. These new theoretical approaches undermine the existing theories of people like Von Humboldt, Cuvier, Lamarck and Lund himself, and render them, in Lund's opinion, obsolete. In the cave scene, the sudden insight in the consequences of Darwin's theories, threatens to crush Lund completely – mentally as well as physically. Therefor Lund feels that, from then on, he is no longer a member of the worldwide community of scientific pioneers. He now sees himself as a relic from the past, someone who is rendered *almodisch*, while modern, progressive, 'heretical' especially Darwinian evolutionist theories, seem to emerge as the victorious paradigms of the future.

Precisely this clash of scientific paradigms literally pulls the ground from underneath Lund's feet, and – in *The Road to Lagoa Santa* – ultimately leads to his withdrawal from science and turns out to be the (alleged) reason why he never returns to Europe again. Instead of continuing his scientific studies and surveys of the natural world, his career comes to a standstill after the epiphany in the cave (the 'disaster' as he calls it).<sup>9</sup> From that moment on he adopts a simple, uncomplicated lifestyle and lives more or less anonymously among the locals in the village of Lagoa Santa in the Brazilian district of Minas Gerais till the end of his days.

Lund is radically changed after the opening tableau of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*. In a way his former personality dies and a new Lund is born. The intellectual and systematic scientist is transformed into a grumpy old man, who is more engaged in the small things in everyday life than in restlessly searching God's master plan of creation. Lund has become skeptical of religion, but above all he has lost his faith in science. He is no longer convinced of the viability of the Hegelian hypothesis he previously endorsed, namely that humanity eventually will reach an ideal state of existence where all controversies are overcome and paradise will be realized on earth. For Lund Hegel's teleological understanding of human history is unmasked as a false presumption. And with the introduction of Darwinian theory, the world, according to Lund, becomes a mere 'evolutionary blood-

bath' (1981: 263), a merciless world where only the strongest and the most powerful species and individuals stand a chance of survival. The narrator summarizes Lund's understanding of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), in the following derogatory way:

a work which may give rise to all sorts of mischief, which perceives struggle and destruction where the Creator's order and harmony ought to prevail, which can unleash a new morality excusing all evil, postulating that the weak exist in order to be crushed by the strong. (1859: 251)

In the novel's third section Lund gradually accepts life as it comes: one day at a time. Although he himself suffers from all kind of physical defects and illnesses, this does not prevent him from becoming more and more involved in the lives of the local inhabitants, especially the children of Lagoa Santa. Instead of doing research – which mainly consists of collecting archaeological objects, especially bones of dead animals – his interests now change direction and intensity. In a sense he becomes increasingly interested in life as it is, *hic et nunc*: nature with its abundant tropical richness of shapes, scents and colors, as well as the people around him in Lagoa Santa. Instead of studying nature he no longer understands it as his duty to unravel its secrets, in order to increase human knowledge and – as a consequence – pave the way for the Hegelian notion of progress. From now on, he seems to be satisfied with nature as it is. After the cave-crisis Lund simply becomes part of nature, while the dynamic notion of progress is replaced by its opposite: stasis.

## From Chronology to Chronotope

But what about space in *The Road to Lagoa Santa*? In the first place Stangerup's narrative is characterized by a set of clear spatial divisions. Apart from the three narrative sections, each separated by vignettes, and each representing different temporal stages, we can discern three spaces in the narrator's overall literary discourse. The first two are European: 1) the cold Scandinavian North and 2) the more comfortable climate of the Mediterranean. The third space is South American, primarily Brazil. These three topographical spaces are each invested with a number of contrasting cultural connotations and differences, thus charging the novel's spaces with ideological and cultural content.

In most of Stangerup's writings the main characters are restless individuals, often exiled or caught between cultures. Europe, including Denmark, is perceived as a world lacking lust for life, a cold, scientific space – an intellectual *Abendland*. In *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, it is represented as an essentially unattractive continent with a climate that is bad for Lund's health. At the same time, Europe also represents science, art, high culture, well established political institutions and a stable arena for public debate: 'the energetic, progressive Europe of science, museums, academies, colleges, journals, libraries, and dissertations.' (1981: 63) At the opposite end, South America, especially Brazil, represents an attractive, colorful realm full of vitality and authentic emotions, but with poorly developed political and cultural institutions: 'Dr. Lund simply cannot take Brazil seriously as a culture of its own. No proud traditions, no history worth mentioning. No great poets, not a single composer or philosopher of any distinction.' (1981: 93) At the same time, Stan-

gerup highlights the festive aspects of Catholicism and the sensuality and Dionysian power it entails. He sees the latter clearly demonstrated in e.g. South-American carnival traditions, with their Samba dance and music.<sup>10</sup>

In Stangerup's oeuvre as a whole, Europe and Brazil appear as two absolute cultural and ideological opposite spaces. Brazilian culture not merely denotes an enormous diversity of religions, but it also stands for a more 'humane' balance between the head and the body, between the world of ideas and that of carnal pleasures. Stangerup's Europe, and notably Northern-Europe, essentially represents a world of the past. In general terms Europe is a dystopia while Brazil represents the exact opposite, a utopia, which is determined by positive human values. But Stangerup's Brazil is not simply a romantic rose garden, it is also a conflict-zone – a sphere in which the sublime and the uncanny meet and interact. In Stangerup's Brazil, conflict becomes productive and opens new perspectives, whereas cultural conflicts and dichotomies in Northern-European seem to be negated or suppressed.<sup>11</sup>

Secondly, space plays a crucial role in Stangerup's novel in what may be called the chronotopic modes of expression the narrator employs. He fuses, intersects and intensifies space and time in *The Road to Lagoa Santa* in ways that bring Mikhail Bakhtin's key notion of chronotope to mind. In the latter's seminal essay 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', Bakhtin refers to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and emphasizes that time and space are interrelated fundamental categories that precede cognition, or in Kant's words:<sup>12</sup> 'Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions. We can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think of it as empty of objects' (Kant 1971: 38) and 'Time is not an empirical concept that has been derived from any experience. For neither coexistence nor succession would ever come within our perception, if the representation of time were not presupposed as underlying them *a priori*' (Kant 1971: 46-47).<sup>13</sup>

Bakhtin uses the word chronotope not merely to describe the *concrete experience of readers* when they feel that time and space in some cases become so deeply intertwined and interdependent that they no longer can be separated from each other. He also uses the term to describe this temporal and spatial interrelatedness from a structural and even a generic point of view.<sup>14</sup> Looking at *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, we see that the opening scene, the story's climax and turning point, happens in a cave. Just like corridors, cellars, thresholds, doors, staircases, streets, squares, etc., dr. Lund's cave is a chronotope in the Bakhtinian sense of the word. After Lund's epiphany in the cave, chronology is interrupted and time even comes to a halt and – as I will maintain here – turns into space.<sup>15</sup>

Bakhtin emphasizes a number of times the fundamental representational and mimetic power of chronotopes, as in the following – frequently quoted – passage:

Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins (...) And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers – the time of human life, of historical time – that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas. (Bakhtin 1981: 250)

This is precisely what happens in *The Road to Lagoa Santa*. Narrative events, the chronological flow of narrated time, is reorganized and turns into a *textual structure* that produces spatial experiences – or maybe even better – ‘spatial modes’, rather than temporal ones.

Let us now return to the beginning of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, which, as pointed out earlier, does not coincide with the beginning of the narrative, but rather with a stage in the middle, the climax of the narrative as a whole. Initially the reader is unaware of this organizational principle, but later the crucial opening scene is reiterated (three times in total) to emphasize its importance within the narrative structure (1981: 140, 172). At every reiteration of the opening scene, two concrete circumstances dominate the description: 1) the fact that time for Dr. Lund has come to a halt, and 2) that this is accompanied – or brought about – by the constant, immobilizing and numbing downpour of tropical rain showers.

The rains prevent Lund and others to do what they normally do; they keep people from moving around, and all possible forms of agency and communication are brought to a halt. This temporary ‘immobility’ is also a narrative signal, making the reader aware of the fact that the narrative’s temporality is now taking on a different shape, or is transformed into another ‘substance’. Temporality is, in other words, turned into spatiality. Moreover, the rains are also thematically associated with Lund’s childhood in Copenhagen, and thus also activate memories related to the places (and spaces) of his youth (1981: 14-15). Again, time is oriented backwards, instead of forward. In any event, there is also a fundamental difference between the way the tropical rains in Brazil are depicted and the Danish rains of Lund’s youth. The first are an immobilizing curse while the latter are remembered as a blessing:

(A)nd again he hears, as when he had first come to Rio de Janeiro, the sound of leaves falling from the treetops after the ants had cut them off, a muted whispering sound like snow falling, like the still rain over Lake Furesø on a late June evening. (1981: 180)

How this complex metamorphosis of turning time into space works in the novel itself, can clearly be discerned when we look more closely at the opening lines of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*. The importance of opening lines for the way a narrative is engendered and perceived goes without saying (Said 1985). In this particular case, though, the initial lines even produce a twofold effect: it enhances the *spatial* effects of the text at the expense of its *temporality*. The very first sentence of *The Road to Lagoa Santa* reads:

‘The time of the cave expeditions is nearly at an end’ (1981: 13).

The opening words directly refer to ‘time’ and to something spatial, i.e. ‘the cave’, but these lines also indicates that temporality, or part of it, is about to come to an end, or a standstill. In the second sentence of the novel, the spatial dimensions are more concretized and fixed to a real topographic locality ‘Lagoa Santa’, which is then semantically charged with emotional meaning, by juxtaposing ‘Lagoa Santa’ with the word ‘home’. It is interesting to note, that this reference does not appear in the English translation, which uses

the phrase ‘modest little house’, instead.<sup>16</sup> Although the English translation is not really wrong, it nevertheless misses the crucial point that the notion of ‘home’ or being ‘at home’ is essential for a comprehensive understanding of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*. The notion of home paradoxically emphasizes that Lund is a *stranger* in Lagoa Santa and remains a stranger all his life, notwithstanding the fact that he spends most of his days in Brazil.<sup>17</sup> He stays an alien in Brazil, while at the same time he becomes increasingly estranged from his home country, Denmark, and from European culture too. This circumstance, which the opening scene merely indicates, becomes an underlying issue for Lund’s existence in the novel: the question of what ‘home’ really means. Where does Lund really belong? Throughout *The Road to Lagoa Santa* the spatial notion of ‘home’ becomes charged with semantic and emotive content, which the reader has to deal with.

## Worlds Apart

The importance of the cultural dichotomy Brazil-Europe is also foregrounded at the very beginning of *The Road to Lagoa Santa*: ‘He (=Lund) is looking forward to returning to Europe soon, to cultivated society, to paved streets, sidewalks, restaurants, libraries, cheerful smiles, alert eyes, serious newspapers, bright schoolchildren, tradesmen’ (1981: 13). Although it later becomes evident that the first section of the novel contains its narrative climax, the opening paragraphs initially seem to point in the exact opposite direction: instead of a culmination, a chain of events seems about to come to an end. Time is, in a way, about to stop and lose its meaning, while – at the same time – the significance of ‘place’ and ‘space’ increases. The dynamics of movement (travel) are turned into stationary idleness – stasis.

The balance between the two central Kantian *a priori* entities shifts in the beginning of the text, but the gross total, nevertheless, stays the same – like communicating vessels in science class. This fundamental interdependency – and mix up – of temporal and spatial categories is expressed a number of times in *The Road to Lagoa Santa* itself, as in: ‘Nothing indicates that he exists in the present (...). Up is down, the past is the present, and the present is a remote future’ (1981: 46).

Thus, Brazil becomes one big chronotope, where time loses meaning, where history is unimportant, and the world, so to speak, is in a constant flux of birth, rebirth, decay and death. Hence also the fact that Lund feels that he is ‘not merely rested but, morning after morning, reborn’ (1981: 100). Increasingly the word ‘Brazil’ becomes a metonymy for a state of mind, and thus ‘Brazil’ becomes more or less detached from the country with the same name – and develops into an existential and ideological notion, rather than a tangible topographic reality.

In Stangerup’s discourse, and in particular in *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, dichotomies play a crucial role in organizing and enhancing narrative and textual meaning. The most obvious dichotomy is the abovementioned spatial-temporal one, which is linked to the opposition between Europe and South-America. The latter is defined as an absolute opposition: in Brazil ‘(n)othing (...) is as it is in Europe’ (1981: 46). Each of the two poles has its own

meaning and attractions, but none of them really gets the upper hand. Throughout *The Road to Lagoa Santa* Lund is tossed between them, and one might say that he thereby ends up in a constant state of exile; he is nowhere at home, and always a stranger. And when Lund leaves Europe for Brazil in the winter of 1832, his feelings for his home country become increasingly positive, the further away he gets (1981: 91).

By the end of his life Lund had become more Brazilian and less European. In his will he decides that his death should be a festive ‘Brazilian’ carnival occasion, and no solemn ‘European’ affair. Precisely as Dr. Lund has proscribed it in his will, the people of Lagoa Santa party for three days and nights in a row upon his funeral. And when during the last day of the festivities they run out of paper for the production of firecrackers, the locals use the scientific works that Lund has studied so intensely. No harm done, for these previously monumental scholarly works have become obsolete now anyway, since modernity has found a wide range of new scientific hypotheses – with Darwin as this development’s quintessential figure – which change both the scientific world and mankind’s self-awareness:

For three days and nights they dance and drink, and there are no mishaps. Lagoa Santa resounds throughout Minas Gerais. On the last day, the venda proprietor runs out of fireworks and has no more paper to make new ones. But Nero and his wife (...) come to his aid, and after nightfall fireworks again explode over the lake. Blainville’s *Ostéographie* bursts into a spluttering shimmering sun. Two thick volumes of von Humboldt’s *Kosmos* float down in a purple shower (...) swiftly followed by Buckland’s *Reliquiae Diluviae*, while Baron Georges Léopold Crétien Frédéric Dagobert Cuvier’s *Discours* is a dud which drowns among the rushes. Schouw’s *Plantgeografi med Atlas* soars so high into the sky that it disappears with the howl of a stuck pig. Milne-Edwards, de Candolle, Rudolphi, Owen, Biot and Ampère, Rèamur, Linneaus, Fabricius, Forchhammer, Charles-Lucien Bonaparte, and H. C. Oersted all are transformed into a shower of stardust which bids farewell to the Doctor out of the dark tropical sky. (1981: 284)

## **Under the Skin**

Stangerup’s characters are not merely historical figures. They are also vehicles in an attempt to coalesce time and space. In *The Road to Lagoa Santa* this ‘bridging effect’ is enhanced by numerous shifts in modality; suddenly the story may change from past tense to present tense, and back again. The narrator also uses different syntactic devices, for example abrupt variations between very long sentences and short ones, in order to either speed up events or to create a certain kind of anxiety on behalf of the reader. These strategies blur the temporal discrepancy between Lund’s nineteenth century and the reader’s own time, but also entice the recipients into adopting spatial attitudes and values that are fundamentally different from their own. Ultimately these narrative techniques help concretizing the story Stangerup wants to get across, and turn it into something tangible and spatial, instead of something abstract and temporal.

In *The Road to Lagoa Santa* Henrik Stangerup undertakes a precise literary analysis of a scientific attitude and worldview, in which space and time are the prerequisites for the *literary* text. Stangerup chooses exclusively to focus on space, instead of time. A radical choice, because the text generically speaking is a historical novel. By doing so, Stangerup not only aims at bridging the gap between the past and the present, but also wants to ‘produce space’ – or rather ‘presence’ – as Gumbrecht would call it. Therefore it does not come as a surprise that the author himself in various interviews and biographical retrospectives has described how Brazil and Dr. Lund literally got under his skin while he was writing *The Road to Lagoa Santa* (Hauke 1987: 123). Nor is it surprising that *The Road to Lagoa Santa* has survived the ravages of time and is still one of the most acclaimed works in Danish twentieth century literature.<sup>18</sup>

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## Notes

1. Pontoppidan received the Nobel Prize in 1917, together with another Danish author, Karl Gjellerup (1857-1919).
2. As a matter of fact, P.W. Lund was the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's nephew. I would like to thank my students Rozemarijn Vervoort and Michal van Selm for their vivid interest and intelligent input during our discussions about Stangerup, space and Kierkegaard, during the winter semester 2011-12.
3. See for a discussion of the 'Scandinavian model' Hilson (2008).
4. This graphic, in my opinion quasi-cinematographic, effect is even more prominent in the German translation of the novel, where the original (modern) charcoal drawings are replaced by (black and white) reproductions of P.A. Brandt's nineteenth century aquarelles. Unfortunately the – otherwise fine – English translation by Barbara Bluestone, lacks the important paratextual graphic elements, at least in the edition referred to here.
5. Section 1: 13-25, section 2: 31-174, section 3: 179-284.
6. See for biographical presentations of Stangerup's oeuvre: van der Liet (2001: 295-306), and, in English, Schou (1999: 415-421).
7. The presence of Brandt is motivated by the fact that he makes drawings of the archaeological sites and produces scientific drawings and charts of the material. He is in many ways Lund's Jack-of-all-trades, acting as his messenger boy, cook, butler and – when necessary – even as his physician.
8. All English quotations from Stangerup's novel are taken from Barbara Bluestone's translation: Henrik Stangerup, *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, 1997.
9. The religious association that comes with the notion of epiphany is further enhanced by the way Stangerup describes the caves in which the overwhelming experience takes place and in which a number of references to temples and church buildings play a prominent role. Cf. *The Road to Lagoa Santa*: 118-119.
10. Stangerup has written a number of essays about carnival, for example Stangerup (1973), and with two friends even published a documentary book on the topic: Stangerup et al. (1982). In *The Road to Lagoa Santa* there is a relevant reference to Carnival too: see (1981: 66). Erik Böttzauw is also the artist who created the landscape vignettes between the three sections of the novel.
11. An indication of the thematic importance of Brazil in Stangerup's works can be derived from the fact that Brazil (and the Caribbean) has its own thematic section in *Tværtimod! Levned og meninger 1956-98*, a comprehensive collection of his essays and journalism. Cf. Stangerup (2003: 209-244).
12. See for a philosophical introduction to this field the first chapter of Lefebvre (2011: 1-67).
13. These citations originate from the e-text version of the 1929 Norman Kemp Smith translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*: <http://staffweb.hkbu.edu.hk/ppp/cpr/toc.html>.
14. A point I will not pursue any further in this essay.

15. Instead of using chronotope as a key concept to analyze space in *The Road to Lagoa Santa*, we might also use Foucaultian notions as ‘liminal space’ or *heterotopia* to describe the cave-scene or even Henrik Stangerup’s novelistic Brazil as a whole. In this essay though, I will – for lack of space – limit myself to the concept of the chronotope.
16. The Danish original reads ‘hjemme i det lille, beskedne hus’ (which literally means: ‘at home in the modest little house’).
17. It is hardly accidental that the novel’s title refers to the dynamic chronotope of the ‘road’. Cf. Bakhtin (1981: 243-245).
18. In a newspaper competition, in order to choose the ‘best’ Danish twentieth century book, *Vejen til Lagoa Santa*, ranked twenty-sixth in the overall score. Noteworthy too is the fact that only two more recently published novels are listed ahead of Stangerup’s work. Cf.: *Politiken*, 1999. Information retrieved from: <http://www.litteraturpriser.dk/polaarh.htm>.



PART 3

**ECOCRITICISM AND SPACE**



# Imagined space/Lived space, Alienation/Destruction, Singularity/Specificity

## Testing Three Oppositions to find out what (Lived) Space means<sup>1</sup>

**Isabel Hoving**

The woods were unmoved, like a mask ... they looked with  
their air of hidden knowledge... mysterious stillness watching me...

Joseph Conrad

Once upon a time  
there were trees on Parade

.....  
Jerusalem Thorn crown me  
Almond nurture me  
Guango shade me  
Olive Senior

The trees are close around us. They are watching us. Their still, mysterious watching may indicate the colonial anguish around the beginning of the twentieth century, as in Joseph Conrad's imagination of an inimical African otherness that is watching the guilty European intruders. The trope of trees as eye-witness to human history, to its horrendous events and momentous changes, is central to the common imagination of trees as the patient witnesses of human transience.

However, the second motto, by the Jamaican-Canadian poet Olive Senior (1941), acknowledges another interaction between human beings and trees: there seems to be an arrangement of a much more practical nature between the two. The trees crown, nurture and shade the narrator.

I want to take the difference between these two imaginations of trees as my starting point for a discussion about the social relevance of the debate into which I inscribe myself here: the academic debates on space. The relation to social concerns has been central to these debates from their beginnings in the second half of the twentieth century in cultural geography, anthropology, and philosophy; they often had a definite *critical* dimension. A few decades before the spatial turn, time, not space, was still considered to be the central point of any critical approach, as Henry Lefebvre has it: 'In the wake of this fetishization of

space in the service of the state [as analyzed in the Hegelian tradition, IH], philosophy and practical activity were bound to seek a restoration of time' (21), and Marx, Bergson, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and the Deleuze of *l'Anti-Oedipe* are part of that tradition (1991:22).

In an interview published in Simon During's *Cultural Studies Reader* Michel Foucault remembers the extent to which time was understood as the sole object worthy of study:

I recall having been invited, in 1966, by a group of architects to do a study of space (...) at the end of the study someone spoke up – a Sartrean psychologist – who firebombed me, saying that *space* is reactionary and capitalist, but *history* and *becoming* are revolutionary. This absurd discourse was not at all unusual at the time. Today everyone would be convulsed with laughter at such a pronouncement, but not then. (Foucault quoted in During 1993: 140)

New theories of space contested the dominant focus on time and history, and again in the name of a cultural and social critique. Postcolonial theory, for example, insisted on the anticolonial potential of a focus on space. Caribbean and/or postcolonial scholars suggested space as the preferred, or sole remaining discourse available to colonized peoples whose histories were erased (Benitez-Rojo, Brathwaite, Glissant, Harris). This focus on space came with the dismissal of Eurocentric views of glorious genealogies as the foundation of a superior identity, and of Eurocentric historiography as the triumph of the white imperial self (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 34). Not *all* spatial approaches were seen as critical, though. The postcolonial interest in lived, practiced space emerged from the critique of the colonial view that colonial spaces were uninhabited, uncultured, and therefore available for appropriation and restructuring.<sup>2</sup> For space is never 'just there' – is never neutral and mappable. It is here that we find the critical potential of spatial theory.

To fully understand this critical potential, it is helpful to consider the difference between the concepts of real, imagined, and lived space. Tim Cresswell's introduction offers a good overview, with a focus on the critical dimension in the theorizing of space. Let us begin by tracing his narrative on the differentiation between (what others called) real and imagined space. In the 1970s, he argues, humanist geographers articulated a critique of scientific approaches of space as an abstract, empty location (real space). They began to develop the notion of *place* to theorize the emotional significance places have for people (Cresswell 2004: 18-24). Cresswell shows how a good decade later, critical geographers – influenced by cultural studies – questioned the essentialism and exclusionary nature of many of these notions of place; the significance of a place is not the same for all its inhabitants; people of different classes, ethnicities, ages, etc. will experience it in different ways, that may often be at odds with the dominant representation of that place (for example, a nationalist, ethnocentric representation of a nation as the natural dwelling place of people of a certain race and ethnic identity only). Places were now theorized as 'socially constructed ... these constructions are founded on acts of exclusion' (Cresswell 2004: 26). The critical aspect of this constructivist approach lies in the insight that what has been constructed can also be changed; an essentialist, exclusionary, naturalized construction of place can be demystified, and turned into an inclusionary place (Cresswell 2004: 26-30).

The next step in this discussion on how theories of space can contribute to understanding the politics of space, and help to realize an emancipatory act of demystification, is the redefinition of the concept of *lived space*. While this concept is already discussed in the introduction to this book, I now want to situate it explicitly within the context of the contemporary efforts to develop a truly critical approach to place and space. In the wake of Cresswell, I identify the critical potential of the concept of *lived space* in the approach to space proposed by urban theorist Henry Lefebvre and political geographer Edward Soja (who prefers the term *thirdspace* to indicate a comparable concept) to revise the restricting dualisms of the earlier anti-positivist theories of space discussed above, that only opposed real and imagined, objective and subjective space, as Tim Cresswell explains (2004: 38; Lefebvre 1991: 39). ‘Thirdspace is practiced and lived rather than simply being material (conceived) or mental (perceived) ... Thinking of place as performed and practiced can help us think of place in radically open and non-essentialised ways where place is constantly struggled over and reimagined in practical ways’ (Cresswell 2004: 38-39). Lived space, then, with its emphasis on everyday conflicts over ownership and meaning, allows for an even more radical anti-essentialism than the earlier concept of imagined space did, and as such it may counter any essentialist, homogenizing exclusionary understanding of the cultural meaning of places.

Postcolonial ecocriticism pushes this reflection a bit further. Though the concept of lived space is not often explicitly used in ecocritical debates, we could say that the radical, ecocritical understanding of lived space is the starting point for a whole new series of socially committed inquiries. One of the reasons why ecocriticism is such a booming field lies in the fact that it promises an approach that is both academically and socially relevant; it might even contribute, according to some, to the struggle against global environmental destruction. Postcolonial ecocriticism therefore brings up questions such as the following: If space is always lived, that is, shaped by the discourses and practices of the people and institutions that inhabit it, even when a colonial eye would deny that active presence, should we then not also take into account the agency of the animals and plants that shape that environment? Could an open eye for their agency lead to a critique not only of older forms of imperialist exploitation, but also of the present-day destructive processes of globalisation, that jeopardize both the natural environment and the communities that depend on it?

In this paper, I want to use the lens of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism to explore the question how the concept of lived space retains its critical force. A Marxist-inspired tradition would seek its critical potential in its capacity to reveal the specific agents and interests at work in the conflicting processes that dominant, conservative discourse would describe as universal, inevitable, and natural. Is this indeed the way in which postcolonial theory and ecocriticism – two of the most explicitly socially and politically committed fields of inquiry the academy has on offer, nowadays – use the critical potential of the concept of lived space? I will seek an answer through a discussion of the way in which different poems and novels evoke spaces that are shaped by human, animal, and plant life.

## Olive Senior: Agency, Destruction

I will begin by presenting the case of Olive Senior's ironic poetry, which interweaves political issues with reflections on life's violence.<sup>3</sup> It can be read as an extensive exercise in the evocation of *lived space*. Senior's references to nature function as a means to convey and explore the concrete specificity of a space; not an essential authenticity, but a specificity that is understood as intensely historical and interactive. Her spaces are marked by violence, poverty, and exploitation. But there is not just one human source of that violence.

Plants are deceptive. (...)

.....  
 (...) from the way they breed (excuse me!)  
 and twine, from their exhibitionist  
 and rather prolific nature, we must infer  
 a sinister not to say imperialistic  
 grand design. (1994: 63)

Senior's natural images identify the violence of the colonial and postcolonial Caribbean as bound up with its very environment. 'Gardening in the Tropics, you never know/what you'll turn up. Quite often, bones' (1994: 85). These may be the bones of the 'desaparecidos', political activists and dissidents who were killed by a dictatorial regime, or they may be the remains of a young man who just got lost in inimical territory. 'I buried him again so he can carry on/growing' (1994: 85). Senior speaks about the potential of growth and expansion offered by death – as death mediates the return to nature's materiality. But Senior does not see that promise as certain: a gardener can expect to suddenly dig up human bones of those killed in political violence in her garden, but will then have to *act* to let those dead bones lead to growth. Here we discern a non-transcendental, local response to post- or neo-colonial violence: it is pragmatical, and oriented towards the future. In this sense, we can describe her evocation of postcolonial, corrupted environment by the felicitous term proposed by anthropologist Timothy Ingold: as *taskspace*. The taskspace, which could be seen as a specific instance of lived space, is a space that has to be unsentimentally and continuously laboured to counter the external and internal violence that threatens to destroy it.

Senior's specific understanding of lived space counters metropolitan understandings of globalisation by presenting the *local* effects of globalisation, it highlights conflicts (such as those between those who were murdered for political reasons, and their murderers) and identifies specific agents within the field of neocolonial/ postcolonial violence, but these are not its only critical effects. Her work also highlights a tension between those who see alienation as the main issue in ecocritical approaches to place, and those who focus on destruction and poverty as the main issues to address. Metropolitan ecocriticism has been traditionally concerned with the wish to heal 'humankind's alienation from the natural world' (Buell 1992:8). Its challenge seems to lie in the re-imagination of the world as interconnected, as a network in which humans, animals and plants are all engaged. But what is the productivity of this dominant focus? The concept of alienation implies that

there would be a real, authentic world to reconnect to, a world that would be unmediatedly accessible. Poststructuralist thinkers have already problematized this assumption for decades.<sup>4</sup> I might add that a Marxist intervention would suggest that alienation itself is not the problem to address, but rather the political causes of the gaps and chasms. This is Senior's position too. Her work, focusing on the specificity and destruction of place, seems not only to dismiss alienation as a relevant concern, but also to problematize the recent theories of globalisation, that subscribe to the Deleuzian emphasis on the dynamics of globalisation, as if this dynamics would be an autonomous process (instead of being caused by specific agents).

The Deleuzian theories that are evoked in a postcolonial and/or Caribbean context do not necessarily oppose Senior's specific approach to lived space, but they do represent another approach to space that I can best describe with the help of Peter Hallward's differentiation between an understanding of the world as specific, and as singular space. Hallward explains this distinction in his much-debated study *Absolutely Postcolonial*. He departs from the observation that, since Edward Said's work in the late 1970s, postcolonial studies have always been concerned with specificity. In Said's wake, postcolonial scholars generally hold that they want to foreground the *specificity* of non-metropolitan voices (in an emancipatory act that wants to defend diversity against appropriating universalizing gestures), and the *specificity* of the cultural, economic and political agents that work to erase that diversity. Hallward's innovative argument is that, in spite of its explicit aim, the work of these postcolonial scholars is in fact often accomplishing an opposite goal: it focuses on developing *generalizing* vistas of the dynamics of globalization, that would not be energized and shaped by any *specific* external agents, but that would be independent and self-supporting. In Hallward unusual terms, he holds that these postcolonial scholars therefore evoke a *singular* process of becoming.<sup>5</sup>

Hallward argues that some of the later work of Caribbean scholars such as Edouard Glissant (and we could add Antonio Benitez-Rojo) shows this emphasis. In as far as Deleuze's work inspires their work, it is often more interested in the question how the body, or a culture or community, *acts and connects* to its surroundings (as a machine, in Relation), than how it *experiences* it. In this sense, these Caribbean scholars are equally concerned with lived space as Senior. However, their work risks understanding lived space *primarily* as non-specific, as shaped by a 'singular' global dynamics, and as such it positions itself differently on the axis between specificity and singularity.

Thus, Senior's poetry shows that (relatively) dominant spatial approaches (such as the ecocritical approach that is inspired by the need to overcome alienation from nature, or the 'singular' theories of globalisation) are not necessarily critical in the specific sense of the term I proposed above: they do little to analyse the specific agencies and conflicts that shape global and local spaces.

Senior's work occupies an illuminating position in relation to the tensions between specific and singular approaches, between the approaches organized around the notion of alienation, and those around the notion of destruction, and between lived space and imagined space. We have discussed the first two tensions. The centrality of the trope of the

watching trees in metropolitan writing is a good starting point to elaborate the third tension (lived space/imagined space), that I have only begun to sketch in my introduction.

In literary texts such as the poems and prose quoted above, it is seldom suggested that the watching, redeeming gaze of the trees would be enough to effectuate a healing return to nature. Some writers, such as Joseph Conrad, question the possibility of a reconnection, not in the least because they situate the trope of the watching trees within the context of an exploration of the painful chasms and divisions brought about by historical violence: the unbearable gap between traumatic past and present, the anxiety-provoking chasm between colonial Europe and those that it has exploited, murdered, and declared utterly other. For this reason, it would be silly to suggest that this writing would not be socially relevant. Nevertheless, these political and social issues are here evoked as issues of guilt and alienation, which then become a problem of *visuality*: the frustrated or satisfied desire to be *watched* (and understood, or redeemed) by transcendent, superhuman beings. This desire to be *seen*, or the anxiety of being seen, is oddly one-sided, even when it is understood as the desire for contact; the context of guilt and anxiety seems to preclude any follow up that includes reciprocal interaction. It begs the question to what extent the trope of the watching trees engages with the critical potential of the concept of *lived* space that is at the heart of both the postcolonial and the ecocritical project, and that implies interaction. On a positive note, we could point at the fact that this writing perceives trees as the living representatives of a non-human universe, that watch human life from their untranslatable perspective, from their own world in which we, doomed humans, are only visitors; the trope seem to acknowledge nature's agency. But at second sight, the trope of the watching trees is not concerned with the evocation of a *lived* space in which living organisms interact. Rather, they evoke an *imagined* space, through the theme of visuality. They respond to the desire to be *seen* – not to the environmentalist desire to engage into a more complex, sustained interaction with this meaningful, lived environment. For this reason, the trope can be said to evoke perceived space (or imagined space, Soja), rather than lived space. However, as I have already argued, from a sociological point of view the problems of guilt and alienation that lie behind the trope of the watching trees are not primarily problems of the imagination; the problems concern complex social conflicts, and they cannot just be solved through a different *imagination* of, say, the relation between human self and space. Here, then, the evocation of imagined space might lack the critical potential (in the sense of effectuating a demystifying identification of agencies that would free a space for change) that an evocation of lived space could have.<sup>6</sup>

In metropolitan literatures that address the darker sides of globalisation in this manner, the theme of alienation looms large. As a consequence, this writing is often shot through with the more general desire to touch base again with material reality, the real, or, in Lacanian terms, the Real. From a poststructuralist perspective this desire is problematic. In a 2001 essay, Slavoj Žižek explains that the psychoanalytical concept of the Real brings out the futility of this socially motivated desire for the real; the Real is not some stable, material ground that offers a firm foundation, but it should rather be seen as that what threatens our sense of self – the Real is the point where the Symbolic fails. The term indicates the horrifying moments of collapse of our social order, and our identity. In this sense, the Real

highlights the irreparable gap between us and the world.<sup>7</sup> I will contribute to this discussion by analysing the way in which poets and writers – champions of the imagination – grapple with the paradoxical endeavour to heal alienation and return to the real by means of the imagination. Though the project to return to the real might seem doomed, its significance lies less in its relative success, than in its capacity to foreground the conflicting desires that motivate the wish to return to the real.

In this discussion of the way in which literature might respond to the desire to heal alienation, I want to bring together two of the three tensions central to this essay: alienation/destruction; imagined space/lived space. My main concern is to find out to what extent a literary work that desires to return to the real evokes a sense of space as perceived/imagined – in that case, I would expect the evocation of a coherent, homogeneous space, an emphasis on visuality as the dominant way of knowing, and perhaps the sense of control and mastery that comes with it – or as lived – and in that case, I would expect an emphasis on interactivity and a multiply sensual engagement with space, and a sense of a heterogeneous, dynamic, interactive environment. This discussion will shed light on two of the three pairs of concepts that are the topic of this essay (alienation/destruction, imagined space/lived space), and that will finally allow me to explain the critical function of *some* of the possible literary evocations of space.

In the next section, then, I will discuss two literary texts, written on the margins of the metropolis, that are organized around the desire to return to the real, and that both contain a critique of visuality. Both help us to grasp the critical potential of certain representations of space.

## Cándani and Malouf: Is Death the Cure for Alienation?

The poetic novella by Surinamese-Dutch poet Cándani, *Huis van as* (*House of Ashes*), 2002, addresses the psychological and sensual disorientation of both those who emigrated from Surinam, and those who stayed. In this sense, the novel is very much concerned with the postcolonial exploration of (diasporic, transnational) space. The novel's naive narrator, a Hindustani Surinamese girl who returns for a visit to Surinam from the Netherlands, discovers that her own late father conceived a son with her adored bosom friend, Señorita, when she was only thirteen years old. It is suggested that the bosom friend was her father's illegitimate daughter – which makes him both the father and the grandfather of his illegitimate son.

Cándani's naive, lonely heroine's intense need for reconnection makes her see the world as organized around the binary opposition of closeness/isolation only, so that adultery and incest become meaningless words. For her, the bosom friend who was impregnated by her father, embodies the bliss of connectedness, rather than the horrifying transgression of incest that is an effect of the havoc wreaked by colonial exploitation. This view is mirrored in the seductiveness of the Surinamese landscape that is presented as a sensual, but corrupted space that does not acknowledge any boundaries and therefore invites continuous (sexual) transgressions. The destitute women who live here mirror each other's suffering. They are trapped in a lush, visual, imaginary universe. But it is only in the eyes of

the lonely, returning daughter that this imaginary space appears as the space where the desire for a reunion can be fulfilled.

There are other ways to read this imagination of Surinamese space. The celebration of Surinamese nature can also be read as the narrative of joyful *expansion*, in the Deleuzian-Glissantian sense (Glissant 1990: 53). From this perspective, the incest-survivor appears as a sensual organism that actively connects to a sensual network of plant, animal, and human life, which could be understood as the place of becoming itself. Rather than understanding the endless game of mirroring and doubling as a play within the imaginary order, it is possible to see the game as an effort to *pluralize* the body, through its endless active engagements. Ultimately, it is the incest-survivor's *actions* that will save her, not an alternative imagination. She engages in the effort of transforming herself in different ways: not just by sensual relations to others; at a decisive moment, she decides to go out and seek an education.<sup>8</sup> Her pragmatism productively disturbs the mesmerizing evocation of the landscape as a coherent *imagined* space. She represents a strong critique of this particular imagined space, which is structured by the device of mirroring, and therefore by visuality: it functions as imaginary confinement, and as an obstacle to action, to life.

Though this materialist reading brings out the story's celebration of vitality and survival, while emphasising the multiplicity of one's sensual interaction with the environment (and not merely one's visual relation), I do not want to argue that the story is an exemplary celebration of Lefebvre's lived space. Cândani's narrative represents a phenomenological evocation of lived space, not the social and political concept coined by Lefebvre. Besides, the story has its darker undertones that invite a psychoanalytical reading. The only characters that fully succeed in realising a return to nature, for example, are dead – a bitterly ironic resolution of the problem of alienation. Thus, the novella suggests that the desire for the real, that animated the anguished protagonist, is not merely the desire for reconnection, but the desire to return to matter, and as such – as Freud proposed – it would be bound up with the death wish. The novel, then, foregrounds both the problems that are associated with the effort to reconnect with one's native space as perceived/imagined space alone, and the difficulties of evoking *lived* space as the site of reconnection.

A comparable critique of the visual imagination as the privileged space to heal alienation can be found in David Malouf's wonderful novel about Ovid's last years in exile, *An Imaginary Life* (1978). While at first Ovid deplores his exclusion from not so much the city itself, but rather his language, his meeting with an inarticulate wild boy brings him to be guided ever farther away from the symbolic order, into the imaginary and even beyond.

Many of the essays that are devoted to the novel offer a psychoanalytical approach, and rightly so. For the wild boy is clearly Ovid's imagined double. The first paragraphs of the novel tell about his first acquaintance with the wild boy:

When I first saw the child I cannot say. I see myself – I might be three or four years old – playing under the olives at the edge of our farm, just within call of the goatherd, and I am talking to the child, whether for the first time or not I cannot tell at this distance. (...) Bees shift amongst the herbs. The air glitters.

It must be late summer. There are windblown poppies in the grass. A black he-goat is up on his hind legs reaching for vineshoots.

The child is there. I am three or four years old. It is late summer. It is spring. I am six. I am eight. The child is always the same age. We speak to one another, but in a tongue of our own devising. My brother, who is a year older, does not see him, even when he moves close between us.

He is a wild boy.

If the wilderness is the other to civilisation, the wild child is the psychic other to the civilized self, signifying the imaginary to the self that has entered the symbolic order. Ovid's interest in the child ultimately leads to his reconciliation with his exile, as it leads him to acknowledge the transformative potential of the imaginary. He learns the value of silence, as the language in which he can fully communicate with the wild child, and the nature around him. Slowly, happily, healed, he leaves language behind, and enters the space of the real – and his death.

What interests me here, is the manner in which the wild child mediates Ovid's relation to space. Different readings of the novel's representation of space offer themselves. Some critics see here an analysis of the postcolonial condition (and therefore as the evocation of a postcolonial space). Bill Ashcroft, for example, argues that a post-colonial consciousness 'accepts the boundless mystery of the marginal, the mystery of becoming', whereas colonialism fixes 'that continual possibility which represents loss or unformed being' (54). In the same vein, Suzie O'Brien opposes imperialist discourse to the '*wilderness of dialogical possibilities* which is the *space* for postcolonial enunciation' (O'Brien 1990: 91; quoted in Randall 2006: 19, my emphasis). For Gareth Griffiths, too, the sense of linguistic dislocation in the novel makes it a postcolonial text (62). He, for one, opposes a reading that would understand this thematic as universal (61). Just as Cândani, however, Malouf presents a sobering view of the boundless potential of this specific mysterious, dialogical space, as they both associate it with death.

As if responding to the postcolonial readings, Don Randall differentiates between two interpretations of the Child (2006). If we read the narrative as an account of identification and the gradual loss of identity, the Child can indeed be seen as representing the imaginary (2006: 25). There are, however, other reading and writing positions that might be better equipped to emphasize the productive irreducibility of otherness celebrated by so many postcolonial scholars. Instead of the postcolonialists' poststructuralist reading, Randall proposes a phenomenological approach, especially Levinas' ethics of the Other.<sup>9</sup> To emphasize his point, Randall states that Ovid 'is equally clear in his recognition that the Child is indisputably other than anything the poet's self contains and is also more than anything he could imagine' (2006: 26).

As in that earlier dream I am face to face with something that is not myself or of my own imagining, something that belongs to another order of being, and which I come out of the depths of myself to meet as at the surface of a glass (52, Randall 2006: 26)

In spite of the fact that Ovid also recognized the boy as the wild boy he played with as a child, and in spite of the references to the ‘face to face’-position and the glass surface where they meet (which suggest the realm of the imaginary order), Randall argues that the Child ‘surely manifests otherness, because he presents a reality that is not and can never be contained within the self’ (2006: 27). Thus, the Child would *not* stand for the imaginary other, the mirror self, but for an ungraspable otherness that resists appropriation.<sup>10</sup>

This alternative reading is supported by the novel’s ending, in which the visual imaginary as the means of overcoming alienation is both evoked and problematized. This happens when Ovid and the child leave the relative order of the village. It is only when he is very close to death, when the wild child guides him ever further into the wilderness, that Malouf’s Ovid experiences the richness of his natural environment to the full. This wild, intensely productive space, with which the feral child interacts happily, is a multiple agent in its own right, and as such it exceeds the notion of imagined space (and certainly that particular imagined space that is organized by the Imaginary, and that appears as the mirror other of alienated, civilized man). By its sheer materiality, it also exceeds the mythical, transforming space that was the subject of Ovid’s famous works. It appears as a phenomenologically lived space that is sensually experienced through sight, hearing, smell and taste; and though it is not the social space meant by Lefebvre, the novel’s emphasis on its interactivity does evoke a sense of lived space that has certain affinities with Lefebvre’s. Just as in Cândani’s novel, then, the potential of imagined space as the privileged site for the healing of alienation is seriously questioned, together with the redeeming force of the visual.

In the following section, I will turn to a novel in which the critique of visuality is articulated even more radically.

### **Marie Kessels: Imagined Space Is Lived Space, and Vice Versa**

In her novella *Ruw* (‘Rough’), 2009, the Dutch writer Marie Kessels also expresses the desire to return to the real, but she weds this desire with a strong critique of the visual. The story is told by a woman, who, having lost her sight in an accident, tries to regain her sense of space in new ways – through the use of hearing, touch and smell. Kessels’ work, of which the subtle cultural critique lies in its meticulous, sensual, idiosyncratic examinations of everyday life, that refute all facile understanding, can well be read as a convincing critique of dominant patterns of perception. No dominant, routine approach to the world can yield any real knowledge. This novel is an exploration of the most productive ways to relate to space when dominant strategies have fallen away. Because of its emphasis on the materiality of space, this novel also offers some insights that are at the heart of ecocriticism.

If we relate this novel to our discussion on the problematic concept of alienation, by reading the text – very much against the grain – as a comment on the relevance of the concept of alienation for a cultural critique, its response would be that the problem is not so much that an alien space should be made meaningful again, but that it should be made *liveable*

again. Meaning, Kessel's work suggests, is *opposed* to real understanding, as meaning is based on certain dominant discourses that blind as much as that they yield insight. What is more, visuality itself seems to be at odds with real understanding, as understanding can only come from painstaking sensual interactions. From such a critical perspective, the narrator has no option to gain the smug, triumphant mastery of one's surroundings that one finds in some mainstream imagined spaces.

A remarkable aspect of the text is its explicit refusal of the logic of the imaginary order (with its emphasis on visuality) as the most appropriate model to relate to the environment. This is, for example, made clear in relation to issues of friendship. The narrator may get very close to her friends, especially after a drink, but she will then remind herself sternly: she will allow herself the pleasure of this intimacy only '(u)ntil Narcissus was smack drowned in his mirror image' (2009: 186). Mirroring as a means of identification is severely dismissed. This intuition of the futility of mirroring is also valid for her interaction with space. Refusing the illusion of similarity, together with the illusion of omnipotence that comes with that,<sup>11</sup> she prefers to relate to the world's new appearance through her touch. Her hand, now the mediating organ, 'is not the mirror in which the world sees itself' (2009: 137). The world that emerges is a rough space, unfit for visual fantasies (2009: 204). It is not the Lacanian Real, however. Resisting the force of the mirror, and the imaginary order, the narrator accepts that one can only come to terms with lived space through the painstaking mediation of signs and symbols. Though her sense of space is thus clearly related to the symbolic order, there are two reasons that problematize a poststructuralist reading that would see Kessel's space as 'text'. First, the narrator deciphers the signs without the benefit of any leading frame for this interpretation. Reading her surroundings is as maddeningly difficult as her effort to learn braille. Space does not present itself to her as coherence, network, textile, or text, but as an incoherent, unconnected diversity of impressions. Second, the signs are intensely sensual. Their materiality undoes their identity as *merely* semiotic traces.

Kessel's narrative is therefore both a critique of any facile understanding of space as imagined, and an exploration of how the differences between imagined space, 'real' space, and lived space collapse, when the usual imaginary frames are no longer available. When space can no longer be imagined, one may try to map it anew; but this mapping is inevitably a full, physical and psychological confrontation with lived space, that is, an interactive, sensual space shaped by the practices and discourses of others. Mapping can only happen through *living* that lived space anew. Kessels defines space as simultaneously real, imagined, and lived, and she does so in a way that is exceptional – many literary texts will privilege one of these views of space, often imagined space.

My point is not so much that Kessels shows that space can be considered from all three perspectives, but that her novella embodies such a strong, convincing critique of the dominant desire to approach space as *primarily* imagined (through the visual). Thus, Kessels questions the gap between material reality and text: this alienating gap does only exist for the mainstream citizens whose experience of space has become an everyday routine.

## Conclusion

In what way do postcolonial criticism and ecocriticism help us understand the critical potential of the concept of lived space? Senior's work, which is inspired by a non-modern Creole understanding of life, shows that the metropolitan diagnosis of alienation as the main problem to address is hardly useful to those who are at the wrong, destructive end of globalisation. Marie Kessels, too, argues that alienation only comes with the uncritical adoption of mainstream discourses. Art and theory that evoke *lived* space, instead of, or alongside, imagined space, seem to steer free from the unproductive debate on alienation. The concept of lived space is concerned with action and connectedness, and not with identity and boundaries. Some of the promising senses of lived space, however (for example in phenomenology, or the ‘singular’ approaches discussed above), may be at odds with the much more political understanding of the term we can find in critical spatial theories such as that of Lefebvre. ‘Singular’ theories will not lead to any sharper insight in the specific agencies that are involved in the production of a certain space. I do not want to argue that art necessarily has to engage in such political practices – far from it. But if spatial theory partakes in a cultural critique, as its main practitioners argue, it is enlightening to ask *in what ways* it contributes to such a critique. In addition, we might want to specify the exact nature of the contribution to a cultural critique of writers and artists who make the evocation of space their main concern. A focus on destruction instead of alienation often characterizes explicitly politically committed novels and/or non-metropolitan novels, but not necessarily so, as Cândani’s non-metropolitan novel on alienation shows; a focus on specificity may be part of a postcolonial cultural critique, but may miss the planetary, environmental agencies that shape places too, and that are acknowledged by ‘singular’ theories; finally, however, a novel’s reliance on lived space instead of imagined space may reinforce the demystifying strategies of a cultural critique, but not necessarily so, as Hallward’s critique of the ‘singular’ models of lived space shows. The fact that socially committed writers position themselves differently on the axis between lived space and imagined space, alienation and destruction, and specificity and singularity, is already a good indication that there is more than *one* critical position. I hope that my exploration of some of the different possible positions may be useful for any further analysis of the cultural critique accomplished by literary evocations of place and space.

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## Notes

1. Some of my discussions of literary texts are based on longer versions in other publications. I have discussed Olive Senior’s work in my forthcoming book. Cândani’s novel is discussed in a chapter in *The Cross-Dressed Caribbean*, Ledent et al., forthcoming. Malouf’s novel was discussed in an unpublished paper, ASCA, 2006, and Kessel’s novel was analyzed in an unpublished paper presented in Bloomington, 2011.
2. See Mary Louise Pratt’s famous *Imperial Eyes*. Inge Boer’s work is an especially productive example of the postcolonial re-thinking of space.
3. Olive Senior was born in 1941 in Jamaica, and has been living in Toronto, Canada, since 1993. The Caribbean is nevertheless still central to her work (which includes fiction, poetry, non-fiction and children’s literature, and which has won numerous awards).
4. Whereas some phenomenological strands within ecocriticism do hold that a reconnection with the world is nevertheless possible, psychoanalysis questions this assumption for the reason that human subjectivity can only come into being by an irrevocable separation from the real (Grosz 1994: 116).
5. Though Hallward is primarily concerned with unveiling the contradiction between what postcolonial scholars *say* they do, and what they are actually *doing*, he is also highly critical of what he calls the ‘singular’ approach, which, in his eyes, lacks explanatory force. He develops this argument throughout his book, but a summary is presented in the Introduction.
6. One could also argue that imagined space can have a strong critical effect by evoking a cultural anxiety that invites a critical self-reflection; Conrad’s novella may be a good case in point. I would argue, however, that metropolitan literatures will often offer melancholy, nostalgic, or romantic imaginations of alienation and loss that will not necessarily invite a critical self-reflection, whereas non-metropolitan literatures will more often counter such imaginations to identify the actions, practices and conflicts that have made the world into what it

is. For a discussion of this assumption in the field of ecocriticism, and a critique of romantic (environmental) aesthetics, see Morton (2007).

7. Not all scholars subscribe to this theoretical approach, however. Phenomenology, for example, *does* assume continuity between us and the world, even if this relation is not necessarily simple and straightforward. In addition, in the context of Deleuzian theory, the notion of such an irreparable gap does not make sense. There is not enough space here to elaborate on the differences between these approaches, but they would lead to different understandings of the concepts of lived space and perceived/imagined space.
8. By virtue of her closeness to the lush landscape, one could read the narrator's bosom-friend as the embodiment of Surinam, which opens the possibility of an allegorical reading.
9. The focus on potentiality and becoming we find in many postcolonial interpretations could also be understood within another, non-phenomenological, Deleuzian approach.
10. Indeed, it is through Ovid's writings that most of us became acquainted with the myths of Narcissus and Echo. This does not mean that Malouf's story uses these myths (which evoke the Imaginary) to frame Ovid's last years. To the contrary; Malouf's story suggests that, to a certain extent, Ovid is finally moving outside the logic of the Imaginary (and the Symbolic).
11. In the period in an infant's life that Jacques Lacan describes as the mirror stage, the young child begins to identify itself with an external image (for example in the mirror), which then offers the fragmented self the pleasurable illusion of coherence and omnipotence.

## Nature's Helping Hand

### Cooperation between Builder and Nature as a Rhetorical Strategy in Vitruvius, Statius and Pliny the Younger

Bettina Reitz

#### **Introduction**

The achievements of engineers are one of the things which we today associate most readily with Roman civilisation. The building of roads and bridges, the construction of aqueducts, the digging of huge tunnels, clearance of mountain passes, construction of vast palaces – what could be more Roman? However, in antiquity no less than today, such massive engineering projects and alterations of the natural landscape were not only appreciated and admired, but also criticised and condemned. In this paper, I aim neither at an ecological assessment of the impact of Roman civilisation, nor a reconstruction of Roman environmental attitudes from contemporary literary sources.<sup>1</sup> Rather, I would like to consider how literary texts describe interventions in nature, and how these descriptions are designed to steer our evaluation of such projects.

In analysing ancient texts which evaluate manipulations of nature, we need to be aware that condemnation or approval of any instance of engineering or construction does not depend on the kind or scale of the activity itself. Rather, the kind of text and the context of the evaluation determine whether the positive or the negative sides of such an intervention are activated. Any engineering event can potentially be cast in a positive or a negative light. Roman authors need to negotiate this ambivalence inherent in the theme of intervention in nature. But what specific strategies do they employ in order to convince readers either of the virtues or the dangers of such activity? The strategies most widely used in Roman texts are to stress public usefulness on the one hand and private luxury on the other. For example, a text describing the building of a new aqueduct could make this project look like the hallmark of a good ruler by emphasising that the aqueduct was intended to supply the city with clean water. If, on the other hand, the description implied that the aqueduct was intended to supply the builder's own gardens with water, the construction appears an act of wanton luxury.<sup>2</sup> This paper deals with a less common rhetorical strategy, employed by authors for the purpose of suppressing the potentially immoral connotations of altering nature on a grand scale.

#### **The Rhetoric of War with Nature**

When Roman authors describe large-scale alterations of nature or the landscape, they often increase the drama and vividness of their descriptions by (more or less explicitly)

personifying nature, so that she can react to the act of alteration. In the majority of instances nature is portrayed as resisting the interventions. The builder therefore has to overcome this resistance through a struggle and coerce nature into submission.

This rhetoric of struggle and victory can be used both positively and negatively in the debate about the moral implications of engineering. Nature's unwillingness to cooperate can be one way of highlighting the transgressive and immoral nature of the enterprise.<sup>3</sup> However, more commonly, the rhetoric of fight and victory over nature can serve the purpose of those authors wanting to praise the achievement: emphasizing nature's resistance can add to the prestige of the victorious engineer, who celebrates a triumph over nature subdued.

One example of such a rhetorical use of the metaphors of war and victory is Domitian's triumphal victory over the river Volturnus in Statius' *Silvae* 4.3, a poem about the construction of the Via Domitiana.<sup>4</sup> In this poem, the river god Volturnus himself rises from the depths, and, leaning against the newly-built bridge, thanks the emperor Domitian for ordering and taming him and turning him into a clean and channeled stream (*Silvae* 4.3.72-84):

“Kind orderer of my plains, who bound me in the law of a straight channel  
when I spread over distant valleys nor knew to keep within my banks, see, now  
I, the turbulent bully, that in time past barely tolerated imperilled barks, I bear  
a bridge and am trampled by crossing feet. I that was wont to carry off land  
and whirl woods (ah shame!) begin to be a river. But I give you thanks and my  
servitude is worthwhile because I have yielded under *your* guidance at *your*  
command, and because you shall be read of as supreme ruler and conqueror of  
my bank.” (translation: Shackleton Bailey, adapted)<sup>5</sup>

The eventual acquiescence of the river has been achieved, as the martial metaphors show, only by a struggle in which man has triumphed over river. The river god speaks of himself in the language of a slave taken in war: the river is bound (*ligasti* 75), suffers servitude (*servitus* 80), while the builder is in command and gives orders (*te duce, te iubente* 81).<sup>6</sup> Of course, there is the question of whether to read this ‘straight’, as an exuberant praise poem for the emperor.<sup>7</sup> Some have rather interpreted the rhetoric of war and violence as working the other way, and suggested that the enslavement of the river, now trampled underfoot, is supposed to evoke the reader’s unease.<sup>8</sup> However we choose to read Statius’ provocative praise, it should be noted that this kind of martial language is a very common way of representing human involvement with nature.<sup>9</sup>

## Natural Cooperation

I would now like to consider a selection of passages which, exceptionally, show nature not as resisting (the ‘default’ situation) but as willingly cooperating with the builder. These cases are comparatively rare because this cooperative stance of nature lightens the work of the builder and therefore makes it appear less of an achievement. However, this

rhetoric of cooperation has the advantage of rendering the alteration of nature a morally less ambivalent process. In order to downplay the dangerous sides of construction, the author turns nature into a partner who cooperates with the enterprising builder. This strategy potentially lessens the achievement of the builder, but it also makes his work morally unexceptionable.

In this article I consider three instances of this strategy at work. I begin with Vitruvius, the first century BCE author of the *De Architectura*. One of the fundamental principles underlying his entire work is the cooperation between architect and nature, and I focus on one programmatic passage where this general principle is formulated. I then discuss two instances where the moral legitimacy of *specific* alterations of nature is at stake: firstly, the earliest of the villa poems in Statius' *Silvae*, and secondly, the elder Pliny's chapters on the use of marble.

## Vitruvius' *De Architectura* and the Ideal Architect

In the *De Architectura*, building is described as a natural process, which mirrors in its different aspects processes found in nature. An ideal of harmony between nature and the architect underlies Vitruvius' entire work.<sup>10</sup> In the preface to book 2, Vitruvius expresses the ideal of cooperation between architecture and nature by means of an introductory anecdote.<sup>11</sup> While Alexander the Great was engaged in holding court and dispensing justice, an architect, Dinocrates, dressed himself up in the clothes and attributes of Hercules, and approached the king. When asked what he wanted, he told the king (2 *praef.* 2):

He replied: “I am Dinocrates, a Macedonian architect, who brings you ideas and plans worthy of your distinction. For I have moulded Mount Athos into the shape of the statue of a man, in whose left hand I have shown the ramparts of a very extensive city, in his right a bowl to receive the water of all the rivers which are in that mountain, so that they will flow thence into the sea.” (translation: F. Granger, adapted)<sup>12</sup>

Alexander is pleased with this plan, but he does ask the architect whether the city designed in this way could easily be supplied with agricultural produce:

Alexander, delighted with this conception, at once inquired if there were fields round about which could furnish that city with a corn supply. When he found this could not be done, except by sea transport, he said: “I note, Dinocrates, the unusual formation of your plan, and am pleased with it, but I perceive that if anyone were to establish a colony in that place, his judgement would be blamed. For just as a child when born, if it lacks the nurse’s milk cannot be fed, nor led up the stairway of growing life, so a city without cornfields and their produce abounding within its ramparts, cannot grow, nor become populous without abundance of food, nor maintain its people without a supply. Therefore, just as I think your planning worthy of approval, so, in my judgment, the site is worthy of disapproval ...” (translation: F. Granger, adapted)<sup>13</sup>

Alexander himself then discovers a more suitable location for the foundation of a great city, equipped with a natural harbour and surrounded by fertile lands, and Dinocrates receives the commission of laying out a city in this spot: Alexandria (2 *praef.* 4).

I read this episode as a programmatic statement of Vitruvius' attitude to architecture in relation to nature. In Vitruvian thought, architecture ideally develops organically out of nature, respects natural conditions and works in harmony with them. In this anecdote, the architect Dinocrates does not initially take this fundamental 'philosophy of architecture' into account. It is significant that Alexander's reason for his refusal in the Vitruvian version of the story differs from other known versions. In the most extensive version of the anecdote apart from Vitruvius' own, Plutarch has Alexander refuse because Athos already bears witness to the arrogance of another ruler, the Persian king Xerxes.<sup>14</sup>

In Vitruvius' version, Alexander's refusal has nothing to do with his fear of hybristic or tyrannical behaviour. His refusal is also not motivated solely by economic motives. A larger ideal lies behind Alexander's desire to let human ingenuity be combined with natural suitability. Nature and architecture have to work together to achieve results (in this case, the megalopolis par excellence, Alexandria). Admittedly, there is a certain imbalance in this cooperative relationship. For the most part, the architect has to adapt to what nature provides. However, nature is also represented as taking an active part in the process: she has to support the foundation of the city by providing produce, just as the nurse, in Alexander's simile, has to feed the child to allow it to grow.<sup>15</sup>

Another difference between the Vitruvian version and the legend as it is told by Plutarch is also instructive. In Plutarch, the architect describes the site of Mount Athos as naturally suitable to such a project: the formation of the rock apparently already suggests the human form.<sup>16</sup> Tellingly, this detail does not feature in Vitruvius' account, where Dinocrates plans to shape Athos so himself, not adapt what already exists.<sup>17</sup> Vitruvius' point is precisely that the Athos-plan does *not* rely on the cooperation of nature, and is therefore inferior to the Alexandria-plan, where nature supports the foundation of a city and offers the architect fertile land and a natural harbour.

The programmatic statement exemplified by this anecdote is that the basis of (good) architecture has to be cooperation between man and nature. Architecture has to adapt to what nature offers, and proceed in accordance with her laws. Nature, on the other hand, often lends the architect a hand in achieving his designs – provided he accepts the offered hand. To bring home the point, the Dinocrates-episode is immediately followed by another, equally important, programmatic passage: Vitruvius' description of the development of culture, and especially architecture, from its earliest beginnings. Here, too, architecture develops harmoniously and organically, as humans respond to the provisions nature offers them.<sup>18</sup>

## **Statius' *Silvae* and the Villa of Miracles**

In the second example, the focus shifts from architecture adapting to nature, to architect and nature actively working together to achieve a complete result. Compared to the Vit-

ruvian example, nature's role here becomes more active. This example can be found in the first book of the *Silvae* of the Flavian poet Statius. This might surprise, since a Statian poem (*Silvae* 4.3) was used earlier to illustrate the 'default' situation of hostile nature successfully subdued by the engineer. However, when responding to diffent challenges, Statius can change his tune. In the poem we are about to consider, nature is cast as very cooperative indeed.<sup>19</sup>

In *Silvae* 1.3, he describes and praises the country villa of a friend, Manlius Vopiscus.<sup>20</sup> Famously, the moral legitimacy of luxurious Roman country retreats was fiercely contested by philosophers, moralists and writers in Rome.<sup>21</sup> A writer wanting to praise a luxurious country villa therefore found himself in a difficult position. He had to enter this debate, and address the moralist criticism voiced by other writers. For Statius, one such opponent in the debate is the poet Horace (65-8 BC), who wrote several odes condemning the luxurious villas of Roman nobles, criticizing them for their size, their disrespect of natural boundaries (for example between land and sea) and the use of expensive and unnecessary building materials.<sup>22</sup> Newlands has argued that Statius in his villa poems deliberately evokes Horace as a literary model, but answers the strictures against luxurious building in various ways.<sup>23</sup> For example, one of the most obvious of Statius' reactions to Horace is his bold assertion that a villa praised for its gilded beams (35) coloured marbles (36), and an art collection containing everything from bronze sculptures to ivory carving and gems (47-51), provides *luxu (...) carentes deliciae* (92-3) – "pleasure without luxury", while all of these features are named by Horace as synonymous with despicable luxury.<sup>24</sup>

What Newlands does not note is that not only Horace, but also Seneca, is a formidable literary opponent for Statius. The younger Seneca devoted several of his *Epistulae Morales* to the topic of suitable living and the dangers of the country villa, as well as railing against excesses of daring and luxurious architecture in general. Again, Statius specifically addresses the points which Seneca puts forward as his strongest arguments against luxury living. One example of this literary response: Seneca argues at length that the luxurious surroundings of his villa encouraged in a man called Vatia not the productive leisure of the philosopher (*otium*), but *inertia*, laziness (*Ep.* 55.3-5). It is no accident that Statius dwells extensively on the particular kind of *otium* and *quies* (quiet) enjoyed by Manlius Vopiscus and another friend, Pollius Felix (who features in *Silvae* 2.2), in their respective retreats and on the ways in which this state is a result of the architectural surroundings: *not* laziness, but precisely *otium* conducive to reflection and the writing of poetry.<sup>25</sup>

Among the different methods by which Statius counters Seneca and Horace to make a powerful case for the moral acceptability of building luxury villas,<sup>26</sup> there is one strategy of particular interest, designed to respond to both Seneca and Horace (among others): his use of the *topos* of cooperation between man and nature. Both Horace and Seneca stress that builders of luxurious dwellings interfere with natural boundaries (especially between water and land), and that artificiality and technology threaten to disrupt the 'natural state' of things. Horace, in the first of his so-called 'Roman Odes', depicts the building of a villa

into the sea as an illustration of sinful human desire for luxury, and stresses the shock it causes to the natural system, focalised through the fish who feel their natural habitat shrink.<sup>27</sup>

In *Silvae* 1.3, on the other hand, nature actively complements the activities of the architect through her own devices (*Silvae* 1.3.15-23):

How gentle the nature of the ground! What beauty in the blessed spot before art's handiwork! Nowhere has Nature indulged herself more lavishly. Tall woods brooded over rapid waters. A deceptive image answers the foliage and the reflection flows unchanging in the long stream. Anio himself (what wondrous allegiance!), full of rocks above and below, here rests his swollen rage and foamy din, as though loath to disturb the Pierian days and song-filled slumbers of tranquil Vopiscus. (Translation: Shackleton-Bailey, adapted)<sup>28</sup>

The builder has only to help nature complete what she has already begun. Nature herself has made the site of the villa a luxurious space, and the builder is following nature's lead in continuing in this luxurious vein.<sup>29</sup> In *Silvae* 4.3, as we saw above, the river Volturnus first had to be subdued and channelled by force, before he claimed now to flow more happily under human control (4.3.72-84). The river Anio does not offer Vopiscus an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to win the war against nature. In order to render the landscape suitable for Vopiscus' poetic slumbers, he quietens down of his own accord.

In the first line of this passage, the cooperation between nature and engineer is expressed most clearly. The ground has a gentle *ingenium* (15) – a clear personification, since *ingenium* is, in its most basic meaning, that with which man is born, and is only very rarely used of non-human agents.<sup>30</sup> The *ingenium* of the ground is then complemented by the *artes* (16) of the engineer. The classic combination of *ingenium* and *ars*, both of which the artist needs in order to create a great artefact, is a commonplace in ancient literature.<sup>31</sup> Statius separates the pair, and distributes the necessary qualities between nature and the engineer. Only if they cooperate can the villa be truly perfect.<sup>32</sup>

The harmony and happy co-existence of cultivation and nature goes to quite extraordinary lengths. It is encapsulated in the exquisitely humorous image of the Anio going for a night-time swim in the clean waters of the nearby aqueduct, the Aqua Marcia (70-74), thereby cleansing the estate's large-scale water-management (64-7) of its dangerous associations.<sup>33</sup> In lines 59-63, the poet describes that a tree has been preserved in the middle of the house (*mediis servata penatibus arbor*, 59), which passes through roofs and doorways to emerge into the open sky (*tecta per et postes liquidas emergis in auras*, 60). This house carries no suggestion of having been won from nature: the rhetoric of war and victory has here been replaced by that of harmonious and fruitful cooperation between architect and nature. One of the main arguments of the moralising critics, that the luxurious villa violates natural boundaries through unnatural excess, has been effectively disproved.<sup>34</sup>

## Pliny's *Natural History* and the Sustainability of Luxury

Pliny the Elder, the author of a huge *Natural History* in 37 books, describes nature as fundamentally beneficial to mankind.<sup>35</sup> Nature exists to help man and to provide generously for all his needs. However, whilst nature is designed in this beneficial way, man must, according to Pliny, not try to lay his hand on things which nature does *not* readily provide. Diving into the depth of the sea for pearls, or excavating the earth in mining for precious metals is to take from nature things which she has deliberately withheld from mankind, since they are harmful and corrupting.<sup>36</sup> Mining or pearl-diving are therefore sinful activities, driven by *luxuria*, and contrary to nature.<sup>37</sup> Pliny thus approves of the human use and deployment of all the resources nature readily provides, but not of major human interventions in the 'natural state', which are driven by human desire for more than an appropriate share.<sup>38</sup>

Keeping Pliny's general ideas about the relationship between man and nature in mind, let us now consider his treatment of one particular kind of intervention in nature, namely the quarrying (and subsequent use of) marble, discussed in book 36 of the *Natural History*. The book begins with a diatribe against the use of the luxury material 'marble' as such (36.1-5). Quarrying marble is called an *insania*, madness (36.1), and is condemned for disturbing the natural boundaries of nature (36.1-3):

Mountains, however, nature had made for herself to serve as a kind of framework for holding firmly together the innards of the earth ... we quarry these mountains and haul them away for mere pleasure ... We should each of us reflect ... when we see the masses of marble that are being conveyed or hauled, and think how much more happily many people live without them.  
(translation: Eichholz, adapted)<sup>39</sup>

This diatribe is followed by a long list of things that can be made from marble (and stone more generally): statues, then buildings all over the world, and finally, buildings in Rome. Some, but by no means *all* of these statues and buildings are described as luxurious and immoral. When Pliny turns to the city of Rome and its *miracula*, its miraculous features, he finds there, too, a combination of buildings he claims are praiseworthy (such as the Forum of Augustus or the Templum Pacis), and of luxurious abominations (especially the theatres of Scaurus and Curio).

The weakness in Pliny's logic is obvious. According to his own principles, any building made of marble should be condemned as immoral. But in the case of Rome, he can hardly avoid praising many of the additions to the cityscape, especially those by 'good' citizens or emperors. Unfortunately, the buildings he approves of tend to actually be decorated with exactly the same sorts of coloured marbles as those he criticizes.<sup>40</sup>

Pliny's main strategy for protecting *individual* buildings from the charge of luxury is the stress he puts on their usefulness (*utilitas*), the strategy referred to in the introduction. The clearest example of this is his concluding list of *vera aestimatione invicta miracula*, miracles unsurpassed in their genuine value (36.121). This list includes the most high-profile

engineering achievements of the Roman empire: the aqueducts, harbours, roads and channels which so convincingly demonstrate Roman supremacy over nature. Despite the huge intervention in nature that they represent, these achievements are clearly praiseworthy in the eyes of any Roman on account of their undisputable *utilitas*.<sup>41</sup>

Another strategy, which provides more *general* justification for the presence of (partly luxurious) marble architecture in Italy and Rome, is to suggest that these alterations of the natural state are in fact assisted by nature herself. In this way, Pliny can show that the activities comply with his own moral precept of taking from nature only what she provides of her own accord. At the very end of the long section on Roman architecture, Pliny returns very briefly to the quarrying of marble (36.125):

Among the many marvels of Italy itself is one for which the accomplished natural scientist Papirius Fabianus vouches, namely that marble actually grows in its quarries; and the quarrymen, moreover, assert that the sores on the mountain sides fill up of their own accord. If this is true, there is reason to hope that there will always be marble sufficient to satisfy luxury's demands. (translation: Eichholz)<sup>42</sup>

This passage picks up the introduction to book 36, where quarrying marble was still roundly condemned. At this stage, it is suggested that nature does, after all, provide marble of her own accord. The anatomical language applied to nature in 36.1 and there employed to stress the violation committed by man in quarrying marble (*telluris viscera*, the innards of the earth) is picked up and overwritten in this passage. In 36.1, quarrying was condemned for causing irreparable damage: here, the sores (*ulcera*) of the quarries turn out to heal of their own accord.<sup>43</sup> It remains important that the re-growth of marble only applies to Italy: it is called a marvel of Italy (*miraculum Italiae*), a natural *miraculum* to match and justify the many man-made *mirabilia* and *miracula* of Rome and Italy.<sup>44</sup> In Italy, at least, nature's cooperative stance provides some justification for the exploitation of marble. Quarrying marble might not be morally excellent, and it is inextricably connected with luxury, but the 'sustainability' (to use a modern term) of its exploitation renders it at least acceptable.

## Conclusion

The rhetoric of cooperation between man and nature is, as we have seen, employed in texts ranging from encomiastic poetry to technical and encyclopedic writing, in order to respond to specific challenges and protect large-scale interventions in nature from moral criticism.

On some counts, the rhetoric of Pliny, Statius or Vitruvius seems very modern – the idea of working with nature, not against it, has a distinctly green tinge to it, and it even seems as though Pliny was interested in something like the sustainability of natural resources. But the differences between ancient and modern rhetorics of environmental reassurance are in fact considerable. I conclude with a more general, though tentative, suggestion,

which builds on literary analysis for some (speculative) cultural historical remarks. Our modern-day evaluation of the acceptability of human intervention in nature tends to depend on the actual consequences of these actions. Our anxieties are focused around (actual) sustainability, potential dangers for us or future generations, and the harm and suffering created for other species. The rhetoric used for example by politicians or environmental organisations, and intended to convince us that some project is good or bad, reflects and addresses these anxieties. Roman environmental attitudes differ fundamentally from ours in that respect. Roman texts, too, reveal concerns about interfering with nature on a large scale, but often they are not related to actual dangers or consequences. The concerns activated or allayed by the rhetorical strategy I have focussed on are more abstract: they relate to a general idea that there is such a thing as a 'natural state' and natural boundaries, and that crossing them is a *moral* offence.<sup>45</sup> Where we worry about the consequences of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or the radioactive pollution in the Pacific, it was villas built too far out into the sea that caused 'environmentally-conscious' Romans sleepless nights.

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## Notes

1. Weeber (1990) and more recently Thommen provide basic and readable introductions to both of these questions, Thommen also offers extensive bibliographical help (2009: 149-76). Hughes's investigation (1994) is more detailed: he focuses specifically on environmental history, combining evidence from literary sources and modern scientific investigations, although his judgement of ancient interventions is heavily influenced by modern environmental problems. See also Fedeli (1990) for a predominantly literary perspective.
2. See e.g. Pliny's praise for the beneficial aqueduct building of the emperor Claudius (*Natural History* 36.121-3 and the praise of Frontinus in *De Aquis Urbis Romae*, especially section 16 on useful Roman aqueducts being superior to the (useless) Egyptian pyramids. An example of aqueduct construction (allegedly) for private luxury is the emperor Nero's construction of an extension of the Aqua Claudia, partly used to supply his huge new nymphaeum built into the podium of the unfinished temple of Divus Claudius in the gardens of the Domus Aurea (Scheithauer 2000: 120-1, see also Suetonius' *Life of Claudius* 45, *Life of Vespasian* 9). On frauds concerning the distribution of the new aqueduct's waters, see Frontinus' *De Aquis Urbis Romae* 76-7. On the combined functions of display and utility of aqueducts in the Roman empire, see Wilson (2008: 308-9) with further bibliography there.
3. For a pointed formulation of this attitude, cf. Tacitus' negative evaluation of the architects Severus and Celer in *Annals* 15.42: *quae natura denegavisset per artem temptare* (to attempt through art what nature had denied).
4. On this poem and the triumphal subjugation of the river, see e.g. Newlands (2002: 284-325), Smolenaars (2006). See also Kleiner (1991) on rivers, bridges and the triumph over nature in Rome more generally.
5. "*camporum bone conditor meorum, / qui me vallisibus aviis refusum / et ripas habitare nescientem / recti legibus alvei ligasti, / en nunc ille ego turbidus minaxque / vix passus dubias prius carinas, / iam pontem fero perviusque calcor! / qui terras rapere et rotare silvas / assueram, (pudet) amnis esse coepi. /sed grates ago servitusque tanti est, / quod sub te duce, te iubente, cessi, / quod tu maximus arbiter meaeque / victor perpetuus legere ripae.*"
6. This kind of martial language is also employed in *Silvae* 2.2 (esp. 52-59) and 3.1 (20: *obluctantia saxa* (struggling rocks), and 12-16). Newlands (2011) well analyses this aspect of 2.2,

see esp. 134-5. See also Pavlovskis (1973: 2-21). However, in 2.2, the language of war and servitude is combined with the language of natural cooperation; cf. e.g. 25-6: *mira quies pelagi. ponunt hic lassa furorem / aequora et insani spirant clementius austri.* (Wonderful is the calm of the sea; here the weary waters lay their rage aside and the wild south winds breathe more gently. Translation: Shackleton Bailey), clearly reminiscent of 1.3.20-3, on which see further below. The combination of subdued nature and cooperating nature is most clearly expressed in 2.2.53: *his favit Natura locis, hic victa colenti / cessit et ignotos docilis mansuevit in usus.* (Some spots Nature has favoured, in others she has been overcome and yielded to the developer, letting herself be taught new and gentler ways. Translation: Shackleton Bailey). Van Dam's claim that "whereas Seneca is nostalgic and idealizes the cooperation of man and nature, Statius rather regards nature as something savage to be tamed" (1984: 188) should be read with his nuancing remarks at 190. Schneider (1995: 98-101) presents too one-sided a picture of human domination in Statius.

7. For such a (generally) 'straight' reading see e.g. Coleman's detailed commentary (1988) on this poem (esp. 103-5). Note however her remarks *ad* 56-8, where Statius boldly uses the historical example of Xerxes at the Athos and Hellespont not to illustrate *hybris* but to express the magnitude of Domitian's achievement: "It is not clear whether St. was sceptical or not ..." (118).
8. For such a reading see Newlands (2002, ch. 4 with 306-7 specifically on Volturnus). Gale has shown that in Vergil's *Georgics*, too, the force of the war-metaphor is difficult to pin down, since the poet there makes a double use of the metaphor of farming as war: on the one hand, the farmer is at war with nature, but on the other hand, he also appears as a general who trains his land and plants to cooperate with him as an ally in his struggle (2000: 252-7).
9. See generally Weeber (1990: 155-6). A few specific examples: the conceptualisation of water management as war against the floods (Kleiner 1991, Purcell 1996: 199-209), agriculture represented as the farmer's war against nature, and mining as victory over nature (see Weeber 1990: 65-75, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* 33.73).
10. For example, in *De Architectura* 4.1.6-7 the Ionic and Doric orders are said to have been developed in imitation of the proportions of the male or female human body. In 10.1.4 the development of mechanical devices is also portrayed as arising from natural necessity and proceeding in an evolutionary fashion. Conversely, in 9.1.2, Vitruvius argues that rather than architecture mirroring and imitating nature, nature made and created the world according to the rules of architecture.
11. This anecdote also appears in a number of other sources: see Traina (1988: 311 with n. 21-4), McEwen (2003: 95-6). On the cultural implications of the anecdote in Rome, see Purcell (1987: 190-1).
12. "Dinocrates," inquit, "architectus Macedo qui ad te cogitationes et formas adfero dignas tuae claritati. Namque Athon montem formavi in statuae virilis figuram, cuius manu laeva designavi civitatis amplissimae moenia, dextera pateram, quae exciperet omnium fluminum, quae sunt in eo monte, aquam, ut inde in mare profundetur."
13. *Delectatus Alexander ratione formae statim quaesit, si essent agri circa, qui possint frumentaria ratione eam civitatem tueri. Cum invenisset non posse nisi transmarinis subvectiobibus: "Dinocrates," inquit, "adtendo egregiam formae compositionem et ea delector. Sed animadverto, si qui deduxerit eo loco coloniam, forte ut iudicium eius vituperetur. ut enim*

*natus infans sine nutricis lacte non potest ali neque ad vitae crescentis gradus perduci, sic civitas sine agris et eorum fructibus in moenibus affluentibus non potest crescere nec sine abundantia cibi frequentiam habere populumque sine copia tueri. itaque quemadmodum formationem puto probandam, sic iudico locum inprobandum ...*

14. Plutarch, *De fortuna Alexandri, Moralia* 335e: ‘έα δὲ κατὰ χώραν’ ἔφη ‘τὸν Ἀθω μένειν· ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἐνδός βασιλέως ἐνυβρίσαντος εἶναι μνημεῖον· ἐμὲ δ’ ὁ Καύκασος δεῖξει καὶ τὰ Ἡμοδὸν καὶ Τάναις καὶ τὸ Κάσπιον πέλαγος· αὖται τῶν ἐμῶν ἔργων εἰκόνες.’ (“But,” said he, “let Athos remain in its place. It is enough that it be the memorial of the arrogance of one king; but my imprint the Caucasus shall show and the Emodia range and the Tanaïs and the Caspian Sea; these will be the images of my deeds. Translation: Babbitt, adapted). The *hybris* of Xerxes that Plutarch mentions is related not only to Xerxes’ failed attempt to build a channel through the Isthmus of Mount Athos (see Herodotus 7.22-24) but also to the military defeat the Persian fleet suffered in this very spot in 492, and perhaps more generally to his eventual military defeat at the hands of the Greeks. For literary and architectural sources on Mount Athos in antiquity, see Hübner (1995). On this passage see also Traina (1988: 321), who also discusses the relevance of the *exemplum* of Xerxes for the entire anecdote (320-32). For a collection of commonplaces about Xerxes, see Mayor (1878: 127-8).
15. A further idea behind Alexander’s comparison may be that the child/city has a natural inclination to growth, passing through a number of stages (stairway). This inclination can however only be realised if the nurse/nature feed the child/city according to its needs.
16. Plutarch, *De fortuna Alexandri, Moralia* 335 d: ὁ γὰρ Θράκιος Ἀθως, ἦ μέγιστος αὐτοῦ καὶ περιφανέστατος ἔξανέστηκεν, ἔχων ἑαυτῷ σύμμετρα πλάτη καὶ ὑψη καὶ μέλη καὶ ἄρθρα καὶ διαστήματα μορφοειδῆ, δύναται κατεργασθεῖς καὶ σχηματισθεῖς εἰκὼν Ἀλεξάνδρου καλεῖσθαι καὶ εἶναι ... (For Mount Athos in Thrace, in that part where is its highest and most conspicuous summit, has well-proportioned surfaces and heights, limbs and joints and proportions that suggest the human form. When it has been properly carved and worked into shape, it can be called Alexander’s statue, and Alexander’s statue it will be ... Translation: Babbitt). This difference between the versions of Vitruvius and Plutarch is also noted by McEwen (2003: 100-1).
17. Vitruvius 2 *praef.* 2: *Athon montem formavi in statuae virilis figuram.* (I have shaped Athos into the shape of the statue of a man).
18. See Vitr. 2.1.1-7. On the philosophical background of Vitruvius’ story of civilisation, see Morel (2003).
19. On the combination of rhetoric of cooperation and of domination in *Silvae* 2.2, see above.
20. We know nothing about Manlius Vopiscus save what the poet tells us in the preface to book 1 (24-5): *vir eruditissimus et qui praecipue vindicat a situ litteras iam paene fugientes.* (a very learned gentleman and one who more than most others is rescuing our now almost vanishing literature from neglect. Translation: Shackleton-Bailey). On epigraphic evidence about two Vopisci (whose precise relation to the Vopiscus of the poem is uncertain) see Cancik (1978: 120-1). See also Newlands (2002: 127-8).
21. See Edwards (1993: 144 ff.), Beagon (1995: 75-9) and Schneider (1992: 105-10).
22. Newlands argues that the villa in Horace’s poetry can function as “a symbol of physical and moral excess” (2002: 130). See *Odes* 2.15, 2.16, 2.18, 3.1, 3.24. For more on Horatian mor-

- alising about architecture, see Nisbet and Hubbard (1977 on 2.15), Pearcy (1977), White-horne (1969).
23. Newlands (2002: 130): “Statius boldly throws down the gauntlet to the critics of luxury, particularly Horace.” Horace’s poetry is an unavoidable intertext for Statius’ poem. In his fourth book of *Odes*, Horace presents himself as a poet living in Tibur, just as Statius presents Vopiscus in *Silvae* 1.3. Furthermore, one of his main themes is the peaceful existence in the country (albeit not in a luxurious villa but on a ‘humble’ farm) and the moral alternative such a life offers to political participation and life in Rome. Since Statius wants to describe his patrons as leading just such a life in their sumptuous villas, Horace’s stern condemnation of large and luxurious country houses has somehow to be addressed. For Newlands’ analysis of *Silvae* 1.3 see Newlands (2002: chapter 4), with 127-38 especially on Statius’ response to Horatian strictures on luxury.
  24. Cf. e.g. *Odes* 2.18.1-4 (ivory, gold ceilings, coloured marbles) and *Epistulae* 1.10 (water from pipes). For an overview of texts dealing with sumptuous interior decoration, see Drerup.
  25. See esp. 1.3.22-3, 90-104 (*fecunda quies, virtus serena*, etc.) and 108-9 (*docta... otia*). On changing attitudes towards *otium* in the early empire see briefly Newlands (2002: 124, with n. 29 for bibliography). Especially in the case of *Silvae* 2.2, Statius’ poem also enters another debate, since it arguably presents an Epicurean response to (Senecan) Stoic criticism. For a thorough exploration of the Epicurean background of 2.2, see Van Dam (1984) 190-2, 208-10 specifically on *quies*), and 267-72. On *placidus* and *quies* in Statius see further Pitcher (1990: 91-4).
  26. For further analysis of Statius vindication of luxury, cf. Newlands (2002: 154-98) on *Silvae* 2.2.
  27. Horace, *Odes* 3.1.33-6: *contracta pisces aequora sentiunt / iactis in altum molibus; huc frequens / caementa demittit redemptor / cum famulis dominusque terrae / fastidiosus ...* (Fish feel the sea shrinking when massive piers are dropped into the deep. Here come crowding the contractor with his slaves throwing in the concrete, and the master bored with the land. Translation: West). Cf. also Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 89.21: *ubicumque in aliquem sinum litus curvabitur, vos protinus fundamenta iacietis nec contenti solo nisi quod manu feceritis, mare agetis introrsus* (...wherever the shore curves into some bay, you will immediately be laying foundations, and not content with land that you have made by hand, you will also bring the sea inside. Translation: Gummere, adapted).
  28. *ingenium quam mite solo, quae forma beatis / ante manus artemque locis! non largius usquam / indulxit Natura sibi. nemora alta citatis / incubuere vadis; fallax responsat imago / frondibus et longas eadem fugit umbra per undas. / ipse Anien (miranda fides!) infraque superque / saxeus, hic tumidam rabiem spumosaque ponit / murmura, ceu placidi veritus turbare Vopisci / Pieriosque dies et habentes carmina somnos.*
  29. Newlands (2002: 132): “The extravagance of the house is fully matched by the extravagance of nature’s own designs.”
  30. For the exceptional usage of *ingenium* of *res naturales*, see *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* 7(1).1534.84-1535.37. Wray (2007) argues for a special use and significance of *ingenium* in the *Silvae*. Newlands notes the use of *ingenium* here to express the nature’s creative power,

but not the combination with *ars* (2002: 139). Wray does comment on the combination, suggesting that the image of the ground should be read as a “poetological allegory” (2007: 140). Cf. *Silvae* 2.2.45, where the *ingenia* of the place and the builder combine to great effect (*pace* Schneider 1995: 99, cf. Wray 2007: 140): *locine ingenium an domini mirer prius?* (Should I admire first the *ingenium* of the place or of the master?)

31. See Horace, *Ars Poetica* 295-301, 408 ff., Longinus 22.1, 36.4, Quintilianus 1 *pr.* 26, Tacitus, *Dialogus de oratoribus* 33.1-3, Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem* 2.11 (on Lucretius), Ovid, *Amores* 1.15.14. Significantly, to express the natural talent part of the equation, the word *natura* is frequently used instead of *ingenium*. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.159 for a similar play on the combination of *ars*, *ingenium* and *natura*.
32. This combination of *ars* and *ingenium* in the villa is also played out in the combination of the two kinds of water nymphs which the poem features. Fantham notes the contract between the two different groups (mentioned in lines 37 and 46): “The first nymphs, then, are personified plumbing, the second group the living spirits of the stream” (2009: 166). Behind the choice of image stands also the idea that the combination of *ingenium* and *artes* render this particular landscape ideally suited to *poetic* production. Newlands (2002:138-42) also identifies a specific poetic quality of the landscape, and locates it especially in the description of the river Anio.
33. On the potentially tyrannical implications of water management, see Purcell (1987: 192-3). On the cultural significance of water engineering in Rome more generally, see Purcell (1996).
34. Newlands (2002:132): “Contrary to moralising strictures against architectural excess, Vopiscus’ house is in harmony with its environment, not in violation of it.”
35. On attitudes to nature in Pliny, see Beagon (1992 and 1996) Wallace Hadrill (1990: 80-96), and Sallmann (1986). On the beneficial attitude of nature towards humans, see especially Wallace Hadrill (1990: 83).
36. For the most extensive statement of this idea, see Pliny’s condemnation of mining in 33.1-5.
37. Wallace Hadrill (1990: 86): “... For the whole work is underpinned by the simple idea that Nature supplies, unasked and ungrudgingly, everything man needs, but that man, blinded by *luxuria*, abuses nature and turns it into the tool of his own destruction; the function of science is to reveal the proper use of nature and so save mankind.”
38. This ideal of the ‘natural’ is never clearly defined, but in general, as Wallace-Hadrill phrases it, “the idea of the natural is ... intimately linked with simplicity, cheapness, and accessibility. ... Luxury, by contrast, is characterised by superfluity. It is always excess to requirements. It is wasteful and destructive” (1990: 88). Cf. also Beagon (1996: 306): “Indeed, it is Pliny’s careful evaluation of what man’s needs really are, both material and moral, that often leads him to place restrictions on man’s activities in nature.”
39. *Montes natura sibi fecerat ut quasdam compages telluris visceribus densandis ... Caedium hos trahimusque nulla alia quam deliciarum causa ... Secum quisque cogitet, et ... quas vehi trahiique moles videat, et quam sine iis multorum sit beatior vita.*
40. Edwards suggests that the buildings Pliny approves of are often not described, because otherwise it would immediately become obvious that they are made of exactly the same

materials as all the buildings described as decadent (1996: 105). However, in the case of these very prominent and visible features of the Roman cityscape, it would very likely have been obvious to a Roman reader that they too were decorated with marble. On the paradox of sinful quarrying versus beneficial use of marble in Pliny, see also Edwards (1996: 108-9).

41. Pliny points to *utilitas* as a moral justification for large-scale quarrying, if only implicitly, by repeatedly stressing the uselessness of the luxurious building projects he criticizes most fiercely, such as the pyramids in 36.75: *dicantur obiter et pyramides in eadem Aegypto, regum pecuniae otiosa ac stulta ostentatio.* (And the pyramids, also in Egypt, should be mentioned in passing, the useless and stupid display of the wealth of kings). The utility of harbours and aqueducts in comparison speaks for itself. On the importance of *utilitas* in Pliny's work, see Citroni Marchetti (1982).
42. *Et inter plurima alia Italiae ipsius miracula marmora in lapicidinis crescere auctor est Papirius Fabianus, naturae rerum peritissimus, exemptores quoque adfirmant compleri sponte illa montium ulcera. Quae si vera sunt, spes est numquam defutura luxuriae.*
43. These passages also recall the extensive use of anatomical language in 33.1-3.
44. On *mirabilia* and *miracula* in the *Natural History*, see Carey (2003: *passim*).
45. This relationship between natural boundaries in society and in nature is explored by Edwards (1993: ch. 4). Cf. the passages quoted in n. 3, n. 28 and n. 40. On the philosophical (especially Stoic) background of the idea of the natural, see Kullmann (2010). Sallmann (1961) investigates the force of *natura* in the work of Lucretius. However, Edwards (points out that the meaning of the ‘natural’ in moralising literature has a diffuse philosophical background which precludes one precise definition (1993: 144-5).

PART 4

**SPACE AND POWER**



## ‘No Bounds in Space or Time’

### Rome and the Underworld in the *Aeneid*. A text-linguistic and narratological analysis of Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.264-901<sup>1</sup>

**Suzanne Adema**

Vergil’s *Aeneid* was published after Vergil’s death by order of emperor Augustus (first century B.C.). The epic tells the story of Aeneas, a Trojan who survived the Trojan war. He travels through the Mediterranean world and fights on Italian soil in order to fulfil the task allotted to him by fate: lay the foundations of Rome and make possible its salvation by emperor Augustus (Conte 1994: 283). The *Aeneid* had strong ideological purposes and was meant to be a national epic, extolling the eternal power of Rome. This message is formulated by Jupiter in the first book of the *Aeneid*:

(1) *Aeneid*, 1.278-279

For the Romans I set no bounds in space or time (*nec metas rerum nec tempora*); but have given empire without end.<sup>2</sup>

As part of his quest, Aeneas crosses the bounds of space and time when he descends into the Underworld. Thereby, he leaves the Upper world and enters an eternal space in which spirits and Underworld deities, all allocated to specific places, repeat their actions *in perpetuum* (*Aeneid* 6.264 – 901).

In this article, I give a text-linguistic analysis of this *katabasis* episode and argue that it may be interpreted as a means to suggest the lack of limits in time and space for Rome.<sup>3</sup> Rome was seen as ruling the world when the *Aeneid* was written and the *katabasis* episode may be seen as incorporating the space of the Underworld into Rome’s power, as Feldherr argues (1999). One message of the episode would be that Rome’s power was not limited to the spatial boundaries of the Upper world. We could perhaps take it one step further and argue that with the Underworld a sense of eternity is brought into the story of the very first beginnings of Rome, as if to emphasise that for this city the limitations of time, too, are lifted. In this interpretation, Aeneas experiences eternity in the space of the Underworld so that he is able to instigate eternity in the Upper world when he lays the foundations of Rome.

This interpretation is supported by the presentation of the episode, particularly by the use of tenses. The episode is a text-linguistic mix of time and space, of narrative and description, of temporality and eternity. I aim to unravel this mix in order to gain more insight into the presentation of Aeneas’ experience of eternity. At some points in this episode, the

narrator neatly separates Aeneas' temporary visit from the eternal surroundings in which the visit takes place, but at other points the narrator obscures the boundaries between the restricted time of the living and the eternal space of the dead, with tense usage as his main tool. Both strategies can be found when Aeneas and the Sibyl, his guide, start their descent (example (2), (3) and (4)).

The narrator begins the episode by asking the gods of the Underworld permission to unfold their secrets:

(2) *Aeneid*, 6.264-269

You gods, who hold (*quibus est*) the domain of spirits! You voiceless shades!

You, Chaos, and you, Phlegeton, you broad hushed tracts of night! Suffer me to tell what I have heard; suffer me of your grace to unfold secrets buried in the depths and darkness of the earth.

On Aeneas and the Sibyl went (*ibant*) dimly, beneath the lonely night amid the gloom, through the empty halls of Dis and his phantom realm, [...]

In this first passage the narrator uses an alternation between present and past tense forms to separate the temporary visit of Aeneas from the eternal space of the Underworld. He begins the katabasis episode with an invocation of Underworld deities, using the present tense to give a general characteristic of the deities: “You gods, who *hold* the domain of spirits!” (Latin: *est*). Thus, he suggests that these deities, and the Underworld too, exist in the time of narration. The next sentence contains a past tense form, “on they went dimly” (the imperfect *ibant*) making explicit that the Sibyl and Aeneas visited this eternal space at a specific time in the past. Thus, tense usage marks the transition from general information and narratorial comment to specific narrative taking place in the past.

The narrative clause containing the imperfect tense forms *ibant* is followed by a simile (not quoted), after which a description is given of the entrance of the Underworld:

(3) *Aeneid*, 6.273-289

Just before the entrance, even within the very jaws of Hell, Grief and avenging Cares have set (*posuere*) their bed; there pale Diseases dwell (*habitant*), sad Age, and Fear, and Hunger, temptress to sin, and loathly Want, shapes terrible to view; and Death and Distress; [...] And many monstrous forms besides of various beasts are stalled (*stabulant*) at the doors, Centaurs and double-shaped Scyllas, and the hundredfold Briareus, and the beast of Lerna, hissing horribly, and the Chimaera armed with flame, Gorgons and Harpies, and the shape of the three-bodied shade.

This description is given in present tense forms (Latin: *habitant, stabulant*), a presentation suggesting that pale Diseases, sad Age, Fear, Hunger and loathly Want still dwell at the entrance of the Underworld.<sup>4</sup> The return to the use of the present tense marks the transition from specific narrative (*ibant* in example (2)) back to general description, a transition from temporary to eternal. The description goes on for several lines (not all quoted) until the narrator arrives at the Chimaera, the Gorgons and the Harpies.

There, rather suddenly, the sequence of eternally valid situations is interrupted by a specific event of which Aeneas is the subject: “he grasps his sword” (*corripit*).

(4) *Aeneid*, 6.290-292

Here on a sudden, in trembling terror, Aeneas grasps (*corripit*) his sword, and turns (*offert*) the naked edge against their coming;

“Grasps” (*corripit*) is a so-called historical present and indicates an event in the past, but the word order of the Latin sentence is such that a reader arriving at this verb form for the first time cannot immediately interpret it as such: *corripit hic subita trepidus formidine ferrum/Aeneas*. The Latin verb form occurs at the beginning of the sentence, only providing the information that “he/she/it grasps”. After interpreting the present tense clauses “pale Diseases dwell” (*habitant*, l. 275) and “many monstrous forms are stalled” (*stabulant*, l.286) as denoting everlasting situations, a similar interpretation of “grasps” (*corripit*) might present itself, raising the expectation that some Underworld creature is grasping eternally next to the Gorgons and Harpies. It is only when the reader continues reading the Latin sentence and moves to *hic, subita* and eventually the nominative *Aeneas*, that he knows that Aeneas is the one who grasps and that *corripit*, therefore, should be interpreted as a specific event of the past (a historical present).

The interpretation of *corripit*, in turn, invokes a reinterpretation of the preceding present tense forms. It is now clear that they did not (only) give some general description of an eternal space. They describe the frighteningly real and present creatures wriggling along the path followed by Aeneas at this very moment in the story.

In this sequence of present tense forms, the narrator pays attention to Aeneas’ experience of this eternal space, rather than to the space alone. This emphasis is achieved by combining description and narrative, and space and time therewith, into one seamless travelogue of a trip through an eternal environment. If we want to distil the separate components of this mixture, more information is necessary. In the next section I will, therefore, discuss the narratological and text linguistic properties of Latin narrative and description. The second section deals with the technicalities of how the narrator merges eternal, temporary, narrative and description in this episode, thus presenting Aeneas’ visit to the Underworld as an experience of eternity. In the third section, I will argue that Aeneas, with the help of the Sibyl, even instigates eternal situations in some parts of the Underworld. Lastly, I aim to show that in a significant region of the Underworld Aeneas himself becomes part of this eternal space, forgetting about Upper world time. He needs his guide, the Sibyl, and his father to remind him of his inevitable task in the Upper world. Aeneas has experienced eternity, but only for a brief period of time. It is not his fate to enjoy the eternity of the Underworld, it is his fate to instigate eternity in the Upper world by laying the foundations of Rome.

## Narrative versus description

In narratological approaches (e.g. Genette 1969, Chatman 1990, Bal 1997), descriptions are often seen as a *pause*, in which the action comes to a standstill (definition taken from De Jong & Nünlist 2007). In text linguistic approaches (e.g. Bonheim 1982, Smith 2003, Kroon 2007, Adema 2007, 2008), descriptions also lack temporal progression. Descriptions are characterized by spatial progression or a spatial relation between situations, whereas narrative (used in a narrow sense) is characterized in these approaches as those parts in which there is temporal progression or a temporal relation between events.

One of the text linguistic markers of narrative and description is tense usage.<sup>5</sup> As far as tense usage is concerned, there are two possibilities for both description and narrative in Latin. Descriptions are presented in present tense forms (cf. example (2)) or in imperfect tense forms (Adema 2007, 2008, Kroon 2007). Narrative passages contain an alternation of imperfect and perfect tense forms (cf. *ibant* in example (2)) or they are presented in so-called historical presents (cf. *corripit* in example (4)) (Adema 2007, 2008, Kroon 2007).

The narrator of the *Aeneid* mainly uses the present tense for both description and narrative (Adema 2008). Despite the use of the same tense in these two discourse modes, narrative and description generally are clearly separated components of the story in the *Aeneid*, as is illustrated in example (5).<sup>6</sup>

(5) *Aeneid*, 1.157 – 174

The wearied followers of Aeneas strive (*contendunt*) to run for the nearest shore and turn (*vertuntur*) towards the coast of Libya.

There in a deep inlet lies a spot (*est in secessu longo locus*), where an island forms (*efficit*) a harbor with the barrier of its sides (*obiectu laterum*), on which every wave from the main is broken (*frangitur*), then parts (*scindit*) into receding ripples. On either side (*hinc atque hinc*) loom heavenward huge cliffs and twin peaks, beneath whose crest (*quorum sub vertice*) far and wide (*late*) is the stillness (*silent*) of sheltered water; above (*desuper*), too, is (*imminet*) a background (*scaena*) of shimmering woods with an overhanging grove, black with gloomy shade. Under the brow of the fronting cliff (*fronte sub adversa*) is a cave of hanging rocks; within (*intus*) are fresh waters and seats in the living stone, a haunt for nymphs. Here (*hic*) no fetters imprison (*tenant*) weary ships, no anchor holds (*alligat*) them fast with hooked bite.

Hither (*huc*), with seven ships mustered from all his fleet, Aeneas takes shelter (*subit*); and, disembarking with earnest longing for the land, the Trojans gain (*potiuntur*) the welcome beach and stretch (*ponunt*) their brine-drenched limbs upon the shore.

The first two lines of this example contain two subsequent actions of Aeneas and his men. Both the action “strive to run” (*contendunt*) and the action “turn towards” (*vertuntur*) are presented in present tense forms. Due to this sequence of events time progresses in these lines, making this a narrative passage in text linguistic terms (Adema 2008: 9).

The presentational sentence “there in a deep inlet lies a spot” marks a break in the progression of time, and the next eleven lines are a pause in narratological terms.<sup>7</sup> The present tense forms of this sequence (*est; efficit; frangitur; scindit; minantur; silent; imminet; tenuerunt; alligat*) are connected to each other by means of spatial words and adverbial clauses (e.g. *hinc atque hinc; desuper; intus*). The explicit references to the spatial relation between these states of affairs make this a typical example of a description in text linguistic terms.<sup>8</sup>

After the block description, the narrative mode is taken up again with “Hither, with seven ships mustered from all his fleet, Aeneas takes shelter”, an event denoted by the Latin present tense form *subit*. This action of Aeneas is a specification of “turn towards the coast” (*vertuntur*) in line 158 as it indicates that by turning his ships towards the Libyan coast, Aeneas takes shelter. This means that, after the description, the narrator takes up his narrative at the same moment at which he has left it. The description is a neat unit (*une unité nettement demarquée*, Hammon 1993: 165f), interrupting and suspending the narrative. The long, tranquil description of a peaceful place, similar to a harbour no less, fits perfectly at this point in the story. The pause creates a moment of peace in the ongoing story, just before Aeneas too will find some peace and quiet after the turmoil of a storm.

Both in the descriptive and in the narrative component of this example the present tense is used. In the description, the present tense might be meant to suggest that this place still exists at the time of narration (Schwartz 2002: 18), but it cannot be ruled out that these present tense forms need to be interpreted as historical presents. We should acknowledge the ambiguity of present tense descriptions occurring within present tense narrative, as Kroon (2007) suggests for such descriptions in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.<sup>9</sup> The events of Aeneas’ quest take place in a space that might (still) be real. Nevertheless, the presentation of this space (description) and the presentation of Aeneas’ quest (narrative) tend to be clearly separated in the *Aeneid*, as in example (5).

The *katabasis* episode is exceptional in this respect. There, the eternal space of the Underworld and the events of Aeneas’ quest are not presented in clearly separated components of the text, but the narrator completely merges present tense description with present tense narrative. Thus, he gives emphasis to both the temporal and the spatial aspects of Aeneas’ experience of the eternal space of the Underworld.

## **Experiencing eternity**

Underworld descriptions in the *Aeneid* are no static, separate units in which the story comes to a halt, but they are an integral part of the story telling.<sup>10</sup> Aeneas travels through the eternal space of the Underworld and gazes upon it. The narrator uses Aeneas as a traveller and an observer (focalizer in narratological terms) to merge the separate text linguistic categories of narrative and description into one blended discourse mode (cf. Mosher 1991, Hamon 1993: 170, Herman 2002: 298, 2009: 131).

Whenever the text indicates spatial progression, the time of the story advances, because Aeneas moves or because his gaze falls upon a new part of the Underworld. This means

that spatial progression, characteristic of the description mode, coincides with temporal progression, characteristic of the narrative mode. The key elements in this blend of discourse modes are movement and focalization (Zoran 1984, De Jong 1987, Landau & Jackendoff 1993, Hamon 1993: 173ff, Herman 2002: 298, 2009: 131).<sup>11</sup>

The element of movement is introduced into the episode in its very first narrative clause, which states that Aeneas and the Sibyl “went on (*ibant*) dimly, beneath the lonely night amid the gloom, through the empty halls of Dis and his phantom realm” (see example (2)).<sup>12</sup> According to Herman (2002: 263-99, 2009: 131) motion verbs such as *ibant* (from the verb *ire, to go*) and references to *paths* help readers to construct a story world.<sup>13</sup> In *Story Logic* (2002: 278) he claims that “the notion of paths is an especially important one in narrative domains, since paths imply motion from one part to another and thus dynamic or emergent spatial properties of the sort characteristic of narratives.” Herman uses the term path in a more abstract sense, but in the Underworld there is a literal path (*via*) by means of which the notion can be illustrated, the road that leads to the waters of Tartarean Acheron:

(6) *Aeneid*, 6.295-318

From here (*hinc*) a road (*via*) leads (*fert*) to the waters of Tartarean Acheron. Here (*hic*), thick with mire and of fathomless flood, a whirlpool seethes (*aestuat*) and belches (*eructat*) into Cocytus all its sand. A grim ferryman guards (*servat*) these waters and streams, terrible in his squalor – Charon, on whose chin lies (*iacet*) a mass of unkempt, hoary hair; his eyes are staring (*stant*) orbs of flame; his squalid garb hangs (*dependet*) by a knot from his shoulders. Aeneas, as he is aroused and amazed (*miratus motusque*) by the disorder, cries (*ait*): “Tell me ...”

It is implied that Aeneas and the Sibyl move along the road, reach the river banks and see Charon. The implication is made explicit in line 317, in which Aeneas is presented as aroused and amazed (*miratus motusque*) by all the things he sees at those river banks: Aeneas turns out to have, indeed, followed the path. Thus, the description of this road was at the same time a narrative of Aeneas’ walk along it. The passage both shows text-linguistic characteristics of description (e.g. the spatial adverbs *hinc*, *hic*) and displays the temporal progression characteristic of narrative, added by means of the implied movement of Aeneas and the Sibyl.

Likewise, the (implied) movement of the eyes of an embedded focalizer can make spatial progression coincide with temporal progression.<sup>14</sup> The passage in example (7) is neither purely narrative nor entirely descriptive.

(7) *Aeneid*, 6.548-558

Suddenly Aeneas looks back (*respicit*), and under a cliff on the left (*sub rupe sinistra*) sees (*videt*) a broad castle, girt with triple wall. A rushing flood of torrent flames encircles (*ambit*) it, Tartarean Phlegeton, and rolls (*torquet*) along thundering rocks. In front stands a huge gate, and pillars of solid adamant, that no might of man, nay, not even the sons of heaven, could (*valeant*) uproot in

war; there stands (*stat*) an iron tower, soaring high, and Tisiphone, sitting girt with bloody pall, keeps sleepless watch (*servat*) over the portal night and day (*noctesque diesque*).

The specific parts of the Underworld are related spatially in this passage (e.g. *sinistra*, *ambit*). The element of time plays a role because of the governing verb forms “looks back” (*respicit*) and “sees” (*videt*), which imply a movement of Aeneas’ eyes at every spatial progression. Thus, the description is integrated into the narrative.

At the same time, the passage is a clear example of the merging of temporary and eternal. In the last sentence, the adverbial clause “night and day” (*noctesque diesque*) indicates that at least the present tense form “keeps watch” (*servat*) represents an eternal situation. That is, Tisiphone is not just keeping watch over this portal when Aeneas happens to look at her, but it is, in fact, her eternal task to do so.

The adverbial clause “night and day” influences, in retrospect, the interpretation of the preceding present tense forms. After the historical presents “looks back” and “sees”, we might have been inclined to interpret “encircles” (*ambit*) and “rolls” (*torquet*), too, as historical presents. At the end of the passage, however, we learn that they can and should be interpreted as eternal situations as well: the river Phlegeton will always encircle the castle (*ambit*) and will perpetually roll along thundering rocks (*torquet*). The use of the present tense for both the events of the past (*respicit*, *videt*) and the eternal situations (*ambit*, *torquet*, *stat*, *servat*) turns Aeneas into the observer of a timeless and perpetual tableau vivant.<sup>15</sup>

The eternal and the temporary meet in the Underworld as its eternal space is confronted with a living being, who travels through it and is himself bounded by a restricted amount of time. This results in a presentation in which narrative and description as well as the temporary and the eternal seem to become one odyssey through an eternal space. Aeneas’ visit is presented as an experience of eternity.

In the *Aeneid*, description and narrative are usually presented as separate components, as was illustrated by means of example (5). The deviation of this in the *katabasis* episode is striking and should be given significance. My interpretation would be that Aeneas needs to experience this eternal space before he can become the instigator of that other eternal space, viz. the city of Rome. This interpretation is corroborated by the presentation of two specific encounters. In the next section I discuss these encounters, aiming to show that Aeneas already instigates eternity during his visit of the Underworld. Thus, his Upper world task is foreshadowed in the Underworld.

## Instigating eternity

Most Underworld descriptions in the *Aeneid* consist of present tense forms and are in some instances even accompanied by adverbial clauses which make their eternal duration explicit (e.g. *noctesque diesque* in example (7)).<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, there are several situations in the *katabasis* episode that are not denoted by present tense forms, but by imperfect

tense forms.<sup>17</sup> The imperfect tense forms under consideration denote situations of Underworld residents who have not yet reached their final destination. As such, these imperfect tense forms describe the few situations that are, in fact, temporary within the perpetual realm of the Underworld.<sup>18</sup> There is, for instance, a group of souls who will fulfil a second life on earth, as Anchises explains (*Aen.* 6.713-718). These souls need to drink from the river Lethe to forget about their previous life.

(8) *Aeneid*, 6.703-709

Meanwhile, in a retired vale, Aeneas sees (*videt*) a sequestered grove and rustling forest thickets, and the river of Lethe that drifts past (*praenatat*) those peaceful homes. About it hovered (*volabant*) peoples and tribes unnumbered.

When Aeneas sees (the historical present *videt*) those specific souls hovering about the river Lethe, the situation of that hovering is a temporary one. This explains the use of the imperfect tense to present this situation (*volabant*). In contrast, a present tense form (*praenatat*) describes the eternal course of the river Lethe: “that drifts past those peaceful homes”. The example illustrates that, in the *katabasis* episode, the present tense (*praenatat*) is used for the universally valid features of the Underworld, whereas the imperfect tense (*volabant*) is used for temporary situations taking place during the specific time frame of Aeneas’ visit.

This insight into the particular application of the present and imperfect tense within this episode can be used to come to a new interpretation of two passages, both accounts of a reunion of Aeneas with an old friend. An analysis of the imperfect and present tense forms reveals that Aeneas and the Sibyl help these Underworld residents in accepting their eternal fate. Thus, Aeneas and the Sibyl change temporary states into everlasting ones.

The first passage is a meeting between Aeneas and his former helmsman, Palinurus. The imperfect tense form *agebat* indicates how he was moving along the river banks of the Acheron when Aeneas arrived there:

(9) *Aeneid*, 6.337

Lo! there passed (*agebat*) the helmsman, Palinurus, ...

Palinurus is not allowed to cross the Acheron because his body has not been buried. Therefore, he asks Aeneas to take him along on his crossing of the Acheron (*Aen.* 6.363ff). The Sibyl rebukes Palinurus for this impious proposal (*Aen.* 6.373ff), but also promises him that he will be buried, and that the land will be given his name (*Capo Palinuro*, in the southwest of contemporary Italy). Palinurus now knows that there will be an end to his stay at the river banks of the Acheron. This prospect seems enough for Palinurus to reach an eternal state of happiness:

(10) Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.382-383

By these words his cares are dispelled (*emotae*) and promptly grief is driven (*pulsus*) from his anguished heart; he rejoices (*gaudet*) in the land called after him.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, I propose to interpret the present tense form “rejoices” (*gaudet*) as an eternally valid situation, rather than as a temporary one. That is, *gaudet* should not be seen as a historical present but as an everlasting situation of joy, contrasted to Palinurus’ temporary situation of *agebat* (example (9)). By their visit, the Sibyl and Aeneas make Palinurus accept his fate and turn his temporary hardship into eternal happiness.

The other passage is the final meeting between the former lovers Dido and Aeneas. Aeneas and the Sibyl have reached the Mourning Fields, where the victims of love reside. Dido, too, is a victim of love, since she committed suicide after Aeneas had to end their relationship. It is therefore no surprise that Aeneas and the Sibyl find her in these Mourning Fields, among other unhappy lovers.

(11) *Aeneid*, 6.445-451

In this region he sees (*cernit*) Phaedra and Procris, and sad Eriphyle, pointing to the wounds her cruel son had dealt, and Evadne and Pasiphaë. With them goes (*it*) Laodamia, and Caeneus, once a youth, now a woman, and again turned back by Fate into her form of old. Among them, with wound still fresh, Phoenician Dido was wandering (*errabat*) in the great forest.

Aeneas is the onlooker of eternal situations in the first lines of this example (vv. 445-449), as he sees (historical present *cernit*) how unhappy lovers reside forever in the Mourning Fields (present tense form *it*). Whereas the activities of the other unhappy lovers are presented as everlasting situations, Dido’s wandering is denoted by means of the imperfect tense form *errabat*, indicating that this is a temporary situation in the past of the narrator and, thus, that it is not Dido’s eternal activity in the Underworld.

I would like to give meaning to this difference in tense and argue that the other unhappy lovers are destined to stay in the Mourning Fields forever, but that Dido leaves them behind at the end of her encounter with Aeneas, after he has spoken to her for one last time. At this point, Dido flees to her husband Sychaeus:

(12) *Aeneid*, 6.472-476

At length she flung (*corripuit*) away, and still his foe, fled (*refugit*) back to the shady grove, where Sychaeus, her lord of former days, responds (*respondet*) to her sorrows and gives (*aequat*) her love for love.

The perfect tense is used as the main tense of the narrative in this excerpt (*corripuit* and *refugit*). Nevertheless, the present tense is used in the subordinate clause to tell how Sychaeus responds to her sorrows and gives her love for love (*respondet* and *aequat*). In my opinion, this alternation between the perfect tense and the present tense separates the temporary from the eternal. The perfect tense is used to narrate events of the past, while the present tense forms denote everlasting situations: it is with Sychaeus that Dido will spend eternity. The final meeting with Aeneas has brought her closure.<sup>20</sup>

When Aeneas and the Sibyl met Palinurus and Dido, the latter were still in a temporary state of unhappiness (imperfect tense forms), but when they left them behind, Palinurus

and Dido seem to have found eternal peace (present tense forms). The analysis of tense usage shows that with the help of the Sibyl Aeneas is able to instigate eternal situations.

### Becoming part of eternity: *O terque, quaterque beati!*

Aeneas' visit to the eternal space of the Underworld reaches its climax when he reaches the regions of the Underworld where those renowned in war dwell. Among these are his fellow fighters at Troy. Standing in their midst, Aeneas is no longer a temporary observer of situations that will last forever. He seems to be part of the Underworld and seems to have reached his own desired destination.

The passage starts when Aeneas meets his old friend Tydeus (*occurrit*), and Aeneas bemoaned the Dardan chiefs (*ingemuit*), as he looks at them (*cernens*):

(13) *Aeneid*, 6.477-493

Thence he toils (*molitur*) along the way that offered itself. And now they gained the farthest fields (*iamque arva tenebant*), where the renowned in war dwell (*frequentant*) apart. Here Tydeus meets (*occurrit*) him; here Parthenopeus, famed in arms, and the pale shade of Adrastus; here, much wept on earth above and fallen in war, the Dardan chiefs; whom as he beheld (*cernens*), all in long array, he moaned (*ingemuit*) – Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus, the three sons of Antenor, and Polyboetes, priest of Ceres, and Idaeus, still keeping his chariot, still his arms. Round about, on right and left (*dextra laevaque*), stand (*circumstant*) the souls in throngs. To have seen him once is (*est*) not enough; they delight (*iuvat*) to linger, to pace beside him, and to learn the causes of his coming.

The present participle *cernens* comes from a verb of seeing (*cernere, to see*) and seems a cue for a blend of narrative and description, similar to those quoted as examples (3), (6) and (7) (cf. also example (14)). The following enumeration of Trojan (Dardan) chiefs befits such a blend of discourse modes: time progresses as Aeneas looks from one eternal Underworld resident to another (“Glaucus … his arms”).

The present tense forms “stand round about” (*circumstant*), “is” (*est*) and “delight” (*iuvat*) may, at first sight, represent eternal situations, as they seem typical for a timeless tableau vivant featuring yet another group of eternal Underworld residents. However, this particular tableau is not an eternal one of which Aeneas is a mere observer. On the contrary, the image contains Aeneas, since he is the grammatical object of these clauses: it is *him* around whom they stand and *him* they want to see. This, of course, makes the situations temporary and not eternal. The Trojans will not stand around Aeneas and watch him forever.

Nevertheless, the narrator seems to do his best to suspend the interpretation of these present tense forms as historical presents by hiding Aeneas in this sentence. The situations have Aeneas as their grammatical object, yet in the Latin sentences he is never mentioned explicitly, not even by means of a pronoun (*circumstant animae dextra laevaque frequentes, nec vidisse semel satis est; iuvat usque morari/ et conferre gradum et veniendi*

*discere causas*). For now, it seems as if Aeneas has joined his old friends in their eternal activities and will be one of them once more. The observer is absorbed by the timeless tableau vivant he was looking at.

The idea that Aeneas becomes an inextricable part of the Underworld at this point in the *katabasis* is corroborated when we compare example (13) with the description of the Elysian Fields, presented somewhat later in the episode. The structure of the latter passage is very similar to that in example (13), as it also contains an enumeration of names (*Ilus ... Troy*) and situations in the present tense (*stant, pascuntur, sequitur*). Even the phrase “to right and left” (*dextra laevaque*) is used in both excerpts:

(14) *Aeneid*, 6.649-659

Here is Teucer’s ancient line, family most fair, high-souled heroes born in happier years – Ilus and Assarcus and Dardanus, Troy’s founder. From afar he [sc. Aeneas] marvels (*miratur*) at their phantom arms and chariots. Their lances stand (*stant*) fixed in the ground, and their unyoked steeds browse (*pascuntur*) freely over the plain. The same pride in chariot and arms that was (*fuit*) theirs in life, the same care in keeping sleek steeds, attends (*sequitur*) them now that they are hidden beneath the earth. Others he sees (*conspicit*), to right and left (*dextra laevaque*), feasting on the sward, and chanting in chorus a joyous paean within a fragrant laurel grove, from where the full flood of the Eridanus rolls (*volvitur*) upward through the forest.

The present tense situations in this example, *stant, pascuntur* and *sequitur*, are indeed eternal situations, and Aeneas is their observer (*miratur, conspicit*), as he is in other parts of the Underworld. It is the eternal connotation of present tense forms such as *stant, pascuntur* and *sequitur* in example (14) that brings about the idea that also the present tense situations *circumstant, est* and *iuvat* in example (13) will last forever.

Aeneas himself seems to feel at home among the souls of Trojan warriors. Example (15) shows that Aeneas longed to be with them, in the Underworld, at at least one moment in his life. When Aeneas found himself in the middle of a storm, he envied those of his fellow warriors who fell before Troy:

(15) *Aeneid*, 1.94-101

O thrice and four times blest (*O terque quaterque beati*), whose lot it was to meet death before their fathers’ eyes beneath the lofty walls of Troy! O son of Tydeus, bravest of the Danaan race, ah! That I could not fall on the Ilian plains and gasp out this lifeblood at your hand – where, under the spear of Aeacides, fierce Hector lies prostrate, and mighty Sarpedon; where Simois seizes and sweeps beneath his waves so many shields and helms and bodies of the brave!

This exclamation yields significance to the presentation of Aeneas as one of the souls of fallen warriors in example (13). If he had died before Troy, as he wishes in example (15), the fields described in example (13) are the place where he would have spent eternity, as Servius (a fourth century commentator of the *Aeneid*) has pointed out.<sup>21</sup>

Aeneas would have wanted that, and the narrator almost lets him by presenting Aeneas' encounter with his fellow warriors as the ultimate synthesis of the living and the dead, the Upper world and Underworld, the temporary and eternal.

Inevitably, however, the Sibyl reminds Aeneas of who he is and where he is, a living person among the dead. In contrast to the souls of the dead, he does not have eternity at his disposal (*Aen.* 6.535–539). Aeneas can only stay in the Underworld for a fixed amount of time, because he needs to fulfil his task as the creator of an eternal realm in the Upper world, the city of Rome. It is Aeneas' crucial role in the existence of Rome that keeps him from staying among his friends forever – *tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem* (“So vast was the effort to found the Roman race”), as the narrator exclaims at *Aeneid* 1.33.

The motif of Aeneas' limited time in the Underworld is repeated at the end of the episode. Finally, Aeneas has reached his father Anchises who shows him the future of his race, the great Roman people. This encounter was the very purpose of Aeneas' Underworld visit (cf. *Aen.* 5.731–737). At the end of the encounter, the narrator tells us that Aeneas and Anchises “wander at large over the whole region in the wide airy plain, taking note of all”, the present tense forms *vagantur* and *lustrant*:

(16) *Aeneid* 6.886 – 892

Thus they wander (*vagantur*) at large over the whole region in the wide airy plain, taking note of all (*lustrantur*). After Anchises had led his son (*natum*) over every scene, kindling his soul with longing for the glory that was to be, he then tells of the wars that the man (*viro*) next must wage, the Laurentine peoples and Latinus' town, and how he is to face or flee each peril.

The present tense situations *vagantur* and *lustrant* have no inherent end points, and Aeneas and Anchises might have walked and enjoyed these fields forever. A temporal adverbial clause (“After … was to be”) indicates their endpoint, however, and denotes what Anchises did during their walk. Again, a pleasant situation is ended by means of a reminder of the task Aeneas needs to fulfil in the Upper world: “the man (*viro*) must wage wars (*bella*)”.

It is striking that Anchises shows all the details of the fields in which they dwell to his son (*natum*, 1.888), and that he then reminds the man (*viro*, 1.890) of the wars that need to be fought. Aeneas is no longer (seen as) a son when he leaves the Underworld, but at that moment he is, once and for all, the man with a greater task, the man of whom the narrator sings in his very first line: *arma virumque cano* (*Aen.* 1.1).

## Conclusion

The text linguistic approach taken in this article has shown that the present tense is used ingeniously to create the effect of a journey through an eternal space, allowing Aeneas to experience eternity. The approach has also brought about a difference between Underworld residents that have reached their final destination and residents that are still strug-

gling to find eternal peace. Among the latter were Palinurus and Dido, but Aeneas and the Sibyl help them along their way. Thus, Aeneas helps to create eternal situations in the Underworld.

Aeneas' own experience of the eternity of the Underworld is limited, as the Sibyl and his father tell him again and again. In the episode, Aeneas is an observer and instigator of eternity, but he never truly becomes a participant of it, although he does come close once. The instigation of eternity in the Underworld corresponds with Aeneas' role in the history of Rome and we may even conclude that Aeneas cannot stay in the Underworld because he needs to bring eternity to the Upper world. There, he will lay the foundations for *Roma Aeterna*, a city for which Jupiter himself has set no bounds in time and space (*Aen.* 1.278/9, example (1)).

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## Notes

1. I am indebted to Niels Koopman, who is currently writing a dissertation on narrative and description in Greek war narrative, for his useful commentary on an earlier version of this article. I would also like to thank Mark Hannay for editing this article.
2. All translations (sometimes slightly altered) are taken from: Fairclough, H. 1999. *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid*, part 1&2. (Loeb). The Latin texts are based on the OCT (Mynors 1969). A (historical) present in the translation represents a Latin (historical) present.
3. The corpus of this article consists of the narrator text of Vergil’s *Aeneid* 6.264 – 6.901. Despite the vast amount of literature on the katabasis episode, a text linguistic approach has not yet been used to come to a better understanding of this passage. For a discussion of the thematic significance of the representation of space in this episode (vis-à-vis the representation of space in Augustan Rome), see Feldherr (1999). For an introduction into this episode see the commentaries on *Aeneid* VI by Norden (1903) and/or Austin (1977). Norden also discusses the sources of Vergil’s katabasis episode, among which, of course, Homer’s *nekuia* (*Odyssee*, book XI) (for a discussion of Orphic, Eleusinian, and Hellenistic-Jewish sources, see Bremmer (2009)). The merging of eternal and temporary in Vergil’s sources and, thus, the way in which they function as his model in this respect fall outside the scope of this article, but would be an interesting topic for further research.
4. The description starts with a perfect tense form, *posuere*. This perfect tense form denotes a situation resulting from an event in the past, as is also the case in the English translation ‘they have set their bed’. This interpretation of the perfect tense form *posuere* is due to the combination of the tense and the specific meaning of the verb (Pinkster 1990: 232, Adema 2008: 64).

5. Other text linguistic markers are spatial adverbs (description) or temporal adverbs (narrative). For a more detailed discussion of discourse modes in Latin narrative, see Adema (2007, 2008) and Adema & Stienaers (2011).
6. Descriptions similar to example (7) are found at *Aen.*4.247-251; *Aen.*6.43-45; *Aen.*7.12-15; *Aen.*7.563-570; *Aen.*8.416-422; *Aen.*8.597-599; *Aen.* 11.522-529. Most descriptions are block descriptions in the *Aeneid*, but an exception is, for instance, the description of the river Tiber (*Aen.*7.30-34).
7. In terms of De Jong (2001:317-318), this is a ‘landing type-scene’. Such scenes often contain an embedded focalizer (e.g. *Aen.*7.30-34). Here, however, there is no indication in the text that Aeneas and his men (subject of the previous clause) are the focalizers. On the contrary, the presentative clause with which the description begins, suggests that the primary narrator presents this description.
8. The states of affairs *tenant* and *alligat* are not spatially connected to the other states of affairs. As such, they are not descriptive in a strict sense, but give information about this natural harbour.
9. See also Kroon (2012) for a combined narratological and linguistic approach of Ovid’s *Heroides* X, in which the present tense is used for a merge of the genres of epic and elegy (cf. also Pieper 2012).
10. See note 15 for an enumeration of these Underworld descriptions.
11. Zoran (1984: 321) considers both ways movement.
12. Movement verbs occur throughout the episode (*Aen.*6.384; 411; 424; 477; 634; 638; 678; 898). The simile at the start of the episode (6.270-272) describes the walking along a path (*iter*) “under the niggard light of a fitful moon”.
13. Herman uses the term *path* in the sense of Landau & Jackendoff (1993: 223).
14. Aeneas often is the subject of a verb of seeing in this episode, both in narrator text and in speeches of other characters who invite him to look at something (*Aen.* 6.323; 325; 333; 340; 426; 446; 452; 495; 498; 548; 549; 557; 651; 656; 703; 761; 771; 779; 788; 792; 817; 818; 825; 826; 855; 860). The motif of an (unsure) observer occurs in the simile in lines 6.453-454.
15. Example (7) illustrates a technique that is the reverse of the technique in examples (3) and (4) (l. 273-294). The latter passage starts with an eternal tableau vivant and ends with a reminder that this tableau is the frighteningly real and present environment of Aeneas, and not just a sketch of the entrance of the Underworld.
16. Everlasting present tense descriptions of the Underworld are found at 6.273-289 (example (3)); 6.295-304 (example (6)); 6.417-418; 6.426-449; 6.550-558 (example (7)); 6.640-665 (example (14)); 6.705.
17. In sum, the corpus contains 18 indicative imperfect tense forms, and in eleven of these cases an Underworld resident is the subject (see note 18). It contains 136 indicative present tense forms, of which 66 should be interpreted as everlasting situations and 70 as present tenses used as the main tense of the narrative (historical presents). The corpus also contains 22 perfect tense forms used as the main tense of the narrative (for other uses of the perfect tense, see Adema 2008).

18. In the katabasis episode, eleven imperfect tense forms occur of which Underworld residents are the subject. These situations are not universally valid: one imperfect tense form indicates a situation that took place in the past of the souls under consideration (*dum vita manebat* in 6.661) and ten imperfect tense forms are contemporaneous with Aeneas' visit, but not eternally valid. Apart from the imperfect tense forms in example (8), (9) and (11), these forms are the following: *ruebat*, *stabant* and *tendebant* in 6.304-314 (describing how souls are waiting for Charon's boat, they have not reached their eternal dwelling yet); *sedebant* in 6.411 (denoting how souls are transported in Charon's boat); *tenebat* in 6.469 (taking place during the meeting between Dido and Aeneas); *lustrabat* and *recensebat* (Anchises waiting for Aeneas' arrival). Of course, there are, in addition to these imperfect tense forms, a few imperfect tense forms in this episode of which the Sibyl and/ or Aeneas are the subject and that, for that obvious reason, are not universally valid situations (*ibant* in 6.268; *latebat* in 6.406; *lenibat* and *ciebat* in 468; *iamque tenebant* in 6.477; *rigabat* in 6.699; *videbat* in 6.860).
19. I interpret the adverb *parumper* in the Latin text as meaning ‘quickly’, ‘in a short period of time’ rather than ‘for a short period of time’.
20. West (1980) also observes this change in Dido in this excerpt, but he does not base himself on tense usage. He draws an analogy with Caeneus (6.448). Caeneus had changed, during life, into a man, but is now female again (only her name remains male). Dido, too, returns to her ‘old form’ in the Underworld, as she now is again what she was before she met Aeneas, viz. Sychaeus’ wife.
21. Servius does this in his comment on a line in Aeneas’ final speech to Dido: line 6.466 (*extremum fato quod te adloquor hoc est*. Transl: *This is the last word Fate suffers me to say to you*). According to Servius, Aeneas says this either because he will become a god later (*aut quia deus futurus est*) or because Aeneas thinks that he will be in the realm of heroes, not in that given to Lovers (*aut, quod melius est, quia post mortem tenebit alterum circulum, viris fortibus scilicet, non amantibus datum.*). The latter is the more likely option, as Servius already states. According to the mythical tradition Aeneas is indeed deified (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 1.259f and Ovid. *Met.* 14.603ff), but Aeneas obviously does not know this as he speaks to Dido in the Underworld.

## Argo was Here

### The Ideology of Geographical Space in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes

Jacqueline Klooster

In this paper I will look at the representation of space in the *Argonautica*, the third century BCE epic poem by the Alexandrian poet Apollonius of Rhodes, with an eye on its politico-ideological overtones. The *Argonautica* relates the mythical journey of the Argonauts, a group of fifty young heroes, from Greek Iolcus to exotic Colchis on the edge of the Black Sea and back again in search of the Golden Fleece, which they obtain with the help of the Colchian princess Medea. The journey encompasses some remarkably detours, most notably past the Libyan coast and through a river network in central Europe. It is immediately clear on a first reading that the route of the Argo is not told in a purely realistic way; literary tradition and myth play an important role in its constitution.

Apart from being a rich tale of adventure, a refined psychological portrait of first love gone wrong and a creative commentary on Homeric poetry, the *Argonautica* is also a (literarily) allusive and a geographical epic that deals in various significant ways with the spaces passed by or entered by the Argonauts on their quest for the Golden Fleece. In the scope of this paper, I cannot do justice to the complexity of the epic's composition, but nevertheless I hope to highlight some of its key themes with regard to ideologies in its spatial representation.

#### An Ideological Epic?

Nothing would seem more natural than looking for panegyric or ideological issues in any epic written at court for a newly established dynasty, as this particular poem was for the Macedonian Ptolemies who reigned over Egypt in third century BCE from their capital Alexandria. The Ptolemies formed one branch of the successor kings who had divided the 'Hellenised' territory in the wake of Alexander the Great's campaigns in the East. Apollonius was head librarian of the famous Alexandrian Library which these monarchs had set up, and in this capacity, he presumably would have also been the tutor of the royal children; his connections to the court would seem to have been close (see below for the historical context). Surprisingly, as Richard Hunter wrote in 1993, the *Argonautica* has rarely been considered from a political angle:

Very little attention... has been paid to the Ptolemaic context of Apollonius' epic, to the question of why the Head of the Library would write on this subject rather than any other. Even in formulation the question sounds strange. Until recently it would have been thought hardly worth asking.<sup>1</sup>

Traditional scholarship focused on the poem's many remarkably subtle allusions to earlier literature and research, in particular its deep engagement with the Homeric epics and its intriguing narrative voice.<sup>2</sup> The resulting idea that Apollonius wrote in and for a highly elite, esoteric community in the so-called Ivory Tower of the Ptolemaic Library precluded a political interpretation.

The problematic heroism of the poem's main protagonists may also have blocked this avenue of research. Jason, the leader of the expedition, is characterised as a rather melancholy, un-warlike young man whose main feature is his attractiveness to women and his ability to use them for his schemes.<sup>3</sup> Medea is both a young girl in love with Jason and a dangerous, exotic witch. By ending the epic with the disembarkation at Iolcus, Apollonius stops short of the outcome of his protagonists' marriage. But these horrific events, represented in Euripides' famous earlier tragedy *Medea*, in which the eponymous protagonist kills her children by Jason in a jealous rage at being left by him for a Corinthian princess, casts a shadow over the end of the *Argonautica*. How could such ambivalent protagonists be expected to prefigure, symbolise or ideologically represent anything to do with a self-respecting dynasty?

Additionally, there do not appear to be any direct causal links between the narrative of Argo's journey and the Ptolemaic regime in Egypt: the Argo's quest for the Fleece does not explicitly result in the founding of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. In this respect the *Argonautica* is very different from, for instance, Vergil's *Aeneid*, the great foundational epic of the Augustan age. The *Aeneid* makes clear from its proem that all of Aeneas' far-flung adventures would inevitably lead to a great event, the establishment of the Roman empire:

Arms and the man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy, exiled by fate,  
came to Italy and Lavine shores; much buffeted on sea and land by violence  
from above, through cruel Juno's unforgiving wrath, and much enduring in  
war also, *till he should build a city and bring his gods to Latium; whence came  
the Latin race, the lords of Alba, and the lofty walls of Rome.* (1.1-7, trans. H.  
R. Fairclough)

Compare this to the *Argonautica*'s proem, where there is no such foreshadowing of a final ideological 'goal' and the scope of the narrative is restricted entirely to the mythical primeval times and spaces of the heroes, the epic past as 'walled off from the present', in Bakhtinian terminology.<sup>4</sup> Spatially, this enclosed character of the narrative is reflected by the fact that the trajectory of the Argonauts is not a journey from A to B, unlike Aeneas' quest from Troy to Latium, but a round trip from A to B back to A. Greece is both the point of departure and return, so it is a significant location although it is not prominent in the proem.

Beginning with you, Phoebus, I will recount the famous deeds of men of old,  
who, at the bidding of King Pelias, down through the mouth of Pontus and  
between the Cyanean rocks, sped well-benched Argo in quest of the Golden  
Fleece. (1.1-4) ... But now I will tell the lineage and the names of the heroes,

and of the long sea-paths and the deeds they wrought in their wanderings; may the Muses be the inspirers of my song. (1.20-22, trans. Race)

Nevertheless, unlike what the narratee might be led to expect from this proem, a teleological worldview operates in the *Argonautica* that is expressed mainly in the many aetiological tales (stories of cause or origin) that are related whenever the Argonauts stop to establish new cults, bury their comrades or rename the environment. In fact, one such *aition* is obliquely referenced in the proem: the Symplegades, or Clashing Rocks, became immobile after the Argo sailed through them and thus no longer threaten travellers passing through the mouth of the Bosphorus.

Such aetiological digressions, which often but not always focus on spatial changes, are usually accompanied by expressions like ‘...and so it remains until this day’ and ‘...for later men to see’,<sup>5</sup> making clear that the Argonauts’ entire venture is focalised from the perspective of the Hellenistic narrator. And, since the *aitia* mostly describe Greek influences on previously un-Greek territory, it follows that the Argo’s voyage is seen, at least on one level, as leading to the establishment of Greek imperial domination in Hellenistic times.<sup>6</sup> The role of Greece as point of departure and return in the epic acquires a different significance in this light, as does the anachronistic use of the name ‘Hellas’ throughout the narrative.<sup>7</sup> Even in the fragmented world of Hellenism, Greece will always remain the referential centre and source of Greek culture, or so the *Argonautica* forebodes.

The ideological and political side of the *Argonautica* has now been amply recognised by studies like that of Stephens and Newman and, more recently, Mori and Thalmann.<sup>8</sup> Thalmann’s recent book, *Apollonius and the Spaces of Hellenism*, 2011 is especially relevant because it describes the way space is used to explore issues of colonialism and the ideology of Greek imperial domination in the age of Apollonius’ Alexandria. I am broadly in agreement with the way in which these scholars read the treatment of space in the *Argonautica*, but I also believe that the ostentatious learnedness and constant allusions to mythical and literary traditions make it clear that Apollonius the narrator was, in fact, an armchair traveller rather than an explorer himself. I will argue that his explicitly literary, and hence often deliberately unrealistic, representation of geography is meant to illustrate that all there was to know about the world was contained in the Greek poetic and scholarly tradition, or, in other words, in the Ptolemaic Library, of which Apollonius himself was the head librarian. These two strategies support each other: the learned armchair scholar-narrator who frequently digresses is not opposed to, but rather part of, the ideological project of the epic.

With these themes in mind I will explore a number of issues linked to Apollonius’ representation of space: the age-old opposition between East and West (or Greek versus non-Greek), the many aetiological digressions, the Argonauts’ interventions in the landscape, and the combination of literary tradition with geographical science (erudition).

## A Greek Library in Egypt

To put my interpretation of the epic in context, we need to take a look at the historical surroundings of Apollonius. In the third century BCE, Ptolemy Soter, one of the Macedonian generals of Alexander the Great, built a great library in Alexandria, the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt that had recently been founded (in 331 BCE) by Alexander the Great. The location of the city was strategically chosen; its site on the Egyptian shore opened up the pathway to the Mediterranean trade routes. It looked to mainland Greece rather than to inland Egypt. This was probably the reason why Alexandria was known in Roman Antiquity as *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*: it was perceived as ‘near Egypt’ rather than in Egypt’s heartland. The city was also the site of the grave monument (the so-called *Soma*) of Alexander the Great, laying a very direct and tangible claim to his heritage as Hellenising conqueror.<sup>9</sup>

The Ptolemaic dynasty was to rule over Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean for several centuries. Besides the monument for Alexander, the ideological claims of early Ptolemaic rule are also underlined by the foundation of the Great Alexandrian Library and the adjacent *Mouseion* or Shrine of the Muses, an institution for scholars and poets. This project broadcast a claim to control and perpetuate the heritage of Greek literary tradition and scholarship or, in modern sociological terms, the possession of cultural capital and control over Greek cultural memory.<sup>10</sup> In the Library and *Mouseion*, the Ptolemies financially supported research and scholarship as well as the creation of new poetry. This resulted in an enormous output of learning, such as the commentaries on and editions of the Homeric texts by famous scholars like Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus, as well as a remarkable poetic output clearly inspired by and celebrating the Ptolemies by such poetic luminaries as Callimachus of Cyrene, Theocritus of Syracuse, Apollonius of Rhodes and others.

Anecdotes about this library and its contents reveal that the aim of the Ptolemies was to take over the cultural and intellectual empire that had previously been claimed by Athens.<sup>11</sup> Thus, for example, Ptolemy Euergetes (III), probably king in Apollonius’ time, is said to have borrowed the original manuscripts of the Attic tragedians against a costly deposit of 20 talents of silver. He had these manuscripts copied with great care and then sent back the copies, keeping the originals. The purpose of this trick is clear: he who holds the originals, owns Greek literature.

Other anecdotes demonstrate that there was a marginal interest in the traditions of foreign cultures, including the famous tale of the translation of the Jewish *Pentateuch* by 72 scholars as commissioned by Ptolemy Soter (II) and the presence of Zoroastrian (Persian) writings in the Library. But generally speaking, one cannot escape the impression that ‘Greekness’ formed the dominant focus of the Library and *Mouseion* and that the incorporation of foreign texts into the Library in *Greek translation* somehow turned them into Greek annexations. A similar pattern of incorporating the Greek literary past can also be traced in the new poetry written by the scholar-poets of the Library, like Apollonius and Callimachus. By their manifold intertextual allusions to great works of the Greek past, they

carve out a position for themselves in Greek literary tradition, incorporate it into their own works and force their readers to acknowledge this fact.<sup>12</sup>

So what does this tell us about the alleged Egyptian element in Ptolemaic culture, particularly poetry, which has been the focus of much recent scholarship?<sup>13</sup> It is evident that the Ptolemies frequently had themselves represented in statuary as wholly Egyptian pharaohs.<sup>14</sup> Such statues are generally believed to emphasise the continuity of the ruling class (all previous rulers over Egypt and the Persian Achaemenids, who ruled before the conquest of Alexander, had had themselves represented in this fashion) and thus make Macedonian rule palatable to Egyptian subjects. Susan Stephens has argued that a similar ideology can also be traced in Ptolemaic literature. However, as critics of this approach point out,<sup>15</sup> the identification of Egyptian elements can sometimes depend on reading deeply between the lines or explaining broad cultural/religious parallels between Greece and Egypt as deliberately intended.<sup>16</sup> Even if such Egyptian elements are indeed present and intentional, the medium as well as the message are nevertheless different from the unequivocally Egyptian pharaonic statues of the Ptolemies. The Egyptian outlook in Hellenistic poetry is much more subdued and clearly not meant to encourage the Egyptians to accept the status quo. Unlike the visual arts, literary art at the Ptolemaic court was presumably intended first and foremost for the small ruling elite of Macedonians and Greeks, as Anatole Mori argues about the *Argonautica*:

On my view the poem frames the connection between the practical forms of (Greco-Macedonian) political authority and the celebration of (mainly Greek) cult practice for a Greek speaking audience, one that would have been gratified by tales of a divine mandate for Hellenic rule over Egypt.<sup>17</sup>

This is not to deny that it may well have been pleasant, perhaps even vital, for the Ptolemies to feel that the venerable but outlandish Egyptian culture, onto which they grafted themselves, was deeply, mythically entwined with their own Greek tradition; that Egypt, though strange, was not entirely alien. This can be related, for instance, to the generally accepted idea in antiquity that the Greek and Egyptian races had issued from the same roots via the involved mythological genealogies that eventually led to the twin brothers Aegyptus (eponymous father of the Egyptians) and Danaos (idem of the Danaans, that is to say, the Greeks).

To understand the importance of all this we must place the Hellenistic rule over Egypt in the long history of Greco-Egyptian relations and the Greek perception of Egypt. The Greeks had always felt a certain ambivalence towards Egypt. Herodotus, the sixth century BCE historian, famously treats Egypt as a kind of ‘topsy-turvy world’ where everything happens in a manner that is markedly un-Greek, especially with regard to gender reversal (2.35.2):<sup>18</sup>

Just as the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so, too, have they instituted customs and laws contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men stay at home and weave; and whereas

in weaving all others push the woof upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards. Men carry burdens on their heads, women on their shoulders. Women pass water standing, men sitting. They ease their bowels indoors, and eat out of doors in the streets, explaining that things unseemly but necessary should be done alone in private, things not unseemly should be done openly. (...) (Trans. A.D. Godley)

At the same time, Herodotus shows great respect for the venerable antiquity of Egyptian religious custom and wisdom.<sup>19</sup> This is the background against which we should see the Ptolemies' attitude towards matters Egyptian.

To return to the literary output that was financially encouraged by the Ptolemies, this cultural project advocates a compounded ideological message. On the one hand the incorporation of all earlier Greek learning and literature in a new Greco-Macedonian royal institution (the Library) was of the utmost importance; we may compare the way Alexander the Great subjected Athens, the cultural capital of the Greek world in his time, to Macedonian rule. On the other hand, we find the agenda of legitimising Greek/Macedonian rule over the East and in particular Egypt. Both these ideologies could be called expressions of cultural or ideological imperialism; the *Argonautica*, as I shall argue, incorporates both.

### **Egypt and Libya in the *Argonautica***

Regarding the mythological legitimising of Greek presence in Egypt, two passages in the *Argonautica* come to mind. One seems more concerned with Egyptian and Greek *identities* in the mythical age, and the other is more directly concerned with colonised *spaces*.

The first is the intriguing claim that the Colchians, inhabitants of Aea at the mouth of the river Phasis on the Eastern side of the Black Sea, were really Egyptians. It appears in the following context. After stealing Medea and the Fleece, the Argo is being followed by the hostile Colchians, who attempt to block their passage. Luckily, Argos, son of Phrixus, a half-Greek cousin of Medea, knows an alternative route back from Aea (Colchis) to Iolcus. (4.259-293) He learned of this route from ancient pillars that date from a primeval era, as the narrator recounts:

From [Egypt], they say, a man traveled all around Europe and Asia, relying on strength, might and courage of his soldiers. He founded countless cities on his way, some of which are perhaps still inhabited, others not, for a great stretch of time has since passed. Aea at least has continued to exist to this day, along with the descendants of those men whom that king settled to dwell in Aea. They, in fact, preserve their forefather's writings, pillars on which are found all the routes and boundaries of the sea and land for those who travel around them. (4.272-281, trans. Race)

There is a lot one could say about this passage regarding the *identity* of the Greeks and the inhabitants of the East. The passage clearly forms an adaptation of Herodotus (2.103.2-

104.1). In the first place, the mythical pharaoh it refers to, Sesonchosis (or Sesoosis), alias Sesostris, is mentioned by Herodotus in a similar tale to prove the Egyptian descent of the Colchians. Yet, as critics have remarked, he is described by Apollonius, in a way that could easily call to mind Alexander the Great, especially because his name is not given in the passage. There were earlier traditions that drew parallels between these two great campaigning kings.<sup>20</sup> The parallelism is enhanced in the context of the *Argonautica*, as Thalmann notes, by the fact that, unlike Herodotus, Apollonius describes Sesonchosis as a coloniser and founder of cities, not simply a conqueror.<sup>21</sup>

The implied equation of Colchians with Egyptians is equally important. It serves to explain a number of things about their customs, like their strange burial practices (3.200-209, they hang the bodies of their male dead in trees but bury their women), which is entirely in line with the Herodotean claim to the effect that the Egyptians were ‘most opposite to the other people’ in every way.<sup>22</sup> It is also relevant that the Colchian king Aeetes is a ‘son of Helios’, just as the Egyptian pharaohs were considered sons of the Sun god Amon.

This Egyptian angle acquires a highly relevant symbolism: the stealing of Medea and retrieval of the (originally Greek) Golden Fleece from Colchis by the Argonauts could be said symbolically to foreshadow the conquering of Egypt (which was under Persian rule during the time of Alexander) by the Greeks in the Hellenistic age. Herodotus uses the same pattern of stealing women ‘from the other side’ (either Greek or Eastern) throughout his first book to explain the causes of the eternal conflict between Greeks and barbarians (Herodotus 1.2-2.3 recounts the rapes of Io, Europa, Helen and Medea).

So Apollonius’ use of Herodotus’ identification of Colchians with Egyptians, who are, in this narrative, outsmarted by Greeks seems highly significant. It forms an implicit aetiology for Greek rule over Egyptian spaces and a typological template for later conflict between East and West. From this perspective, it is particularly attractive to relate the story of Jason and Medea’s unhappy marriage to the fact that Medea was eponymously considered the mother of the Medes by some, including Herodotus (7.62.1). This could well mean that their doomed liaison, like that of Dido and Aeneas in Vergil’s epic, symbolises the enmity between the descendants of Jason (the Greeks) and their arch-enemies, the Persians, often called ‘Medes’. Only after the Persian king Darius III had been conquered by Alexander at Gaugamela could this prototypical conflict between East and West be considered over, at least temporarily. We see a heavily Herodotean undertone colouring the whole Colchian episode, in which this specifically Herodotean identification of the Colchians as Egyptians is the key moment.

Keeping in mind the agenda of legitimising Greek rule over specifically over the *spaces* of North Africa, we can understand why so much is made in the *Argonautica* of the lengthy Libyan episode in book 4.1233-1620, which finds its most famous literary predecessor in Pindar’s fourth *Pythian Ode*.<sup>23</sup> After a storm, the Argonauts are beached on the shallows of the Syrtes on the coast of North Africa. This region is described throughout as eerily empty, lifeless, uncultivated and soundless, with a disconcerting blurring of the elements; sea, land and sky are all vast, undifferentiated expanses. This causes complete

disorientation in the Argonauts, a feeling that there is ‘nowhere to go’. What nature there is, is inverted: there is too much water, and it is too shallow; plants grow there rather than on land; and there is no animal, much less human, life (4.1235–1250). In short, the North African shore is presented as a pre-civilised landscape. The effect this has on the Argonauts is that they too revert to a pre-civilised state, break up their community and retreat into the desert to die alone. To their fortune, Jason is then accosted by the Libyan Herossae, indigenous goddesses clad in primitive goat-skins, with an oracle that lifts their desperation and helps them find their way again (4.1308–1362).

The Herossae advise the Argonauts to ‘carry their mother’, that is to say, the ship Argo, over the desert sands in the tracks of the horse of Poseidon. Thalmann convincingly reads this oracle as referring to the tradition of Greek foundation-oracles, which so often play key roles in Greek stories of colonisation and often turn on metaphors, equivocations and the like. He moreover contends that the Argo/mother should be read, in concordance with this oracular language, as symbolising in this passage the ‘motherland’ of the Argonauts, as a piece of Greek earth. This would turn the Argonauts’ heroic carriage of their vessel over the desert sands for twelve days and twelve nights into a kind of symbolic fertility rite, and confirm the colonising symbolism of the whole episode.<sup>24</sup> In addition, it may be noted that at a later stage in the Libyan episode the Hesperides, other local Libyan nymphs, symbolically grant the Argonauts a drink of water, while Triton, the sea god, offers a clod of earth to the individual Argonaut Euphemus as they depart from Libya. Combined, these gifts can be read as a symbolic surrendering of the territory, as we often find it in Herodotean histories.

As noted, the Argonaut Euphemus receives a clod of Libyan earth as a gift from Triton.<sup>25</sup> Euphemus disturbingly dreams that he nurses this clod at his breast in the form of a tiny woman, like a daughter, but later to his shame and horror he copulates with her. However, the clod-woman assuages his guilt by saying that she will turn out to be the nurse of Euphemus’ descendants, the island/nymph Calliste, not his blood relative. Euphemus casts the clod overboard, as per her request in the dream, and the island Calliste is born from it. Later this would come to be called Thera, and the Dorian Greeks would migrate from there to the Libyan region of the Cyrenaica, which still was a prosperous Greek city state in the third century BCE and practically next door to Alexandria.

The history of this Greek city in Libya is highly relevant to this passage. Although it became subject to Alexander the Great in 331 and was later practically annexed by the Ptolemies of Egypt, it seems to have long enjoyed a nominal independence. That is, until the marriage of Berenice, daughter of Cyrene’s king, to Ptolemy III Euergetes, the ruler in Apollonius’ time. From then until 96 BCE, Cyrene was completely under Ptolemaic rule. Depending on how we wish to date the epic, the Libyan episode may have had a great contemporary relevance for the dynasty.

In the typical binary oppositions at play in this kind of colonising myth, as Stephens observes, the Greeks play the role of the male in this passage; the female clod of earth (compare the local goddesses Herossae and the Hesperides) willingly subjects to domination (the common metaphor of ploughing and fertilising soil for sexual intercourse is

inverted here) and nurses and feeds the children of the coloniser. This is a foreshadowing of the peaceful and fruitful union of the coloniser and the colonised; we might even say it functions as a foil to the marriage of Jason and Medea. As Thalmann remarks, the fact that the clod that becomes Thera is a nurse and lover, nicely complements the fact that the Argo is the Greeks' true 'mother' and a piece of Greece: colonised land can never be a true mother, since her settlers are not indigenous, but she fulfils the role of nurse and lover willingly and well. The ultimate message is clear: the Greek presence in northern Africa had been divinely ordained to bear fruit ever since mythical times. In this sense the prophetic dream of Euphemus is surely the most important aetiology in the epic for Greeks in North Africa in the third century BCE.

### Aetiologies: *Altering Space*

This brings us to the topic of the many aetiological digressions in the *Argonautica*. Throughout the narrative it is emphasised that the Argonauts create lasting changes in landscapes they pass through by removing, replacing or impregnating former inhabitants, renaming places and leaving physical reminders of their passage in the form of graves, altars and other constructions. This makes un-Greek, often unclaimed, landscape 'Greek' by a physical token: 'Argo was here'. In many cases, such actions are described in the form of aetiological digressions which link the actions of the Argonauts with rituals, cults and settlements that can allegedly still be witnessed in the time of the epic's narrator and intended narratees (indicated by formulas like 'still to be seen', 'in later days' etc.).<sup>26</sup> As noted, this gives the world-view of the epic a distinctly teleological cast, focusing on the Hellenistic era and its Greek domination over the world as endpoint.

Many of these *aitia* revolve around the institution of religious cults by the important Argonaut Orpheus and bear a seal of divine approval.<sup>27</sup> When the mythical bard Orpheus is introduced in the epic, it is significant that he is the first to be named in the heroic catalogue, that he possibly functions as a kind of intratextual alter ego of the narrator<sup>28</sup> and that he is able to make nature (i.e. space) comply to his music:

And [Orpheus], they say, charmed the hard boulders on the mountains and the course of rivers with the sound of his songs. And the wild oak trees, signs still to this day of his singing, flourish on the Thracian shore of Zone where they stand in dense, orderly rows, the ones he led forth from Pieria, charmed by his lyre. (1.26-31)

The Argonaut Heracles is another central figure in the epic as the personification of heroic strength. Unlike Orpheus he changes nature by the force of his hands. He eradicates trees (1.1188-1205), creates springs (4.1441-1449) and kills monsters (1.989-1011) and snakes (4.1433-1435). His role in the community of the Argonauts is, from the start, that of an outsider. As semi-divine son of Zeus, he is literally too big for the ship and its crew: in a subtly humorous scene in the first book he even breaks his oar because he rows so much harder than his comrades (1.1160-1171). This finally results in his being left behind by accident in Mysia, where he (the only apparently pederastic crew member) goes off in

search of his squire/*eromenos* Hylas. Occasionally, the Argonauts catch glimpses of him as he crosses the earth before them, always far off in the distance, a divine trailblazer riding the world of monsters. In this context it seems relevant that Alexander the Great famously included Heracles as one of his heroic ancestors.<sup>29</sup> To see Heracles as prefiguring Alexander, in some senses, does not seem implausible. He stands to the Successor Kings (like the Ptolemies) as Heracles stands to the rest of the heroic crew of the Argo: a larger, more heroic, even semi-divine trailblazer who conquers and Hellenises far-flung regions.

## Scholarly Geography in the *Argonautica*: The Armchair Traveler

As we have seen, the many aetiological digressions in the epic are a way for the Apollonian narrator to claim that heroic Greeks had left their civilising marks on a large territory surrounding the Mediterranean and eastwards around the Black Sea. Special emphasis seems to be reserved for the North African-Egyptian connection.

How may we link this observation with the celebrated learnedness of the narrator? Let us begin with a look at Apollonius' representation of geography. Throughout, the Argo's route is mapped with great precision, often almost in the style of a scientific work. The first leg of the journey from Iolcus to Colchis (books 1-3) is fairly straightforward. Apollonius follows traditions that presented the natural course towards Colchis through the Bosphorus and along the southern shore of the Black Sea. Argo's return, on the other hand, is odd. There were various traditional routes, namely retracing the same path on the way back, passing through a river network in north-western Europe, traveling through the Adriatic and Ligurian seas surrounding Italy, or crossing North Africa.<sup>30</sup> Instead of limiting himself to one of these, Apollonius *combines* them with some very unlikely results. In fact, it seems probable that one of the epic's aims was the combination of various routes of the Argo as found in previous poets and contemporary scientific sources.<sup>31</sup> It is probably useless to ask what Apollonius actually believed to be (scientifically) true; the point is that he includes what he has been told, following the Argo's progress 'on an imaginary map on which earlier poets and historians have left their marks: signposts that cannot be ignored by a Hellenistic writer.'<sup>32</sup>

This project of combining earlier poetical/scientific geographies in the *Argonautica* is, as I claim, also part of what one could call Apollonius' ideological or panegyric agenda: he shows that all previous Greek traditions converge in his own work. To make the *tour de force* of this combination of previous traditions especially noticeable, he often marks out the Argo's geographical detours with emphatic invocations of the Muses, goddesses of poetic inspiration who in Hellenism had become more or less the personifications of Greek poetic tradition, to show he is patching together different accounts.

A striking example of this procedure is 4.552-556. Before embarking on the most Odyssean stretch of the Argo's journey (around the Western coast of Italy, where mythical geography traditionally located the places of Odysseus' adventures as recounted in Homer's *Odyssey*), the narrator asks the Muses how it is possible that traces of the Argo

are to be seen beyond the Adriatic Sea and Italy. This is certainly not where the Argonauts were heading at this point in the narrative, so they must have made a very strange and unexpected turn to arrive at the west coast of Italy: ‘But goddessess [Muses], how is it that beyond this sea around the Ausonian land and the Ligystian islands (which are called the Stoechades) countless traces of the Argo are clearly to be seen?’ In this way, marked by an invocation to the Muse, the stitching together of different poetic traditions becomes apparent. It is clearly marked out as such.<sup>33</sup>

The fact that Apollonius’ scholarly and poetic work mainly took place in a royal establishment dedicated to research and the literary arts called the *Mouseion*, literally ‘Shrine of the Muses’, helps us see that his invocations of these goddesses might actually stand for his browsing in the adjacent or incorporated Library to create his version of the mythical tale of the Argonauts’ journey, which had been told countless times in varying versions before. From Alexandria, and from within the great Ptolemaic establishment of the Library and *Mouseion*, aided and inspired by his reading of the most famous and most obscure writings from the Greek literary and scholarly tradition, the armchair traveler Apollonius is able to imagine and chart the journey of these mythical Greek heroes to the most exotic of places. The narrative of the Argo’s journey thus both encompasses and claims as Greek the physical world as well as the mythical or literary world. Indeed, it shows how all stories pertaining to this world, both realistic and fantastic, are ultimately available in the greatest shrine of Greek culture, the Ptolemaic Library.

## Conclusion

To conclude my essay, I return to Apollonius’ description of Orpheus. Orpheus is the archetypical Greek mythical bard, and his prominent inclusion in the *Argonautica* is often interpreted by scholars as a symbolic intratextual representation of Apollonius’ poetical persona. With this interpretation at the back of our minds, let us look again at the text introducing Orpheus.

And [Orpheus], they say, charmed the hard boulders on the mountains and the course of rivers with the sound of his songs. And the wild oak trees, signs still to this day of his singing, flourish on the Thracian shore of Zone where they stand in dense, orderly rows, the ones he led forth from Pieria, charmed by his lyre. (1.26-31)

I suggest that the Greek phrasing of ‘dense, orderly rows’ ( $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\eta\varsigma\ \sigma\tau\chi\kappa\omega\sigma\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ ) alludes to hexameter verse; it may also be recalled that the Greek rhetorical term for poetic material was  $\tilde{\nu}\lambda\eta$  (wood),<sup>34</sup> which seems to be hinted at by the orderly rows of oak trees. That Orpheus leads them down from Pieria, country of the Muses, makes it likely that ‘poetical material’ is symbolically referred to. Orpheus functions as a metaphor for the poet Apollonius because he is ordering and harmonising traditional literary material to establish a unified narrative about the Argonauts, ‘proof’ of which is then provided by the (still visible) traces left in Argo’s wake. Similarly, Orpheus leaves his marks on the landscape by

his songs, with lasting results: the trees he has charmed with his song remain to this day as signs of his singing.<sup>35</sup>

The mastery over poetic tradition and (geographic) knowledge, here symbolised by Orpheus' powerful singing that orders space, can also form an important way of building an empire. This is confirmed by the metapoetical vignette of Amphion and Zethus building the walls of Thebes, one of the vignettes described in the *ekphrasis* of Jason's cloak (1.721-768), his weapon of seduction when he goes to meet the Lemnian queen Hypsipyle. This cloak has been made by the goddess Athena and represents many scenes that clearly carry symbolic significance for various major themes in the epic.<sup>36</sup> Thus the vignette showing the goddess Aphrodite mirroring herself in the shield of the god Ares seems to foreshadow the motif of how (Medea's) love eventually helps Jason achieve his martial aim (the conquest of the Golden Fleece). Additionally, the vignette representing the mythical heroes Amphion and Zethus building the city walls of Thebes depicts Amphion effortlessly making the boulders move to the sound of his lyre (like Orpheus), while Zethus uses strenuous physical force (like Heracles). But both efforts are ultimately constructive:

And on it were the twins sons of Antiope, Asopus' daughter, Amphion and Zethus. Nearby was Thebes, still without towers, whose foundation stones they were just now laying with great zeal. Zethus was carrying the top of a high mountain on his shoulders, like a man toiling hard, but after him came Amphion, playing loudly on his golden lyre and a boulder twice as big followed in his footsteps. (1.735-741)

Interpreted in an ideological vein, this mythical vignette may suggest that he who masters *mousike*, the art of the Muses, can move mountains like Amphion or Orpheus.

This would have been a welcome message for the Ptolemies, founders of the greatest Library on earth and its famous *Mouseion*. For them, political, economic and military power (as symbolised in the epic perhaps by Heracles and Zethus, and in reality by their conquering predecessor Alexander) was only part of the story. They backed up their claims of territorial rule with claims of universal literary and cultural hegemony, based on the appropriation of the Greek tradition. They controlled it with scholarship and philology and added to it with the composition of new poetry and scholarship by state-funded poet-scholars in the *Mouseion* and the Library. Apollonius, the head librarian, philological scholar of Homer and creative poet of a mythical Greek travel epic, embodies all of these ambitions.

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## Notes

1. Hunter (1993: 3).
2. Excellent work on the narrative structure of the *Argonautica* has been done by e.g. Fusillo (1985); Cuypers (2004: 43-62); Morrison (2007: 271-312). The Homeric vocabulary has been the focus of work by Campbell (1983) and Rengakos (2003).
3. For Jason as anti-hero, cf. Lawall (1966: 121-169).
4. Bakhtin (1981: 15).
5. Cf. 1.1058; 1.1345; 2.841-4; 2.851-7; 2.864-50; 4.1620-2; 1.1145-9; 2.604-606; 4.1444; 4.1755.
6. Cf. Clauss (2000: 26); Klooster (2007: 66); Thalmann (2011: 39-41).
7. Thalmann (2011: 53-76).
8. Stephens (2000: 195-215); (2003); (2005); Newman (2001: 309-341); Mori (2008).
9. For the layout and topography of ancient Alexandria, see Fraser (1972).
10. Cf. resp. Bourdieu (1993), Assmann (1997). For this aspect of the Library and its poet-scholars, see Klooster (2011).
11. Cf. Too (2010: 17-81).
12. See e.g. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Acosta-Hughes (2010); Klooster (2011).
13. E.g. Selden 1998; Stephens (2001); (2003); Hunter (2003).
14. See e.g. Empereur (1998) for images.
15. See e.g. Mori (2008: 9).
16. It has to be admitted that both Stephens (2003) and Selden (1998) identify striking parallels between Egyptian myth/literature and Hellenistic ones. The importance of such passages would seem to lie in an attempt at syncretism.
17. Mori (2008: 9); Stephens (2000: 195-215) also acknowledges this as part of the message of Hellenistic poetry, in particular the *Argonautica*.
18. This is remarkably similar to Apollonius' description of the customs of the peoples on the shores of the Black Sea, the Chalybes, Tibareni and Mossynoikoi, as well as the Amazons and the Colchians. In general, the reversal of genders is a recurrent theme in the epic.
19. Cf. e.g. Isocrates *Busiris*.
20. Stephens (2000: 200). A parallel between Sesoosis and Alexander had already been drawn by Hecataeus of Abdera (third century BCE). According to D. S. 1.55.2-3, first century BCE). Alexander is called the new Sesonchosis in Ps. Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* (1.34.22)
21. Thalmann (2011: 42-47).
22. Cf. Fusillo (1985: 159-67); Stephens (2000: 198-99), Thalmann (2011: 42-47).
23. That this is the ideological background of the episode has been stressed by Stephens (2000); (2003); Clauss (2000: 11-32); Mori (2008) and Thalmann (2011). The Libyan episode's

most famous literary adaptation is in Pindar's *Pythian 4*, but Apollonius seems to mix in elements from other versions. The colonisation of Cyrene also forms the topic of Herodotus book 4. It was apparently also treated by Hesiod and Antimachus.

24. Thalmann (2011: 89-91).
25. This is also the name of the god of the Nile, elsewhere in the epic, viz. 4.260.
26. See Fusillo (1985); Hunter (1993); Klooster (2007: 63-81), Danek (2009), Köhnken (2010: 136-151). Examples of human constructions are: 1.1058-1062: the grave of Cyzicus; 1.1345: a city founded by Polypheus; 2.841-4: the grave of Idmon; 2.851-7: the grave of Typhis; 2.864-850; 4.1620-2: temples to Triton and Poseidon. Examples of changes in nature (often but not always with help of semi-divine intervention) are: 1.1145-9: a spring created by Rhea; 2.604-606: the Symplegades become fixed; 4.1444: a spring created by Heracles; 4.1755: a clod of earth becomes Calliste.
27. For Orpheus as an ordering force, cf. Clare (2002: 231-260). Other examples of the power of his song are: 1.569-574: fishes swim in the wake of Argo; 2.161-3: the shore is charmed (*iainetos*) by his song; twice Orpheus' song is indirectly linked to the creation/finding of a spring: 1.1140-1151-2; 4. 1423-1430.
28. Cf. Klooster (2011: 75-91), with references to earlier literature.
29. Cf. e.g. the contemporary Theocritus *Idyll* 17.20-27.
30. Cf. Delage (1930: 51-54; 277-291). The return via the north-western rivers is derived from Timaeus and Timagetus; the Mediterranean episode is partly Homeric and partly derived from Timaeus; the Libyan episode is found in Hesiod, Pindar, Herodotus and Antimachus. There are in fact also traditions he refutes: namely that the Argo returned via Oceanus (so Hesiod, Pindar, Hecataeus and Antimachus), which is pointedly denied by Apollonius: Hera warns the Argonauts not to enter Oceanus in 4.634-644. Alternatively, the Argo could have returned the same way it came (so Callimachus).
31. Cf. Delage (1930, *passim*); cf. Meyer (2001: 219; 222; 234).
32. Meyer (2001: 227).
33. On Apollonius' relation with the Muses, see González (2000: 270-292); Morrison (2007: 271-312); Klooster (2011: 209-222). This process of pointing out that there were contrary or famous literary traditions on which Apollonius based his account is marked by many Muse-invocations throughout the epic. They frequently refer to localities or names, such as at 2.844-845; 4.982-992; 4.1381-1387.
34. Cf. Plb. 2.16.14; Longinus; 13.4, 43.1, Arist. *EN* 1094b12; Phld. Rh. 2.124.
35. Cf. Klooster (2011: 76-77); Thalmann (2011: 32) also sees the figure of Orpheus as symbolising the ordering of the material of the epic.
36. The interpretation of the cloak is attempted by many scholars; see the bibliography in Fusillo (1985) and Manakidou (1992). Bulloch (2006: 44-68) suggests there is a deeper correspondence with the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women, which obliquely reflects on the sinister turn Jason's relation with Medea will take. I hold (Klooster 2012: 72-75) that there is a polyvalent symbolism present in many of the vignettes.



# The *Epitaphios*, civic ideology and the cityscape of classical Athens

## Space and cultural memory\*

Mathieu de Bakker

### Introduction

Within the corpus of Athenian oratory inherited from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE a separate sub-category consists of *Epitaphioi* ‘funeral orations’. Its six extant samples can be divided into three (mostly) complete orations, ascribed to Lysias (ca. 390 BCE), Demosthenes (338 BCE) and Hyperides (322 BCE), two orations that are embedded in literary works (Pericles’ famous oration of 430 BCE in Thucydides’ *Histories*, 2.35-46 and Plato’s subtle parody of the genre in his *Menexenus*, 236d4-249c8) and one fragmentary rhetorical exercise that has come down to us under the name of Gorgias. The orations have many characteristics in common. One of them was their performative context. They were recited, or meant to be recited, in the vicinity of the *dēmosion séma* (lit. ‘public grave’) at the Ceramicus, Athens’ state cemetery, on the occasion of the ceremonial burial of the cremated remains of those who had fallen in campaigns in the previous season.<sup>1</sup>

An elaborate description of this ceremony is found in Thucydides’ *Histories*, in the introduction to Pericles’ *Epitaphios*, which is embedded in the narrative of the first year of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta and their allies (431-430 BCE):

In the same winter the Athenians, following their ancestral custom, gave a public funeral for those who had been the first to die in the war. These funerals are held in the following way: two days before the ceremony the bones of the fallen are brought and put in a tent which has been erected, and people make whatever offerings they wish to their own dead. Then there is a funeral procession in which coffins of cypress wood are carried on wagons. There is one coffin for each tribe, which contains the bones of members of that tribe. ... Everyone who wishes to, both citizens and foreigners, can join in the procession, and the women who are related to the dead are there to make their laments at the tomb. The bones are laid in the public burial-place (*dēmosion séma*), which is in the most beautiful quarter outside the city walls. ... When the bones have been laid in the earth, a man chosen by the city for his intellectual gifts and for his general reputation makes an appropriate speech in praise of the dead... (Thucydides, *Histories* 2.34, transl. Warner with minor adaptations)

\* I thank the editors of this volume for their useful comments on an earlier version of this paper and Nina King for her English corrections.

In his description of the ceremony, Thucydides singles out the Ceramicus as ‘the most beautiful quarter outside the city walls’.<sup>2</sup> The cemetery owed its name to the adjacent potters’ (*kerameis*) quarter and covered an area north-west of the city, just outside the Dipylon Gate and the walls that had been built at the instigation of Themistocles in 478 BCE. It can be seen as a typical transitional or ‘liminal’ space, mediating between life and death as much as between city and countryside. Across the cemetery ran the ‘sacred’ road that linked the city to the sanctuary of Demeter and Korè in Eleusis, where the Athenians celebrated the popular ritual of the Mysteries. Every year the Athenians marked the close affiliation between city and sanctuary by means of a procession that moved across the Ceramicus.<sup>3</sup> Of equal importance was the Panathenaic procession in honor of the city’s patron goddess Athena. It moved across the ‘Dromos’, the other road that crossed the Ceramicus, which, flanked by prestigious grave monuments, ran from the Academy through the Dipylon Gate, via the Agora to the Parthenon temple on the Acropolis, on whose friezes the procession was displayed and eternally re-enacted (see map 1). Thus the Ceramicus was a crucial part of various state-ceremonies that were staged to forge, uphold and reinvigorate the Athenians’ sense of collective political and religious identity.

With a view of the Acropolis, the city’s religious heart, and studded with sculptures, graves and inscriptions, the Ceramicus proved an ideal setting for a public ceremony to commemorate the virtues of those who had fallen on behalf of the city. Its panoramic backdrop breathed solemnity and civic pride, and this is reflected in the extant *Epitaphioi*, which celebrate the heroism of the war-dead, whose acts are glorified as, and taken as an example of, selfless sacrifice on behalf of the collective ideals and interests of the state.

The *Epitaphioi* have primarily been studied as textual artifacts, often in connection to questions about their function within society.<sup>4</sup> The speeches facilitate comparison as they revolve around the same popular mythological, historical and ideological topics, such as, respectively, the war against the Amazons, the victory over the Persians, and the popular concept of Athenian autochthony.<sup>5</sup> These topics are, however, mirrored in the ceremonial context of the orations too, as was observed by Tonio Hölscher:

During the burial ceremony ... a speech was delivered by a leading statesman; it awarded a place to the fallen citizens in a string of famous ancestors who in mythical times defeated the Amazons and captured Troy, later dispelled the Persians and finally beat their Greek foes, *its content thus conforming to the representations upon the city’s monuments.* (Hölscher, 2010: 145; my italics)<sup>6</sup>

In this contribution I will explore the relationship between the content of the funeral orations and their spatial context in more detail, and look into the various ways in which they are interrelated and in which the ceremonial space can be ‘lived’ by the audience of the oration. I hope to demonstrate that the monuments on and the panoramic backdrop around the Ceramicus helped the orator in conveying his message of the continuity of Athens’ democratic ideals of individual and collective liberty and selflessness on behalf of the *polis* and of Greece as a whole.

To begin with I will zoom in on the spatial context itself and discuss in more detail the ways in which the Ceramicus can be described as a place that was ‘lived ... experienced and valued’ by the Athenians ‘in an ideological relation to society and power’, to use the phrasing of the editors in the introduction to this volume. I will include in this paragraph some observations that seek to qualify the adequacy of the popular phrase *lieu de mémoire* (‘place of memory’) to describe sites like the Ceramicus where rituals of remembrance are arranged and memory is actively encouraged and manipulated. Turning thereupon to the individual *Epitaphioi*, I will reassess aspects of their interpretation against the background of their spatial context. I will begin with the two samples of *Epitaphioi* that are embedded in larger literary works (Thucydides’ *Histories* and Plato’s *Menexenus*), as they reveal to us the importance of the ceremonial context, which both authors use to suggest interpretations that question and even undermine the ideological content of the speeches themselves. Next, I will zoom in on the ‘scripts’ of Lysias, Demosthenes and Hyperides, and discuss passages that can be related to monuments in the surroundings and thereby gain significance.<sup>7</sup>

## Ceremonial Space in Athens

A nowadays popular term to describe space as it is ‘lived’ in the context of ceremonies related to a city’s or nation’s past, is Pierre Nora’s ‘*lieu de mémoire*’. It should be realized, however, that Nora coined this expression as part of a larger theoretical discussion in which he placed – in the footsteps of the influential sociologist Maurice Halbwachs – history and memory in fundamental opposition to one another:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.

(Nora, 1989:8)<sup>8</sup>

Nora considers the emergence of entities experienced as *lieux de mémoire* in conjunction with the rise of history as a scientific discipline, and with a more complicated, mediated manner in which collective cultural memory is experienced within modern societies. As the ultimate cause behind this development he postulates ‘the acceleration’ of history, a process that he identifies with the growth of nation states and the fusion of the world into one global society.<sup>9</sup> As a result, local identity is put under pressure and therefore the need increased of ‘*lieux de mémoire*’, instituted places of (collective) remembrance, represented by monuments, rituals, festivals or any other spatial or temporal entity that may symbolize, express, or organize memory in a coherent and recognizable way for those who witness, receive or take part in them.

According to Nora the emergence of the *lieu de mémoire* coincided with the disappearance of the *milieu de mémoire*, ‘environment of memory’, where memory is not objectivized and crystallized, but, a place that

is communal, belongs to public life, functions through a network of associations with diverse places, spaces, and groups, relies upon metonymic constructions, and, like human memory, condenses, abridges, alters, displaces, and projects fragments of the past, making them alive in the present for particular groups (Nelson, 2003: 74).

Thus a *milieu de mémoire* is not a site whose ‘past-ness’ is remembered as past, but a spatial realm where memory offers itself in a continuous unmediated and unfashioned dialogue with the present. Nora associates *milieux de mémoire* with pastoral and peasant cultures that renew their memory continually through oral rather than written means.

Nora’s strict distinction between memory and history has been challenged by specialists in the field of memory studies, who take as their point of departure the assumption that our understanding – and therefore any attempts at reconstruction – of the past is always affected by the present and therefore continually shifting. Important in this area is the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, whose concept ‘cultural memory’ nowadays dominates debates about the relationship between space, remembrance and society:

The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose “cultivation” serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity. (Assmann 1995: 132)<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Nora and his school, memory studies generally assume a continuation through history of the ways in which humans seek to organise and objectivise their memory within societies. Depending upon place and time, this process may happen spontaneously, driven by the need of a group to express or identify itself in a particular manner, but it may also be, or become, part of an ideological agenda set in motion by those in power, with the intention of exerting control or steering a society into a certain direction.

Unless one rejects the dichotomy of history versus memory that is implied in the term *lieu de mémoire* and employs the term ‘theory-free’, it makes more sense to follow Assmann’s emphasis on continuation and define the Ceramicus as a ‘site of cultural memory’.<sup>11</sup> As such, it played a major role in the transfer and advertisement of concepts related to Athenian ideology. These were mirrored, first, in concrete images of the Athenian (mythical) past that were (re)presented, (a) in the temporal sense, by the content of the orations, (b) in the spatial sense, by the temples, grave-monuments, inscriptions, sculptures and paintings that constituted the site’s ceremonial backdrop, and (c) in the spatio-temporal sense, by the processions that crossed the site on the way to Eleusis and the Acropolis or the ceremonial burial of the war dead at the *démosion séma*. Second, the petrified shapes of the monuments on and around the Ceramicus emphasized what was probably the single

most important item of Athenian political propaganda, the idea of continuity of habitation and rule of the Athenians citizens over their own soil from which they had sprung forth themselves. This ‘myth’ of Athenian autochthony recurs as a topic in extant funeral orations<sup>12</sup>, and also accounts for their typical structure in which mythological topics seamlessly switch to historical ones.<sup>13</sup> Thus in a subtle and seemingly inadvertent manner, the *Epitaphioi* suggest an uninterrupted tradition of Athenian core values such as liberty, selflessness and martial excellence, each associated with Athens’ democratic constitution.<sup>14</sup>

Although the anachronism in the use of the term *lieu de mémoire* itself may be problematic, Nora’s idea of ‘acceleration’ of history certainly turns out to be useful – though rid of connotations with a dichotomy of history versus memory – in explaining the inclination of the Athenians of this period to ‘petrify’ and thereby spatially anchor their past through monuments.<sup>15</sup> ‘Acceleration’ need not be time-bound to the 19th century and the growth of the nation state: it can also apply to antiquity. Owing to a unique set of circumstances – some of them related to the physical, geological and climatological layout of Attica and therefore part of the *longue durée*, and others, like the fall of the tyrants and the advent of the Persians typical *événements* – post-Kleisthenic Athens became an increasingly restless society that seemed continually ‘on the move’, engaged in campaigns abroad whilst often besieged at home. It survived assaults of Persians and Greeks, built itself an empire in the Aegean, fought a war of attrition against Sparta, rebuilt its city after its traumatic defeat to the Peloponnesians (404 BCE) and the subsequent rogue regime of the Thirty (404-403 BCE), and gradually regained its prominent position among the Greeks in the course of the fourth century until it capitulated to Macedonian power after the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE. All this came with a price. In the fifth century alone the Attic countryside had to be evacuated twice, and apart from casualties due to plagues, droughts and other natural disasters, the city lost scores of hoplites and marines in expeditions overseas, the most striking of which were the defeats against the Thracians (at Drabeskos, ca. 465 BCE), the Egyptians (460/59 BCE, cf. ML 33) and the Sicilians (413 BCE). The popularity of Athenian beliefs in autochthony and uninterrupted habitation may result from an unconscious desire to balance the flux, restlessness and instability. It coincided with a desire to remember and create sites of cultural memory that expressed the permanence, both of the city’s physical layout and, metonymically, of its mentality throughout the ages. Let us now turn to the *Epitaphioi* and look into the ways in which they function within this larger ceremonial context.

### **The ‘embedded’ *Epitaphioi* of Thucydides and Plato and the question of space and speech**

To begin with, we need to look into the ‘embedded’ *Epitaphioi* of Thucydides and Plato. Their speeches were not delivered at the ceremony in the form in which they were written down, but were meant to encourage reflection on the genre as they interact both with their own literary context in which they are embedded and with the Athenian tradition of *Epitaphioi*. As we saw above, Thucydides’ specimen is preceded by a description of the ceremonial context that hints at the sensitivity of the orators and their audience to the

interplay between speech and space, and thus can be helpful in evaluating the content of the funeral orations of Lysias, Demosthenes and Hyperides that stand alone.

Thucydides and Plato were, each in their own ways, traumatised by events that they believed had resulted from excesses of the civic ideology that was celebrated in such glowing terms in the funerary oratory of their fellow-Athenians. Thucydides was exiled during the Peloponnesian War after losing Amphipolis, an Athenian stronghold in the northern Aegean, to the Spartan commander Brasidas (424/3 BCE). He lived to see the end of the war, but it is not known whether he returned to his native city. Plato witnessed the death-sentence of his charismatic teacher Socrates (399 BCE) on charges of *asebeia* ('impiety') and of corrupting youth, held up by a law-court under the renewed democracy in Athens a few years after the fall of the Thirty. Both authors connected their *Epitaphioi* to Pericles, the great Athenian statesman of the second half of the fifth century BCE who was responsible for many successful campaigns as *stratēgos* ('commander'), and architect of a naval strategy that gave Athens – against the odds – an advantage over the Spartans in the initial years of the Peloponnesian War.

### **Pericles' funeral oration as it is presented in Thucydides' *Histories***

Thucydides presents Pericles' funeral oration (2.35-46), held at the end of the first campaigning season of the Peloponnesian War (431-430 BCE), as a historical event, and is thus bound by his promise to keep himself 'as closely as possible to the general content of speeches which were actually delivered' (Thuc. 1.22.1).<sup>16</sup> We therefore do not know exactly to what extent he manipulated Pericles' oration, which deviates from the other *Epitaphioi* as it passes over concrete mythological and historical precedents of Athenian greatness – autochthony, the Persian Wars and the Athenian empire are summarily mentioned (2.36.1-4) – and also leaves aside ostentatious praise of the war-dead. Instead, we find a utopian panegyric of the qualities and moral principles of the Athenian state and its inhabitants (2.37-42). In the consolatory part of the speech, Pericles lists the difficulties faced by those bereaved of their relatives but also points at ways in which they can continue to contribute to the city and its empire (2.43-45).

Thucydides makes Pericles' funeral oration part of a larger episode that foregrounds Pericles as an effective leader of the unruly Athenians in a time of crisis.<sup>17</sup> It begins with his representation of Pericles' speech in the Assembly in response to the Spartan demand that Athens gives up its empire (1.140-144), and covers the first half of the second book, in which apart from the funeral oration (2.35-46) two further speeches are ascribed to him, one in the Athenian Assembly, where he seeks to encourage the Athenians when they face the daunting prospect of a Peloponnesian attack (2.13), and the other to calm their anger as a result of the plague and the invasion of the Peloponnesians and the destruction of the countryside of Attica (2.60-64). Thucydides rounds off this episode when Pericles dies, with a reflection on his character and his extraordinary talents for knowing how to hold the city in check. He praises his foresight, charisma, selflessness and incorruptibility (2.65). A key phrase in this character judgement summarises the tension between the Athenian utopia as expressed in his funeral oration, with its emphasis on harmony between private and

public interests and on the selfless involvement of all citizens, and the actual political situation:

It became a democracy in name (*logōi*), but in reality (*ergōi*) a rule by its first man (2.65.8)

Thucydides illustrates this contrast between words (*logoi*) and reality (*erga*) in the spatial context of the funeral oration. The introduction to the oration, which I quoted at the start of this essay, is unique in its length compared to other introductions to speeches in the *Histories*. Thucydides' attention to detail in this passage reveals his sensitivity to the spatial backdrop of the state funeral, and shows his awareness of its effects on the audience. It is within this setting that he makes Pericles mount the platform to give his oration:

And when the moment arrived, he came forward from the grave to a platform that was made high, so that he could be heard over the greatest possible extent by the crowd, and spoke along the following lines... (2.34.8, transl. based on Rusten 1989)

This is the only instance in Thucydides of an orator mounting a platform before his speech. The description befits the position of Pericles rising 'high' (*hupsēlon*), as a one-man ruler, above the Athenian 'crowd' (*homilou*). In harmony with Thucydides' statement in his character judgment, Pericles covers up the reality (*erga*) of the situation by his words (*logoi*), as he seeks to play down his role in the ceremony and gain the sympathy of the audience along the traditional oratorical precept of *conciliare* ('win over the audience'), considering it impossible to speak adequately at such an occasion:

'Most of those who have already spoken here used to praise the person who added this speech (*logon*) to the ceremony, considering it good practice that it is spoken in the case of those who are buried after dying in war. I would have thought it to be sufficient, however, for tributes to men who have become heroes by their deeds (*ergōi*) to be displayed by way of deeds (*ergōi*), too, such as you can see have now also been prepared around this grave at public expense, and for the virtues of many not to be endangered by one man (*heni andri*), as belief depends on his speaking well or poorly.' (2.35.1, transl. based on Rusten 1989)

In the setting and opening words of the funeral oration Thucydides illustrates, in spatial terms, Pericles' ambiguous position as *de facto* one-man ruler in democratic Athens. Pericles tactfully plays down his role and masks the reality of his elevated position behind his wish that the oration was not held and the deceased had only been honoured by deeds such as described by Thucydides himself in the preceding paragraph. Thus, using the backdrop of the state funeral at the Ceramicus, Thucydides explains the initial successes of Periclean policy in the war against Sparta, but also hints at the vulnerability of Athens, which depends on the singular qualities of one statesman to keep its volatile 'crowd' (*homilos*) at bay. This picture undermines the utopian image that Pericles presented in his oration of

Athens as a city of equality, ambition and selfless involvement of every single individual. In the subsequent detailed description of the plague and implosion of Athenian society (2.49–54.1) Thucydides further explores the incompatibility between words and reality in Periclean Athens and breaks down various slogans that are found in funerary oratory, repeating them – in some cases almost literally – in the context of illness and social distress.<sup>18</sup>

### **Plato's *Epitaphios in the Menexenus***

In his dialogue *Menexenus* Plato targets the genre in a different way by making Socrates' voice a specimen that was allegedly taught to him by Aspasia, Pericles' wife, and that contained 'leftovers' (*perileimmata*, 236b) of the speech that Pericles held and that was embedded in Thucydides' *Histories* (see above). The dialogue has raised many questions, not in the least for its blatant anachronisms as it stages Socrates thirteen years after his death (399 BCE), honouring the Athenians that fell in the Corinthian War (386 BCE).<sup>19</sup> Most scholars acknowledge ironic undertones, but agree that it is certainly not a straightforward parody.<sup>20</sup> The oration honours those who died in the Corinthian war and refers to topical mythological and historical events, most of which Socrates connects to Athenian greatness and the selfless sacrifice of its citizens, even when they concern stains on Athenian history like the civil war in Athens (243d–244b). Plato's targets may have been Lysias and Pericles<sup>21</sup>, and there is certainly irony when Socrates claims to have learned the oration from Aspasia, Pericles' wife and Socrates' 'teacher' (*didaskalos*, 236c). Her prominence contrasts with the role that Thucydides' Pericles awards to women in his Athenian utopia, where he admonishes them to avoid having a reputation among the males, 'whether for virtue or for reproach' (Thuc. 2.45.2).

Although Plato makes Socrates quote the speech outside its ceremonial context, he certainly envisages it to be held at the *dēmosion séma*, as he refers to the war-dead of the battles of Tanagra and Oenophyta that were fought by Myronides (on whom see below, 242a–c), to those who fell at Sphacteria (242d) and in Sicily (242e–243). Of each group he points out that they are 'buried here' (*enthade keintai*), thus evoking the ceremonial context of the *dēmosion séma*. Socrates also, however, mentions the failure to recover the corpses in the sea-battle of Arginusae (406 BCE, 243c), which brought the Athenians to the regretful decision to sentence the victorious generals to death. He wryly comments that the marines of this campaign were 'not ... buried here' (*ouk ... keintai enthade*), and met a fate they did not deserve. Such explicit references to painful episodes in Athenian history are usually left implicit in funerary oratory by 'shrouded' referencing.<sup>22</sup> In this case, however, the reference is made more poignant by an evocation of the ceremonial context of the public burial, which could not be awarded to the marines who died in this particular sea-battle. In referring to this incident, Plato reminds his readers of the excess of popular anger against the victorious generals which led to their death-sentence, and thereby suggests his discontent with the volatile Athenian democracy at the end of the 5th century that failed to act in the interest of the state. Via subtle ways Plato seeks to question Athenian ideology as it is expressed in funerary oratory and hints at excesses that resulted from it. The inclusion

of the spatial setting in his playful irony reveals to what extent the speeches were experienced as an integral part to a ceremonial whole that included the Ceramicus and the panoramic backdrop of the Athenian cityscape.

### The *Epitaphioi* of Lysias, Demosthenes and Hyperides

Having used the embedded funeral orations of Thucydides and Plato to show the importance of the ceremonial space in which the speeches were delivered, I now turn to the three *Epitaphioi* of which (almost) complete scripts have been left to look for possible ways in which they interact with their spatial context. The longest sample has come down to us under Lysias' name. Doubts about the authorship and function of the speech do not preclude an investigation into its performative setting, as the speech is intended for an audience present at the public burial at the Ceramicus.<sup>23</sup> In this specific case it concerns the hoplites who had assisted Corinth in its war against Sparta (395-386).<sup>24</sup> After the proem (1-2), the orator focuses on Athens' mythological past, selecting the topics of the repelling of the Amazons (4-6), the burial of the Seven who fought against Thebes (7-10) and the protection that the Athenians selflessly offered to the Heraclidae against their father's enemy Eurystheus (11-16). Next, Athens' autochthony is dealt with (17-19) as a bridge between *spatium mythicum* and *historicum*. The latter begins with the Persian Wars, covering the defeat of the Persians at Marathon in 490 BCE (20-26), the invasion of Xerxes, the sea-battle of Salamis (27-43), and the battle of Plataea (44-47), and subsequently highlights key events of the later fifth century: the Geraneia campaign of Myronides against Korinth (48-53), the growth of the Athenian Empire (54-57), the defeat at Aegospotamoi that sealed Athens' fate in the Peloponnesian War (58-60) and the democratic counter-revolution of 403/2 BCE that brought an end to the regime of the Thirty (61-66). Praise of the war-dead and the story of their campaign follow (67-76), and the orator rounds off with words of consolation (77-81). Within this topical selection, the events at Salamis are told most elaborately; they include a description of the battle focalized by those who look upon it from the shore and by the marines who take part in it themselves (35-39).

The shorter *Epitaphios* that has come down to us under Demosthenes' name was probably addressed to the Athenians at the burial of those who fell at Chaeronea against Philip II in 338 BCE.<sup>25</sup> Following the proem (1-3), the orator turns to the familiar topic of autochthony (4-5) and next to reflections on the virtues and martial excellence of the war-dead (6-37). These are introduced by brief references to mythical and historical precedents, the repelling of the Amazons, and of the Thracians under Eumolpus, the protection of the Heraclidae against Eurystheus, the burial of the Seven who fought against Thebes (8) and the Persian Wars (10-11). Exceptional in this *Epitaphios* is the list of the ten Athenian tribes (27-31), whose members are described as having fought in the spirit of their mythical eponymous ancestors (27-31). In his consolatory peroration Demosthenes mentions the honours the fallen now receive in the islands of the blest (34).

Hyperides' *Epitaphios* celebrates the dead of the Lamian War (322 BCE), which was waged by a coalition of Greek states against the Macedons after the death of Alexander the Great. In contrast to Lysias and Demosthenes, Hyperides singles out the commander

of the Athenians, Leosthenes, and elaborates on his excellence as a general.<sup>26</sup> After the proem (1-3) he briefly praises Athens, comparing it to the sun in the sky (4-6) and there-upon focuses on Leosthenes' campaign and the singular qualities of those who were involved (7-40). He refers occasionally to topical themes like autochthony (7), the Persian Wars (12; 18) and the city's democracy (25). As in Demosthenes' counterpart, the oration pauses on the arrival and status of the war-dead in the underworld (35-39), where their achievements are measured against those of the Greeks who fought in Troy (36), and those of the individual Athenian statesmen Miltiades, Themistocles and Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who were held responsible for the overthrow of the Pisistratid tyranny in Athens at the end of the sixth century BCE (39). Hyperides' speech was found on a papyrus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which it breaks off before the standard consolatory conclusion, of which a small fragment is extant (41-43).<sup>27</sup>

The topics in the *Epitaphioi* can be connected to their spatial backdrop, the Ceramicus and the Athenian cityscape, in three different ways. First, there are the sculptures, paintings, and grave-monuments that display specific events to which reference is made, or that can be associated with them (table 1). The *Amazonomachia* (Lys. 4-6 and Dem. 8, cf. Pl. *Menex.* 239b), for instance, is displayed on the west metopes of the Parthenon and on a painting in the nearby *Stoa Poikilē*. Similarly, Hyperides' reference to the tyrannicides (39) can be linked to their statues on the Agora.

Other topics in the speeches are not visually displayed themselves within (the vicinity of) the Ceramicus, but can be related to local landmarks in other ways (table 2). The Altar of the Twelve Gods on the Classical Agora is such an example. This was a place where foreigners sought refuge and offered themselves as suppliants (cf. Hdt. 6.108). The altar is hinted at by Lysias (11) when he mentions the Heraclidae, who, rejected by all other Greeks, sought and received protection and help from the Athenians in their revenge upon Eurystheus (Lys. 11-16, cf. Dem. 8, Pl. *Menex.* 239b). Another example is the sacred road to Eleusis that ran across the cemetery. Eleusis was related to the myth of Eumolpus and the Thracians (Dem. 8), and to the burial of the Argives after the expedition of the Seven against Thebes (Lys. 10). This mythical event in its turn makes one think of a historical expedition that Athens undertook to help the Argives in a war against Sparta. This led to a defeat of a Spartan hoplite contingent at Oenoe (ca. 460 BCE), a feat so famous in Athens that it was celebrated with a painting in the *Stoa Poikilē*.

Third, there are the abstract topics, such as Athenian autochthony and the greatness of its democratic constitution, that are expressed by the spatial backdrop as a whole, the monumental assemblage of the Athenian cityscape that reminded the audience of the city's continuity and achievements (table 3). Above, I suggested that the continuation of Athenian habitation and mentality is metonymically expressed in the petrified form of its monuments. In a more concrete manner the collective of statues, temples and monuments on the Acropolis can be interpreted as a spatial expression and permanent reminder of Athenian freedom and victory over foreign invaders under the benevolent eye of the city's patron goddess.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 1. Monuments displaying events/persons that are mentioned in *Epitaphioi***

| Event/person                    | Place of monument  | Thuc.            | Plato              | Lysias | Dem.         | Hyp.          |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|---------------|
| <i>Mythical</i>                 |  |                  |                    |        |              |               |
| Contest of Athena and Poseidon  | Parthenon  |                  | 237c-d             |        |              |               |
| Repelling of Amazons            | Parthenon<br><i>Stoa Poikilē</i>   |                  | 239b               | 4-6    | 8            |               |
| Theseus                         | Parthenon<br><i>Hephaesteion</i>   |                  |                    |        | 28           |               |
| Heracles                        | Parthenon<br><i>Hephaesteion</i>   |                  |                    | 11-16  | 31           |               |
| Trojan War                      | Parthenon<br><i>Stoa Poikilē</i>   |                  |                    |        | 10           | 35-36         |
| <i>Historical</i>               |  |                  |                    |        |              |               |
| Tyrannicides                    | Agora; monument on Ceramicus <sup>29</sup>   |                  |                    |        |              | 39            |
| Persian Wars                    | Parthenon; <i>Stoa Poikilē</i> ; <i>Nike</i> temple; Stoa Zeus Eleutherios                   | 2.36.2<br>2.36.4 | 239d-241c;<br>245a | 20-47  | 10           | 12; 18; 37-38 |
| Aeginetan Wars                  | Monument on Ceramicus <sup>30</sup>  |                  |                    | 48-49  |              |               |
| Cimon's War (Eurymedon, Cyprus) | Monument on Ceramicus <sup>31</sup>  |                  | 241d-e             |        |              |               |
| Tanagra and Oenophyta           | Monument on Ceramicus <sup>32</sup>  |                  | 242a-c             |        |              |               |
| Sicilian expedition             | Monument on Ceramicus <sup>33</sup>  |                  | 242e-243           |        |              |               |
| Stasis in Athens                | Grave of Thrasybulous on Ceramicus <sup>34</sup>   |                  | 243e-244b          | 61-66  |              |               |
| Corinthian War                  | Monument on Ceramicus<br>Grave monument of Conon <sup>35</sup><br>Grave monument of Dexileos |                  | 244c-246a          | 67-68  |              |               |
| War against Philip-pus          | Monument for war-dead Olynthos on Ceramicus <sup>36</sup>                                    |                  |                    |        | 17-18; 20-22 |               |
| Lamian War                      | Monument for Leosthenes on Ceramicus <sup>37</sup>   |                  |                    |        |              | <i>passim</i> |
| Athenian walls                  | Themistoclean walls bordering Ceramicus  |                  |                    | 64     |              |               |

**Table 2. Monuments associated with events/persons mentioned in *Epitaphioi***

| Event/person                | Place of monument   | Thuc. | Plato      | Lysias    | Dem.  | Hyp. |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------|-----------|-------|------|
| <i>Mythical</i>             |   |       |            |           |       |      |
| Eumolpos                    | (Road to) Eleusis   |       | 239b       |           | 8     |      |
| Seven ag. Thebes            | (Road to) Eleusis   |       | 239b       | 7-10      | 8     |      |
| Eponymous heroes            | Altar of Eponymous heroes                                   |       |            |           | 27-31 |      |
| Erechtheus                  | Erechtheion   |       | 239b       |           | 27    |      |
| Theseus                     | Prytaneion  |       |            |           | 28    |      |
| Pandion                     | Erechtheion   |       |            |           | 28    |      |
| Leos                        | Leokoreion  |       |            |           | 29    |      |
| Oeneus                      | Shrine of Dionysus near Academy                             |       |            |           | 30    |      |
| Cecrops                     | Erechtheion   |       |            |           | 30    |      |
| Hippothoon and Alope        | (road to) Eleusis   |       |            |           | 31    |      |
| Aias                        | Athena Promachos  |       |            |           | 31    |      |
| Heracles' sons; Eurystheus  | Altar of Twelve Gods  |       |            | 11-16     | (8)   |      |
| <i>Historical</i>           |   |       |            |           |       |      |
| Athenian democracy          | Graves of Kleisthenes, Ephialtes on Ceramicus <sup>38</sup> | 2.37  | 238b-239a4 | 18; 61-66 | 25-28 | 25   |
| Athenian temples and ritual | Temples as visible on Acropolis, Kolonos Agoraios           |       | 237c-d     | 37        |       | 21   |

**Table 3. Abstract topics expressed by the Athenian cityscape**

| Topic   | Thuc.                 | Plato                     | Lysias   | Dem.                       | Hyp.       |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------|
| Autochthony (continuity metonymically expressed in ‘petrified’ form of monuments) | 2.36.1                | 237b; e; 245c-e           | 17; 43   | 4; (30)                    | 7          |
| Fertility (olive and grain – cf. Parthenon; opulence of monuments)                | 2.36.1                | 237c<br>238a; b           | 5; 37  | 5                          |            |
| Ancestors (buried on Ceramicus)   | 2.36.1                | 237a; 239a5;<br>247a-b    | 3; 17; 20; 23;<br>26; 32; 60;<br>61; 69                    | 4; 6-7; 12                 | 3          |
| Athens as a <i>polis</i> and <i>patri</i> s                                       | 2.36.3; 43.1;<br>44.3 | 236d5; 244c;<br>248d-249c | 5; 12; 16; 21;<br>32; 34; 40;<br>58; 63; 64;<br>65; 70; 74 | 1; 2; 4; 25;<br>32; 33; 36 | 3; 4-5; 10 |

After this general overview of topics that can be associated with local monuments or with the Athenian monumental cityscape as a whole, I now turn to a discussion of some individual problems that are found within the speeches and that may be better understood if the ceremonial context is taken into consideration.

### *Lysias*

With the exception of Plato's *Menexenus*, Lysias' *Epitaphios* contains most references to mythical and historical events that can be associated with individual monuments and landmarks in the spatial context. Problematic is the reference to Myronides and his Geraneia-campaign of 458-457 (2.48-53), in which the Korinthians were massacred by an Athenian army raised from the city's youth and elderly, as most Athenian adult hoplites were abroad at that time.<sup>39</sup> Scholars have found it difficult to explain why, in a speech to commemorate those who had fallen in an alliance with the Korinthians, reference is made to a past battle in which the Korinthians were defeated.<sup>40</sup>

A solution is offered in the concluding words of the funeral orations. Here, the orators usually speak words of consolation to the elderly (Thuc. 2.44.1-4; Lys. 72-74; Dem. 35-36; Hyp. 27; Pl. *Menex.* 247-248d) and the youth (Thuc. 2.45.1; Lys. 72, 75; Dem. 37; Hyp. 27; 42; Pl. *Menex.* 246d-247c), bereaved as they are from their children and fathers. They are encouraged and reminded of the service and support they can offer to the state, despite the respective impediments of old age and inexperience. Myronides' Geraneia-campaign provides a dramatic example of such support, as it illustrates Athens' dogged and unwavering mentality when the city is placed under stress with hardly any fighting power left, and highlights the ideal of selfless sacrifice on behalf of the state.

Furthermore, Myronides himself is evoked at the Ceramicus. Fourteen marble fragments have been preserved from a pedimental *stèle* to commemorate the Argives who fell in the battle of Tanagra.<sup>41</sup> This battle was fought under Myronides in the same year as the Geraneia-campaign. Although Lysias does not refer to the Tanagra campaign itself, Plato's *Menexenus* reveals that the war-dead of the Tanagra campaign were publicly buried at the Ceramicus:

These were the first of our men who, after the Persian war and now helping Greeks against Greeks in the cause of freedom, proved themselves men of valor and delivered those whom they were aiding; and they were the first to be honored by the State and laid to rest in this tomb (*en tōide tōi mnēmati*). (242b-c, transl. W.R.M. Lamb)<sup>42</sup>

The performative context of the ceremony and the local monuments seem to account for the presence of Myronides' Geraneia campaign in Lysias' speech, in spite of its commemoration of those who had fallen in support of the Korinthians who once were Myronides' adversaries.<sup>43</sup>

## ***Demosthenes***

The most striking part of Demosthenes' funeral oration is the reference to the ten Athenian tribes that are named after the eponymous heroes of the city (27-31). The myths about these heroes are related to the nobility and selflessness of those who sacrificed their lives in the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE). The specification of the tribes follows a passage in which Athenian democracy is praised for its openness and civilian involvement, and contrasted with the fear of citizens under an autocrat (25-26). It seems as if Demosthenes, at this crucial juncture in Athens' wars against Macedon, is harking back to the tribal reforms of Kleisthenes, an act which was believed by many to lie at the origins of Athens' rise from obscurity to greatness under a democracy in which all citizens were involved. This idea is summarised by Herodotus:

Now the advantages of everyone having a voice in the political procedure (*iségoriē*) are not restricted just to single instances, but are plain to see wherever one looks. For instance, while the Athenians were ruled by tyrants, they were no better at warfare than any of their neighbours, but once they had got rid of the tyrants they became vastly superior. (Hdt. 5.78, transl. Waterfield)

For Demosthenes and his audience, however, the tribes and their eponymous heroes were also spatially present in the context of the funerary ceremony. We learn from Thucydides that the cremated remains of the war-dead were carried to the *dēmosion séma* in coffins of cypress wood and mourned per tribe (Thuc. 2.34.2-3). This tradition probably found its origins in military practice, as the Athenian hoplite armies lined up for battle following tribal divisions. The tribal organisation of the Athenian state was visible in the altar of the eponymous heroes on the Classical Agora, which functioned as political day-to-day hub as the Athenian government used it to update its citizens on laws and decrees, and announced pending lawsuits and political meetings.<sup>44</sup> Loraux speculates about the possibility that the *prothesis* ('laying in state') of the war-dead in the coffins took place in front of the altar, and that the procession that carried them to the *dēmosion séma* went through the Dipylon Gate, in a direction opposite to that of the Panathenaic procession.<sup>45</sup>

The myths that Demosthenes relates about the eponymous heroes are directly or indirectly evoked in the panoramic backdrop of the funeral ceremony. The protreptic function of these myths may be evident from the fact that they each in their own ways emphasise the qualities that are needed to guarantee the city's greatness and martial success. The first of these is the preparedness to (self-)sacrifice, as expressed in the myth of Erechtheus, whose name was given to the Erechtheidae tribe (27). He defeated the Thracians under Eumolpus in the war with Eleusis (see above) at the expense of his daughters, whom he had to sacrifice in order to guarantee victory. A cult was instituted in his honour in the Erechtheion at the Acropolis. The theme recurs in the case of the Leontidae (29), a tribe named after the mythical king Leos, who had to sacrifice his daughters to rid the city of famine. The daughters were honoured at the Leokoreion, a hero-shrine built around a sacred rock at the northwest corner of the Classical Agora.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the self-sacrifice of the Aeantidae at Chaeronea (31) is linked by Demosthenes to their eponymous hero Aias,

who played a major role in the Trojan War and is connected to Salamis and the site of the iconic sea-battle against the Persians. The Athenians had placed a large cult statue of Athena Promachos on the Acropolis that pointed in the direction of the island, towering above the other votive gifts.

A second common denominator in these myths is the willingness to fight heroically against those who had violated Greek customs. Thus in relation to the Pandionidae (28) – named after the mythical king Pandion honoured in the Erechtheion – Demosthenes mentions the vengeance that Pandion’s daughters Procne and Philomela took on Procne’s Thracian husband Tereus, who had raped her sister Philomela and cut out her tongue. Meanwhile, Theseus is related to the Aegeidae (28) who were named after his father Aegeus. A scene from Theseus’ battle against the Pallantidae was displayed on the frieze of the pronaos of the *Hephaesteion* temple in which he was believed to lie buried. He also figured in the battle of Centaurs and Lapiths that could be viewed on the south metopes of the Parthenon. As the alleged founder of *iségōriē* in Athens, he was believed to be responsible for its contemporary greatness, and therefore ultimately for the monumental cityscape through which this greatness was expressed. Furthermore, the eponymous hero Acamas of the Acamantis tribe (29) is like Aias (31) connected to the Trojan War, displayed on the north metopes of the Parthenon and on a painting in the *Stoa Poikilē*. Similarly, the Antiochidae (31) are named after Antiochus, son of Heracles, whose labours could be admired on the east side of the *Hephaesteion* and who probably also featured on the Parthenon metopes (east side) helping the gods in their fight against the Giants.

A final set of eponymous kings seems to be evoked for their cultic associations and the concomitant religious observance that is needed to warrant support from the gods. The Oeneidae (30) are linked to Oeneus ('wineman'), a hero son of Dionysus.<sup>47</sup> Spatially, Dionysus is evoked in his sanctuary on the south side of the Acropolis, but the god was also worshipped at a shrine along the road from the city to the Academy. Each year a procession carried the wooden statue of the god from the sanctuary on the south slope to the shrine (Paus. 1.29.2). This procession crossed the Ceramicus in a similar way to the procession that went from Athens to Eleusis. In the same vein, the Cecropidae (30) are named after Cecrops, another mythical founder-king of Athens, who is held responsible for the foundation and organisation of the city, the contest between Athena and Poseidon (as displayed on the west pediment of the Parthenon), and the institution of their cults on the Acropolis, which itself carried the ancient name 'Cecropia'.<sup>48</sup> Demosthenes describes Cecrops' appearance as half man and half snake, thus emphasising his autochthonous nature and relating him to the familiar topic of autochthony. Finally, the Hippothoontidae (31) are tied to Poseidon through Hippothoon's mother Alopê, an Eleusinian princess. Demosthenes avoids mentioning Poseidon as an Olympian god in this context of burial, but hints at the god's presence through *aposiopesis*. Hippothoon and Alopê were both honoured with cults in Eleusis, whose connection to Athens is again implied.

By listing the eponymous heroes and anchoring their myths within the monumental cityscape, Demosthenes highlights the qualities that are needed to continue the city's greatness: a preparedness to (self-)sacrifice, to fight relentlessly against (foreign) violators of

ancestral customs, and to worship the gods meticulously. These themes are also found elsewhere in Demosthenes' speeches. In the *Philippics*, for instance, he repeatedly insists on self-sacrifice, urging the Athenians not to rely on mercenaries in the wars against Philip, but to put their own lives at stake.<sup>49</sup> In the solemn context of the state funeral after the defeat at Chaeronea Demosthenes continues to stress this theme, though this time more implicitly through a protreptic use of myth. In referring twice to mythical precedents of Thracian aggression (27, 28), the orator may have wanted to suggest a link with the current political situation, in which Athens was under threat from another foreign invader from the North of the Aegean. Another indirect link can be seen in the reference to Cadmus and Semele in the context of Oeneus (30), which hints at Athenian ties with Thebes, the ally of Athens against the Macedons. Altogether the landmarks, cityscape and works of art in the ceremonial context may have helped the orator in bringing across his message. By reminding his audience of the behaviour of their mythical ancestors, he implicitly encourages them to more active resistance and willingness to sacrifice, in harmony with Athenian ideals.

### *Hyperides*

Two observations on Hyperides' *Epitaphios* in this context suffice. As indicated above, the oration focuses on the individual rather than the collective, and extensively celebrates the general of the Athenians in the Lamian War, Leosthenes. This emphasis on the individual is reflected by contemporary developments in the ways in which the dead were honoured in the Ceramicus. In the course of the fourth century graves had grown more luxurious and monuments had been erected in larger perimeters.<sup>50</sup> This was to change a few years after the Lamian War, when Athens came under the rule of Demetrios of Phalerum (317-307), who curtailed funerary excess by imposing a law upon Athens that brought an end to sumptuous graves on the Ceramicus.

Furthermore, this speech contains the only reference to the tyrannicides (39) in the extant *Epitaphioi*. It is also the only time that the Athenian tyrants themselves are mentioned in passing. In the other speeches this episode of Athenian history is never remembered, nor is reference made to the reforms of Kleisthenes that led to the institution of democracy. This omission may result from the emphasis that orators sought to place on the continuity of Athens' mentality, constitution and ideals, from the mythical times of Theseus down to the present. In Hyperides' speech, however, the focus has shifted from the past to the present, and Leosthenes and his troops are judged better than the heroes of the Persian Wars (37-38) and the tyrannicides (39) and thereby hailed as similar liberators.<sup>51</sup> This seems to reflect an attitude towards the past that had changed after the battle of Chaeronea and the subjection of Athens to Macedon rule. The Athenians could no longer look back on an uninterrupted history of political and military autonomy, but had become part of an empire that stretched from Greece to the Indus. Consequently the greatness of the individuals who sought to reconfigure the past greatness of the city and aimed at restoring autonomy had to be highlighted. In this context the reference to the tyrannicides became more relevant, and may have overruled the emphasis on continuity as found in the other speeches.

## Conclusion

By tradition, classics is a field of texts, with the study of a text, its constitution, its interpretations and its connections to other texts as its accepted *raison d'être*. For a long time the spatial context in which these texts have functioned belonged to the exclusive domain of archaeologists and historians. The separation of disciplines caused each field to move in its own direction, and cross-fertilisation was hardly encouraged. The last decades have shown a change in direction. In particular in the case of oratory the spatial context cannot be left out of consideration as it may help us in explaining certain features of the text or in envisaging their performance and the effects on their contemporary audience.

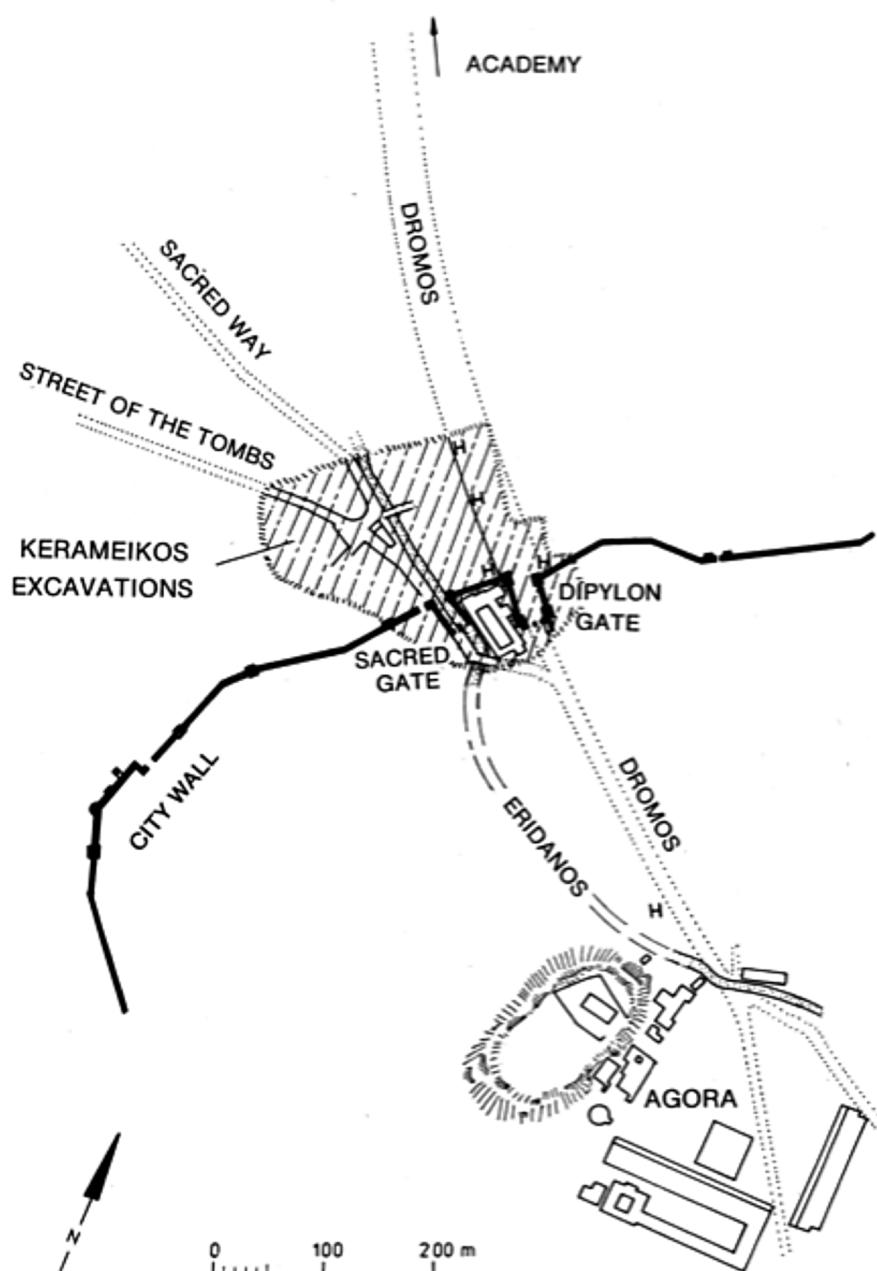
In the case of funerary oratory, it can be demonstrated that the orators selected topics, both concrete mytho-historical and abstract ones, that are displayed or evoked in the spatial ambience of the funeral, either visible somewhere in the backdrop of the cityscape or related to significant landmarks. In doing so, the orators sought to express and steer Athenian popular thought at a solemn, ceremonial occasion.<sup>52</sup> They looked for help in the physical surroundings, and as they spoke at a site where the cultural memory of the Athenians was collectively cherished, they continually referred to items that were part of this memory and which they endeavoured to harmonize with their over-all political message. Thus they caused ceremonial space to be 'lived' in an ideological way, and it was, among other issues, this spatial aspect that made the funeral oration a vulnerable target for Thucydides and Plato, two of the ideology's greatest critics.

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Map 1: The Ceramicus excavations at the northwest edge of ancient Athens. Taken from Knigge (1991: 9)

## Notes

1. Various aspects of Athenian public burial remain disputed in scholarship, most prominently the questions of (a) the origins of the ceremony: when was it instituted? (b) the frequency of the ceremony: was it held every year or only in times of war? and (c) the role of those Athenians who had fallen in Marathon against the Persians (490 BCE) whose cremated remains according to Thucydides (2.34) had not been buried near the *démousion séma* but in the vicinity of the Marathon battlefield. For the debate about these questions, which fall beyond the scope of this article, I refer to Jacoby (1944), and, from a more archaeological and epigraphical perspective, Bradeen (1969), Stupperich (1977), Clairmont (1983) and Arrington (2011). See also Hornblower, *Comm. ad Thuc.* 2.34.1 and Rhodes, *Comm. ad Thuc.* 2.34.1. An overview of the ancient evidence (Diod. Sic.11.33.3; Dion. Hal. *Antiq. Rom.* 5.17.4; Plutarch, *Publicola* 9.7) regarding the origins of the custom is offered by Ziolkowski (1981: 13–21).
2. An unusual comment in Thucydides' *Histories*, in which, as Hornblower observes (*Comm. ad Thuc.* 2.34.5), reflections upon aesthetics of a site are hardly ever found. See also Winton (2010: 157).
3. The importance of this procession for the Athenians is underlined by Xenophon's reference (*Hellenica* 1.4.20) to its restoration by Alcibiades in 407 BCE, when, for the first time since the Spartans had captured Decelea, the Athenians ventured to organise the procession over land again, rather than sail to Eleusis by ship.
4. The classic study on the *Epitaphios* is Loraux (1981; 1986). She concludes that the function of the funeral oration was to provide the occasion on which Athens was '(re)invented' in narrative form. Carter (1991), Morris (1992), and Ochs (1993) explore in various ways the ritual function of the speeches. For a brief overview of different approaches by which *Epitaphioi* are related to their context, see Wickkiser (1999: 65).
5. For an overview of the various *topoi*, see Loraux (1981; 1986) and Ziolkowski (1981).
6. ‘Bei den Begräbnisfeiern ... hielt ein führender Staatsmann eine Rede; darin wurden die gefallenen Mitbürger in die Reihe der ruhmreichen Vorfahren gestellt, die seit mythischer Zeit die Amazonen besiegt, Troia erobert, später die Perser abgewehrt und zuletzt griechische Feinde geschlagen hatten, ähnlich wie es die Bilderzyklen der Staatsdenkmäler darstellten.’ See also Hölscher (1973: 73) and compare Jung's more specific reference in this respect to the *Stoa Poikilē* ‘Painted Stoa’ on the Classical Agora in Athens, in which paintings were displayed of famous mythological and historical battles fought by the Athenians, like the Amazonomachy and the Battle of Marathon. According to Jung (2006) the *Stoa Poikilē* and the *Epitaphioi* contributed to the creation of a canon of history in Athens: ‘It is remarkable that the subjects exactly in this order of representation are also found to be standard elsewhere: in the funeral orations they regularly appear in the same order ... There may be a connection between the paintings displayed in the Stoa and ... the ritual of the state funeral. The speeches delivered on this occasion awarded to the fallen citizens a place in the longstanding tradition of past heroic Athenian achievements ... in a similar way as the Stoa did.’ (‘Auffällig ist dabei, daß die Themen gerade in dieser Reihung auch sonst typisch, geradezu kanonisch sind: In den Epitaphioi Logoi tauchen sie regelmäßig in derselben Zusammenstellung auf ... Möglicherweise steht die Darstellung in der Stoa in einem Zusammenhang mit dem ... Ritual der Epitaphien. So wie die Tapferkeite der Gefallenen bei dieser

Gelegenheit in den Reden in die lange Liste athenischer Heldentaten der Vergangenheit ... gestellt wurde, so geschah dies in der Stoa Poikile analog') (p. 114, compare n. 161).

7. I leave aside the oration of Gorgias as it proves hardly relevant for the argument in this contribution. Its few fragments praise the qualities of the deceased in generic terms, and contain no indications of a relationship with a particular spatial context. For an extensive study, see Volgraff (1952).
8. The quote is taken from an article that summarises important conclusions from Nora's seven volume *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992), which focuses on French history.
9. Nora (1989: 7-8).
10. The quote is taken from an article that summarises the most important of Assmann's ideas. For his view upon the unique constellation of Greece in the field of the history of memory (as opposed to Egypt and other hierarchically led states), see Assmann (2000<sup>3</sup>).
11. Contrast Jung, who prefers Nora's theoretical model over Assmann's (2006: 17-19), but still notes that 'it is fundamentally restricted as many aspects of the *lieux de mémoire* as defined by Nora cannot be applied analogously to ancient ... societies' ('Grundsätzliche Einschränkungen ergeben sich jedoch daraus, daß für antike ... Gesellschaften manche Elemente der von Nora konzipierten *lieux de mémoire* nicht analog anzusetzen sind') (p. 20).
12. See Thucydides 2.36.1; Lysias 2.17; 43; Demosthenes 60.4; Hyperides 6.7; Plato *Menex*. 237b; e; 245c-e.
13. Compare in this respect the *Stoa Poikilē* (see also n. 6 above), in which paintings were displayed of historical subjects like the battle of Marathon side by side with mythical subjects such as the Amazonomachy.
14. In her book on the *Epitaphioi* Loraux argues that the speeches can be seen as attempts to endow Athens' democracy – despite its stress on unity and egalitarianism – with an ideology based on traditionally aristocrat values (1981; 1986). Accordingly, they play an important role in smoothing over tensions in Athenian society between aristocratic ideals of individual excellence and its democratic constitution. In his review of Loraux' work, Tompkins mildly warns against the over-simplification that results from an analysis based on a strict dichotomy between aristocratic and democratic values (1988: 309-310).
15. Thucydides also noted this typically Athenian tendency, contrasting the opulence of Athenian monuments with Sparta and noting that 'one would conjecture from what met the eye that the city had been twice as powerful as in fact it is' (Thuc. 1.10.2).
16. For a discussion of the vexed question of Thucydides' method in representing speeches and the authenticity of Pericles' oration in particular see Rusten (1989: 11-17). The translation of 1.22.1 is his. See furthermore Pelling's article on the subject (2000: 112-122), now reprinted in Rusten (2009: 176-187) and including an overview of relevant scholarship (pp. 492-493; 501-502), to which important contributions of Egermann (1972) and Wilson (1982) can be added.
17. For various views on Thucydides' portrait of Pericles and the evaluation of his politics see Vogt (1956), Strasburger (1958), de Romilly (1965), Connor (1984: 52-75), Nicolai (1996), Ober (1996), and Foster (2010).

18. Most obvious is Pericles' claim of Athenian 'self-sufficiency' (*autarkeia*), by which he praises both city (Thuc. 2.36.3 *polin ... autarkestatēn*) and individual citizens (Thuc. 2.41.1, *sôma autarkes parekhestai*). During the plague their *sômata* turn out to be far from 'self-sufficient' (Thuc. 2.51.3: *sôma ... autarkes on ouden diephanē*, on the ideal of *autarkeia* in general see Wheeler 1955). In a similar, but more subtle way, Thucydides makes Pericles criticize Spartan fear of foreigners and praises Athens as an open city that welcomes its *xenoi* ('foreign guests', Thuc. 2.39.1; compare 2.36.4) and that benefits from the import of goods from the whole world (Thuc. 2.38.2). This openness, however, also entails vulnerability to contagious diseases, as exemplified by the plague, which allegedly has its origins in Africa (Thuc. 2.48.1). Compare, too, the implosion of Athenian *nomoi* – 'laws', a topic of praise in the *Epitaphios* – during the plague, especially those that relate to funerary customs, which are increasingly disregarded (Thuc. 2.52.3-4), in contrast to the careful arrangements for the public burial as set out in the introduction to Pericles' funeral oration (Thuc. 2.34, quoted above). On the complementarity of funeral oration and plague in Thucydides' narrative, see Connor (1984: 63-75), and compare, too, Salkever's observation (1993: 137) that Thucydides explains Athenian autochthony (mentioned by Pericles as standard *topos* in his *Epitaphios*, 2.36.1) in anti-encomiastic terms in his *Archaeology* as the result of the barrenness of the Attic soil, which deterred foreigners from settling in the area (Thuc. 1.2.5-6).
19. For an overview of the different ways in which the anachronism is explained see Dean-Jones (1992: 52, and nn.6-8), who identifies Menexenus as Socrates' son and suggests that the anachronism is a deliberate trick to wrong-foot the Athenians, who, in the course of hearing a speech that praises Athens in glowing terms, start to realise that Socrates himself addresses his son from the grave, thus delivering a funeral oration in the truest sense.
20. See, for instance, Kahn (1963: 229), who interprets the dialogue 'as a kind of political pamphlet, written out of deep loyalty to the noblest traditions of Athens, but out of heartbreak, shame and fury at the present policy of the city'. Compare Salkever (1993: 135): 'Menexenus should not be reduced ... to parody or satire ... but should be understood ... as a playful reflection designed to provide a starting point for thinking about the kind of public speeches that ought to be made in democratic Athens...', and Trivigno (2009), who warns against one-sided, superficial interpretations of the dialogue as a parody, and suggests that it has serious philosophical implications. In his *Orator* (151) Cicero mentions the Athenian custom of an annual public reading of Socrates' oration, which, if true, reveals that the content of the speech was certainly not experienced as a parody or satire in Roman Athens.
21. Kahn (1963: 223) in this respect refers to an 'antagonistic relationship' between Thucydides' and Plato's *Epitaphioi*, but also (p. 230) believes in connections with Lysias' specimen. Coventry (1989: 2) refers more generally to Plato's concern 'to expose the deficiencies of contemporary rhetoric and politics'. Salkever (1993) draws a comparison with Pericles' *Epitaphios* in Thucydides.
22. Compare my observations on 'shrouded' referencing in Lysias' *Epitaphios* (de Bakker 2012: 385), where I follow Frangeskou (1999: 325): 'Lysias is careful not to remind Athenians of specific defeats and prefers instead to ignore them, or talk of them collectively as misfortunes'.
23. For a summary of the debate on the disputed authorship of this speech, see Frangeskou (1999: 317 n. 10) and Todd (2007: 157-164).

24. The exact year in which the speech may have been delivered is unknown. For some suggestions see Todd (2007: 164).
25. Demosthenes refers to his appointment as ceremonial speaker on this occasion in his speech *On the Crown* (18.285-7).
26. On the exceptional position of Hyperides' oration compared to the other *Epitaphioi*, see Usher (1999: 335-337). Note also the polemic nature of the speech (for instance the *occupatio* in 6.15).
27. For recent philological work on the oration see the editions of Herrman (2009) and Petruzzielo (2009).
28. There is a remarkable similarity between Athens' monumental cityscape and post 9-11 New York in the refusal to construct new buildings upon the sacred ground of the temples, resp. buildings that had been destroyed by the enemy. For more on this parallel, see Ratté (2003).
29. Pausanias 1.29.15.
30. Id. 1.29.7.
31. Id. 1.29.13.
32. Id. 1.29.6.
33. Id. 1.29.11-12.
34. Id. 1.29.3.
35. Id. 1.29.10; 15.
36. Id. 1.29.7.
37. Id. 1.29.13.
38. Id. 1.29.6; 15.
39. Thuc. 1.105-106. See Hornblower *Comm. ad loc.*
40. Blass (1887<sup>2</sup>: 440), Walz (1936: 18-19), Thomas (1989: 227-229) and Todd *Comm. ad 2.52*.
41. Pausanias refers to their burial in the Ceramicus (1.29.8). See for a detailed discussion of the inscription Meiggs-Lewis 35 and for the reconstruction of the *stèle* Braden (1974: 7-9).
42. Plato's claim that those who fell at Tanagra were the first to be buried at the *dēmosion sēma* conflicts with Pausanias' testimony (1.29.4) that this honour was awarded to those who fell in Thrace (Drabescus, 465 BCE). Scholars tend to take Plataea as *terminus post quem* and Drabescus as *terminus ante quem*, rejecting Plato's statement. For an overview of this debate see Ziolkowski (1981: 16-21).
43. In de Bakker (2012: 383-384) I attempted a first, speculative solution of this problem. I now hope to have strengthened the argument on the basis of the content of the speech itself.
44. Cf. Hölscher (2010: 141): 'With it issues of central importance for the state were placed under the protection and memory of its mythical tribal fathers' ('Damit wurden zentrale Angelegenheiten des Staates unter den Schutz und das Gedächtnis seiner mythischen Archetypen gestellt').

45. Loraux (1981: 20). Note, too, that the epigraphical monuments that were erected in honour of the war-dead were arranged per tribe (*e.g.* ML 33).
46. Cf. Hölscher (2010: 133-134) for a discussion of this monument within the Athenian ‘mythical’ topography.
47. Though another Oeneus is linked to Pandion by birth (Paus. 1.5.2).
48. Eusth. *Comm. in Dionysii Periegetae orbis descriptionem* 423.
49. *e.g.* Demosthenes, *First Philippic* 4.19.
50. Cf. Loraux (1981: 31).
51. Loraux (1981: 40).
52. Cf. Hölscher (2010: 130): ‘Athens did not simply have a unique history, but created an unusually strong collective memory for itself’ (‘Athen hat nicht einfach eine einzigartige Geschichte *gehabt*, sondern hat sich ein ungemein starkes kollektives Gedächtnis *geschaffen*’).



# Inventing a National Narrative

## Space, Genre and Ideology in Soutsos' *O Leandros* (1834)

Steven Van Renterghem

*Is it a sad, romantic story or political narrative?* With this bold question Dimitris Tziovas (2009: 214) highlights the problematic position of Panagiotis Soutsos's novel *O Leandros*. Nevertheless, the basic storyline of the novel is simple and typically of a romance: the central couple is Leandros and Koralia, who grew up together in Constantinople and were childhood sweethearts before their lives went separate ways. At the beginning of the novel, they meet again in Athens and discover that their love has not changed. Koralia, however, is now married, so their love proves to be impossible. So that they can forget each other, Leandros leaves and travels through Greece. This attempt proves unsuccessful and when he returns to Athens, at the end of the novel, Koralia dies of anguish and he commits suicide soon afterwards. However, intertwined with the story of romance are the numerous places that Leandros visits. They played a significant role in either Antiquity or the recent Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) and so generate an openly nationalist rhetoric from the protagonist. The links between the significance of these places, the political discourse they induce and the love story are still considered problematic, as Tziovas' question indicates.

Panagiotis Soutsos wrote this novel in 1834, in the complicated period after Greek Independence, during which Greece not only developed as a modern state, but also tried to create a collective national identity through various intellectual efforts. The ideology used to legitimate this identity was that the Greek people were direct descendants of the ancient Greeks ('Hellenism'): the true nature of the Greeks resides in them and the newly founded state was considered the resurrection of that old nature after many centuries of suppression by foreign powers. Soutsos, who belonged to the Phanariot elite<sup>1</sup> who had moved to Greece and who were major proponents of this ideology, was no different in trying to express such an ideological message in his novel.

In his analysis, Tziovas stresses the seemingly unclear purpose of the novel: is it making a political statement, recounting an appealing love story, introducing European romanticism in Greece or exciting the young to awareness (Tziovas 2009, 214)? He considers the diffuse composition of the novel as a reflection of the *fluid and unshaped character of Greek society* (215) and concludes that the novel fails to create the synthesis of (all these) contrasting ideas *that is normally a prerequisite for realism and a successful novel* (221).

This negative judgement is essentially not new and it has proved to be a constant in critical publications throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only for *O Leandros* but for all the novels of the 1830s and 40s. Of the tendencies that can be observed in these critical works, the earliest was the consideration of the texts as early historical or realist novels (Sachinis 1958,

39–49), primarily based on their explicitly contemporary setting. While this characterisation has now been rejected (Beaton 1994: 53, note 52), Veloudis (1996: 49) still underlines the realistic intentions of the authors.

Most scholars though have stressed the romantic character of the novel. In his prologue Soutsos sets himself the task of introducing modern literary genres from Europe into Greece. For this reason, he chose to write an epistolary novel and explicitly refers to his examples: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sir Walter Scott, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Ugo Foscolo and James Fenimore Cooper. Several studies have shown that these romantic models did indeed have a great influence on Soutsos and that there are numerous parallels and quotations in Soutsos' novel, mainly from Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* and Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, but also from *Nouvelle Héloïse* by Rousseau and *René* by François René de Chateaubriand (Moullas 1992; Tonnet 1995; Samouïl 1996a: 7–10; Samouïl 1996b: 22–25; Veloudis 1996: 52–59). The problem with these readings is that they often depict *O Leandros* as a mere epigone.

Paradoxically, it was Tziovas who drew renewed attention to the Greek novels of the period 1830–50 by pointing out their structural affinities with the ancient adventure novels (Tziovas 1997). This observation proved a new starting point for research on these works. Recent publications have shown that Hellenist and Byzantine romance not only played a crucial role in the emergence of the first novels of the new Greek state but also influenced their plot structure (Beaton 2006; Borghart 2009).<sup>2</sup>

To date, these new insights have not led to a thorough analysis of *O Leandros* which encompasses all these different components. It is my conviction that the parallels with the adventure novels provide new and crucial information that helps to finally formulate a more encompassing analysis of the novel. Not only does it clarify the narrative structure and genre of the novel, but it also brings forward the important role of space in the novel.

Following these considerations, this paper proceeds as follows: (1) I will explore the semantic implications of the narrative structure of both the ancient adventure novel and the European romantic novel in *O Leandros*. I will point out similarities and differences with these two models and clarify how these are significant in the build-up and meaning of the novel. (2) I will foreground the important role of space in this novel, focussing on both the contemporary environment and the historical sites of Greece and show how their interaction is crucial to the interpretation of the novel. (3) Finally, I will discuss the relationship between these elements and their historical context, showing how the novel is an exponent of Hellenism in its reclaiming of Greece's past, but also conveys a allegorical message that functions in the process of nation building.

## **Space and Time as Equals: Bakhtin's Chronotope Theory**

For an adequate handling of this combination of narrative structure and the role of space, the chronotope theory of the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin is ideal. In the 1930s he developed this concept to effectively describe the structure and the evolutions of the Western novel.<sup>3</sup> It focuses on the combination of two fundamental components of a nar-

rative: passage of time and movement in space. This resulted in the concept of the ‘chronotope’, a specific organisation of time and space that represents a specific world construction and is a defining feature of a prose genre. An important feature of this theory is the emancipation of the aspect of ‘space’. While before it was only considered as a mere background, in Bakhtin’s theory it becomes a crucial element in the genre of the novel, both formally and semantically.

Bakhtin defined the generic structure of the ancient romances as the ‘adventure chronotope’ which consists of three parts. The two outer parts have similar characteristics and depict a home world where a love story develops relatively naturally: the first part is typically the encounter of the central couple, the second is at the end of the story when they are reunited and marry. These parts are defined as ‘biographical time-space’, because time evolves in a natural, logical way and the setting is familiar and realistic.

The middle section is defined as ‘adventure time-space’, in which the couple gets separated and experience several adventures that have no direct influence on the outcome of the love story or their psychology. Most of these adventures are standardised motifs of the genre, topoi such as pirates, kidnapping, storms and persistent admirers. The organisation of time and space in this section is devoid of any logical or chronological order, but is ruled by chance. Adventures could easily be changed in order (reversibility in time) or take place at another location (interchangeability of space). The function of the events and places, therefore, is primarily to be found at a symbolic and ideological level. The setting does not have an impact on the overall stereotypical plot, but does have implications for the meaning of the individual novel. Space thus acquires a symbolic function within the message of the novel.

Recently Borghart and De Temmerman (2010) have further clarified this symbolic functioning of the adventure novel. Noticing the similarities in the symbolic meaning of spaces and events in adventure novels from different periods in Greek literary history, they argue that the revival of the ancient Greek romance in Byzantine and Modern Greek literature can be linked with a specific set of cultural-historical circumstances, i.e. an awareness of an (proto-)ethnic, or (proto-)national, identity and an unease among the intellectual elite about the political situation of their time. In this way, they conclude, the genre itself acquires ideological meaning and is ideally suited to express political unease and group identity.

If we now look at the narrative structure of the adventure novel and its characteristic organisation of time and space, we can see that it is clearly traceable in *O Leandros*. Starting with the concept of time, a first observation is that the ‘biographical’ development of the love story indeed takes place in a limited period of time, with the first letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 1833 and the last one 4<sup>th</sup> April 1834. In addition, there are several temporal sub-layers, created by encounters, stories and references: Classical Antiquity (mainly Athens in the fourth/fifth century BCE), the War of Independence and the end of Ottoman occupation, but also the broader contemporary social and political situation of Greece. All of this clearly goes beyond the specific ‘biographical’ episode. Although there are important references to Antiquity in the first biographical time-space section, the inter-

play between these different time levels is more characteristic of the adventure section (see below).

With regard to the aspect of space, the more neglected field of analysis in literary studies, the semantic implications are similar to those inherent for the organisation of time, but more complex. While the home location of the love story is 1833 Athens, already in the first section a crucial tension between contemporary settings and historical places is evident. Ancient sites induce both inspiration and regret for a glorious past lost. Functioning as *lieux de mémoire*, they help shape a view of Greek identity. The contemporary cities of Greece, on the other hand, are examples of decay, in addition to being places for the future as arenas of the current political battles. Although this opposition between old and new spaces is already present in the first section of the novel, it is in the adventure section that the political and ideological role of space is made explicit: important locations from the recent War of Independence are intertwined with ancient sites, resulting in a web of connotations which I will explore below. Indeed, we could say that while time remains rather stable and chronological throughout the novel, it is the different places that trigger the memories and emotions of the characters. Space in this way is symbolically more important than time. A special case must be made of nature: it functions in a typically romantic way, as a reflection of the moods of the protagonists, and in so doing it reinforces these connotations.

By considering all these elements together, my close reading of the novel *O Leandros*, will result in an allegorical interpretation. It is based on the assessment that the fate of the love couple Leandros and Koralia is linked with the identity of independent Greece and that the developments in their love indirectly express an explicit message about the country's political future. In this way, a coherent message is brought forward throughout the different components of the novel: the openly political passages, the narrative deep structure of the genre (in Bakhtinian terms), the symbolic meaning of time and especially space and finally the fate of the loving couple.<sup>4</sup>

## **Prologue: the Resurrection of Greece**

Already in the prologue Soutsos seems to indicate that his novel is not simply presenting a story, but sending an ideological message. For example, he tells the complete story in the prologue, eliminating any curiosity about the outcome. This point can hardly be understated, because it is a clear deviation from his models. All European epistolary novels of the time upheld the illusion that real letters were being presented and that the author was in fact merely an editor attempting to retrace what had happened. Panagiotis Soutsos seems to have been one of the first authors in Europe not to do so, and it is clear he had good reasons: he invites the reader not to look at the novel as a simple story, but to read between the lines.

More concretely, he hints at the allegorical link between the couple and their country through lexical association. The focus is on space. He explicitly writes about his motherland as a territory that recently had been reconquered:

Εις την αναγεννωμένην Ελλάδα τολμώμεν ημείς πρώτοι να δώσωμεν εις το κοινόν των Λέανδρον.

In the reborn Greece we as the first dare to give to the public *O Leandros*. (my underlining)

A few lines further, when he describes how the couple meets again in Athens after many years, he uses the same crucial word:

Αι πρώται ερωτικάι εντυπώσεις, τας οποίας ο χρόνος δεν εδυνήθη να εξαλείφῃ, αναγεννώνται ισχυρότεραι (...)

Their first feelings of love, which time had not been able to extinguish, were reborn even stronger. (my underlining)

Referring in this way to the ideology of Hellenism and the idea of the rebirth of Antiquity, the narrator implies that time has not been able to destroy the vitality of Greece, just as it could not destroy the couple's love. Finally, the prologue explicitly stresses the nationalist programme of the novel in two ways. For one thing, it describes Leandros as a fervent nationalist who strives for liberty, progress and unity, and has his hopes set on the young King Otto. For another, Soutsos dedicates his novel to Greek youth and exhorts them to build the future of the country and to achieve – as he calls it – “the enlightenment of Greece” (τὸν φωτισμὸν τῆς Ελλάδος, an explicit reference to the Enlightenment ideals that greatly influenced the Phanariot intellectuals). Thus, in his prologue, Soutsos presents the key ideas for the interpretation of the novel. Now let us see how this works in detail in the story itself.

## Biographical Time-space I: Love and Freedom

In the first part of the novel, the first biographical time-space section, we encounter Leandros and Koralia and their impossible love. Even at this early stage, several aspects of their love and their personality are very similar to the characterisation of the protagonists in the ancient Greek romance. One of these is the impeccable ethos of virtue and pure, ethical behavior (Létoublon 1993: 119-123). Koralia, for instance, remains faithful to her husband throughout the story and her sense of virtue is often praised. Leandros for his part frequently scorns the ethics and hypocrisy of his own day and sets up the morals of the ancients as an example. In the prologue the author puts it as follows:

[Ο συγγραφέας] παριστά την μὲν Κοραλίαν γυναίκα ενάρετον καὶ οἴκτου αξίαν, τὸν δὲ Λέανδρον σεβόμενον τὴν iερότητα του Υμεναίου. (prologue, 76)<sup>5</sup>

[The author] represents Koralia as a virtuous women, worthy of our compassion, and Leandros as a man who respects the sanctity of marriage.

Secondly, both protagonists accept their situation as a whim of fate they cannot do anything about. Koralia writes in a letter:

Η σιδηρά Ειμαρμένη μας απεχώρισε δια φραγμών αιωνίων. Η φύσις μας έπλασε δια να συνευτυχήσωμεν, αλλ' εις την γην δεν μας επερίμενε τύχη ουράνιος.

Λέανδρε! Είναι εις το πεπρωμένο των ανθρώπων συμβάντα, κατά των οποίων αι αντιπαλεύσεις μάταιοι, (...) (KE', 103)

Iron fate has separated us with eternal barriers. Nature made us to be happy together, but on earth no such heavenly destiny awaits us.

Leandros! The fate of man comprises situations against which resistance is in vain...

The fact that the protagonists have no grip on the events in their lives and are at the mercy of fate and chance is also a *topos* in the ancient and Byzantine romance.<sup>6</sup>

As they continue to meet and talk, their impossible love is nonetheless represented as beautiful and positive, a feature which is underscored by specific literary means. On the one hand, their relationship is linked with antiquity. To this end, Soutsos inserts numerous quotations of classical authors in Leandros' letters, the majority of which emphasise various aspects of the couple's love. These include a fragment from Aristotle in which Virtue bestows love on the soul (Δ' 81), and Leandros' romantic obsession with Koralia is illustrated with the famous fragment 31 of Sappho describing the physical symptoms of being in love (ΙΕΤ' 95).<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, their love is illustrated with peaceful images of nature and the season of spring (H' 85, IA', IB' 87-88, IE' 93). The symbolic meaning of these images is foregrounded by the fact that they occur in letters written in winter.<sup>8</sup>

At this point space functions as an important symbolic background: nature romantically reflects the mood of the love affair, while archaeological sites work as memories of ancient glory and construct the idea of Hellenism in the novel. The couple takes several walks through Athens, where they are surrounded by ancient monuments. During those walks they discuss life and hint at the ideological-political message of the novel. An example from one of Koralia's letters:

Αισθάνεσαι την μελαγχολίαν, την οποίαν αισθάνομαι περιπατούσα εν μέσω των αρχαίων ερειπίων και των νέων τούτων στεγασμάτων; Η σύγκρισις αυτή του μεγάλου παρελθόντος της Ελλάδος μετά του μικρού παρόντος της δεν σε λυπεί; (Ζ', 84-85)

Don't you feel the melancholy that I feel walking in the midst of the old ruins and these new buildings? Doesn't the comparison of the great past of Greece with its puny present make you sad?

This extract initiates a basic theme which will be developed further in the novel, i.e. that Greece is to follow the example set by its illustrious past, but is not succeeding in doing so at the present time. Such passages are signs of a *social spleen*, which in this first part is primarily elaborated as a typically romantic phenomenon and does not yet have many political undertones. Leandros especially is characterised as a romantic hero reacting against society:

Να περιφέρωμαι, ως ο μύρμηξ, άγνωστος, να συνάζω εις υπόγεια εν μέσω του θέρους την τροφήν του χειμώνος μου; και να αποθάνω τέλος, αφήσας κληρονόμους άλλα μυρμηκίδια... Όχι, τοιούτο δεν είναι ο προόρισμος.

Εις την κουνωνίαν της Ελλάδος, όπου το παν μικρόν και δίχως ορίζοντα, έγκλημα τάχα η προς ουράνια αισθήματα κλίσις της ψυχής; Ο έρως! (Γ' 86)

To behave like an ant, unknowing, to gather underground in midsummer my food for the winter and to die at the end, leaving behind as heirs other little ants... No! That is not my destiny!

In Greek society, where everything is small and without horizon, is it then almost a crime to have a soul that tends towards heavenly feelings? O love!

This mood of romantic *Weltschmerz* is characteristic mostly of the earlier letters of the novel. At the end of the first biographical time-space section, optimistic thoughts prevail and the love of the protagonists and independent Greece are increasingly tied together. In a very lyrical letter Leandros literally combines these two fundamental principles, Love and Freedom, by representing them as ancient goddesses in the midst of nature (IE', 92-94):

Η Ελλάς μου είναι τα Ηλύσια της γης, και ο αγρός μου τα Ηλύσια της Ελλάδος.

Εις την ωραίαν του χλόην, όπου αι Χάριτες και Πιερίδες σκιρτώσι και ψάλλουσι, κατοικεί της καρδιάς μου η γλυκεία θεά, η ποθεινή *Ελευθερία*.

Είδα την Θέαν ταύτην προ ολίγων ετών τον αρματολικόν ενδυμένην χιτώνα, και καταβαίνουσαν από τας Θερμοπύλας με χείρας αιματοσταζούσας, (...)

Έρχεται εις την στολισμένην από βίβλους καλύβην μου, συνοπαδόν έχουσα τον χρυσοχαίτην *Έρωτα*, και εις την εστίαν μου αμφότεροι κάθηνται, Θεοί μου εφέστιοι.

My Greece is the Elysium of the world, and my acres are the Elysium of Greece.

In that beautiful valley, where the Graces and the Muses dance and sing, lives the sweet goddess of my hearth, almighty *Freedom*.

Just a few years ago I saw this goddess in battle dress, descending from Thermopylae with her hands dripping with blood (...)<sup>9</sup>

She comes into my hut, which is adorned with books, in the company of the gold-clad goddess *Love* and they both sit down at my hearth, my household gods.

These two passages again reveal the symbolic function of space in the novel: while contemporary society is depressing, the idyllic nature of Greece exudes a feeling of hope for both the love couple and the country.

## Adventure Time-space: Historical Spaces and a National Narrative

The situation of the central couple proves to be emotionally unbearable: Koralia falls seriously ill and persuades Leandros to go on a journey, hoping that once they lose sight of one another, their passion will die out. With his departure we enter the second section, the adventure time-space. Leandros has only just left when he gets caught up in a storm, loses his way and is saved by a monk (ΛΓ', 108). In the ancient romances a storm (often with a shipwreck) is a standard way of initiating new adventures (Létoublon 1993, 175-180). From our perspective, this can be read as an intertextual trigger for the adventure time-space episode.

The tone of the first part of Leandros' voyage is very pessimistic: he recalls with melancholy the happy hours he passed with Koralia, he expresses his aversion towards society and more and more often contemplates suicide. Gradually, his romantic *Weltschmerz* becomes more intense and acquires a political overtone. Early on in his trip Leandros meets a young man who had been a prisoner of war, became blind and now lives in difficult circumstances with his wife and two children. And yet he sees hope in the young King Otto, who had first been mentioned in the prologue and who here is introduced as the personification of Greek independence. Space becomes very tangible and political:

Η τάσις της χειρός του δύναται να κινήσῃ όλην την από Βοσπόρου μέχρι Κρήτης Ελληνικήν φυλήν, και το νεύμα του σύνθημα της γενικής αναστατώσεως. (...) η Ελλάς ανεγεννήθη. (ΛΕ', 111)

The strength of his hand can move the *whole of the Greek race* from the Bosphorus to Crete, and his nod will be the signal for a complete revolution.  
(...) Greece is *reborn*.

In this way Panagiotis Soutsos fuses his political ideals with the image of the new king. These are usually viewed by scholars in the context of broader ideological trends. There is the element of Hellenism: the belief that Modern Greece is the reincarnation of Ancient Hellas and the hope that all Greek areas will once again be reunited in one state.<sup>10</sup> The influence of the French Revolution and Enlightenment thought is apparent in a fervent desire for freedom and a constitutional state. Finally, Vagenas has successfully shown that views of society of Panagiotis Soutsos and his brother Alexandros were influenced by the utopian socialist philosophy of Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), who advocated the development of an egalitarian society with social progression based on merit.<sup>11</sup>

But at the same time, the political stands that Soutsos takes in his novel are linked with the concrete political situation of his day. When Ioannis Kapodistrias became the first president of Greece in 1828, an intricate power play ensued between different influential groups that had had a hand in the battle for independence. Initially the Soutsos brothers joined the Kapodistrias administration, but they soon left due to his notoriously authoritative style.<sup>12</sup> They subsequently joined the group known as the 'French faction', led by the politician Ioannis Kolletis, who stood for a liberal constitution and the rights of Greeks outside the borders of the current state (see Clogg 1994: 215). The government of the country remained in the hands of members of the Kapodistrian camp even after his death

in 1831. Panagiotis Soutsos agitated strongly against the corruption and hypocrisy of the ministers of this ‘Russian faction’, who continued the political line Kapodistrias set out.<sup>13</sup> In the novel this is expressed through fierce criticism directed at the political upper class. In the letters M’, MA’ and MB’ (115-118), the protagonist rages against the corruption of the politicians of his day, culminating in a satirical description of a meeting with one of them at his house, surrounded by fawning lackeys. Leandros’ political pessimism increases unrelentingly, up to the point where he believes that not even Otto can turn the situation around:

Εις μάτην ο Βασιλεύς της Ελλάδος, υγιούς νοός και καρδιάς, όχι ως βασιλεύς, αλλ’ ως πρώτος πολίτης της Ελλάδος, ζη χωρίς πομπάς και αυλάς. Εις μάτην οι Αντιβασιλεύοντες, ουδαμός εξυβριστάι ανθρώπων, μισούσι την ραδιονργίαν, και ζητούσι να παρεισάξωσι την ευθύτητα. Ο σημερινός πολιτικός μας! Ω το αστείον! (MA’, 116)

In vain does our King of Greece, a man of pure mind and heart, not only as king, but also as the first citizen of Greece, live without pomp and circumstance. In vain do the Regents, who are by no means abusive of men, hate intrigue and try to introduce rectitude. O politicians these days! What a joke!

All these negative outpourings reinforce the idea that the contemporary setting works as a static, sterile space in which nothing really changes, a typical feature of the adventure time-space. This negativism reaches a climax in a scene when Leandros attends a public execution (MΔ’, 119-20). It shocks him deeply and calls up powerful thoughts of suicide. Political disgust and a romantic longing for death are explicitly combined. At this point, it is important to note that fake executions were another trope, typical of the genre of the ancient romance. But In *O Leandros* it is very real, which seems to be the first reversal of a typical motif, underlining the negative state of mind of the protagonist. In line with our allegorical reading, we can observe that both the love story and the state of Greece throughout the book share a similar fate: Leandros’ love for Koralia is impossible and only death seems a solution, while the prospects for the young country are equally dim.

At this stage something happens that will prove a turning point in the novel. Although the reader knows from other letters that Koralia is still very ill and will perhaps die, Charilaos, the friend of Leandros, decides to write telling him that Koralia is well and that she expects to see him in a month’s time (NA’ 124). Leandros is of course overjoyed at this news and not only suddenly regains hope for his love, but also reverses his current political outlook and optimistically looks forward to the future of his country. The importance of this passage is foregrounded by a number of intertextual references.

In the ancient romances deceit of this kind is a standard plot device, but in exactly the opposite way: something happens which makes one of the protagonists mistakenly believe that the other is dead. This typical motif of apparent death (*Scheintod*) usually triggers a new episode in the series of adventures (Létoublon 1993: 185-189). In eighteenth-century romantic novels no such events occur, so such an incident is a deliberate move on the part of the author. The fact that in Soutsos’ novel Leandros is misled into believing

not that Koralia is dead, but rather that she is alive and well, can hardly be a coincidence and must therefore be analysed as a conscious inversion of the model.<sup>14</sup> This episode marks an important turn in the adventure time-space section and introduces the most optimistic and symbolically most complex episode of the novel.

In a series of letters Leandros evokes memories of famous freedom fighters and their victories during the War of Independence that are related to the places he visits and then links them to illustrious figures and events from antiquity. Argolis or Delphi, for instance, evoke both Greece's glorious past as well as its implied bright future. In Hydra, an important base of resistance during the war, he meets famous sea captains<sup>15</sup> whose achievements are compared with those at the battle of Salamis, when the Greeks defeated the Persians in 480 BCE. The most inspiring place, however, is Nafplio. Traditionally, scholars have read the opposition between Nafplio, the first capital of the Greek kingdom, and Athens, which took over this role in 1832, as a simply negative vs. positive. To support this argument they usually cite letter ΛΘ' (114-5), where hypocritical city life is opposed to the idyllic environment of Attica. This view, however, is too simplistic. Apart from the fact that Athens is also sometimes characterised in a negative way early on in the novel (Ζ' 84, see also above), the symbolic significance of Nafplio is expanded thoroughly in two long letters (ΝΓ' & ΝΔ' 125-131). The city is not only a crossroad of Antiquity, Venetian heritage and Ottoman rule, from which youth is to arise with a new kingdom, but it is also the place where Kapodistrias was murdered<sup>16</sup> and where King Otto arrived in Greece. Nafplio thus exemplifies the function of space in this optimistic section: as a historical site it works as a *lieu de mémoire*, constructing a positive national identity, while at the same time as a contemporary site associated with the arrival of Otto, it is filled with hope for the future.

And at this point in the novel, with the memory of Otto's arrival, the king re-emerges as a crucial factor in building the Greek future. This episode actually reflects the political situation at that time: many constitutionalists believed that Otto would be an enlightened ruler who would soon allow a constitution in the Western, liberal tradition.<sup>17</sup> In the novel the king is directly addressed and, in a passage that contains the germs of the *Megali Idea* are clearly noticeable (see note 10), urged to realise the future of Greece, in which:

Ω βασιλεύ της Ελλάδος! (...) το να φθάσωμεν όμως εις την **προγονικήν ημών δόξαν** και δύναμιν δια της **συνενώσεως εις εν όλης της Ελληνικής φυλής** και δια της **αναγεννήσεως** των φύτων, το να ωφεληθώμεν από αιώνα έγκυον μεγάλων μελλόντων, και πλήρη μεγάλων εφευρέσεων, τούτο είναι ιδικόν σου έργον. (ΝΔ', σελ. 129)

O King of Greece! But for us to reach our **ancestral fame** and power again through the **unification of the whole Greek race** and through the **rebirth** of the enlightened spirits, and for us to benefit from an age that is pregnant with great expectations and full of great inventions, that is your task!

Thus Leandros repeats, in very similar words, the appeal to Greek youth made by the author at the end of the prologue. This reiteration strengthens the novel's ideological mes-

sage: this generation has obtained Greece's liberty; the next will have to provide for its future by restoring its ancient glory and uniting all Greeks.

It is important to note that all the elements that positively characterised the love between Leandros and Koralia in the first biographical time-space now return to characterise the future of Greece. Again nature charms: spring arrives and the birds sing (NA' 128, Ξ' & ΞΑ' 144-45). And once again quotations from classical authors are used to intensify the sense of Greek pride. The freedom fighters are indirectly compared with the *Seven against Thebes* and the Turks with the defeated *Persians* by means of excerpts from the plays of Aeschylus (ΝΣΤ' 133, NH' 140). The recently obtained peace is praised through a poem by Bacchylides (ΝΔ' 129).<sup>18</sup> This literary elaboration, parallel to that in the first biographical time-space, underlines the connection between the love story and the Greek future.

After his travels, just before returning to Athens, Leandros meets an old school comrade who now lives in a hut in the hills as a philosopher.<sup>19</sup> This meeting seems to have the purpose of concluding the adventure time-space, as the friend summarises the political message of the novel: the Greeks must renounce the current decay and take the ethos of their ancestors as an example:

Επήνεσε τους παλαιούς ἄνδρας τῆς Ελλάδος, τὸν Επαμεινώνδαν, καὶ τὸν Αριστείδην, καὶ τὸν Φωκίωνα, ὅτι μεγαλουργοί καὶ σύντροφοι τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ τῆς πενίας ἡσαν, μεμφόμενος των εξερχόντων τινάς εἰς τὴν πολιτικήν σημερινούς Ἑλληνας, ως περιορίσαντας ὀλην των την φιλοτιμίαν εἰς ταλαιπώρους ἐριδας, καὶ εἰς δείπνα πολυτελή, καὶ εἰς ποικίλην εσθήτα. (ΞΒ' 146)

He praised the ancient men of Greece, Epaminondas and Aristides and Phocion, because they were men of great achievements and companions of philosophy and sobriety. And he reproved some of the Greek politicians in power today, because they have compromised their dignity through miserable quarrels, lavish dinners and a fancy wardrobe.

He also presents with a small vision of a future society that is in keeping with the socialist philosophy of Saint-Simon on which Soutsos partly based his own ideology (see note 11):

Την μέλλουσαν κοινωνίαν (...) ζώσαν καὶ ηχηράν φιλοσόφων, ποιητών, ρητόρων, αρχιτεκτόνων, ζωγράφων καὶ λιθοξόων. (ΞΒ' 146)

The future society (...) alive and resounding thanks to philosophers, poets, orators, architects, painters and sculpters.

## Biographical Time-space II: the Political Meaning of a Tragic End

When Leandros ends his journey, the second biographical time-space section is broached. All at once the optimism is swept away by the news of Koralia's dire condition. The author creates a powerful contrast in two consecutive letters by inverting the behaviour and perceptions of Leandros' friend on the one hand and of Koralia on the other. This is

made explicit through several echoes in content and word use. The friend enjoys nature, finds inspiration in literature and “recounts the happiness of his own life” (εξιστορή την ευδαιμονίαν του βίου του, ΞΒ’ 145). Koralia for her part is “bereft of any kind of happiness” (εξηρημένη από την γενική ευτυχίαν, ΞΓ’ 147) and “The smell of the roses drove her almost mad with grief” (Η ευωδία των ρόδων την ἔφερε σχεδόν μανίαν λύπης, ibidem).

The contrast is even apparent at a lexical level. The friend says:

Τα χαράγματα εγείρουμαι από την κλίνην μου, και εις το δάσος με τον Πλούταρχον περιέρχομαι.

I get out of bed in the morning, and then wander around in the woods with Plutarch.

Of Koralia it is said that:

Εγείρεται από την κλίνην, επαναπίπτει, ανοίγει βιβλίον δια να διασκεδάση, και πάλιν το κλείει.

She gets out of bed, but falls back again; she opens a book to distract herself and closes it again

Thus they both try to do the same thing, but the result and their state of mind is very different.

What follows, is a rather quick resolution of the story, in which Leandros hopelessly withdraws within himself and slips back into the romantic pessimistic thoughts he had at the beginning of the novel. After Koralia dies, he kills himself. These events constitute a drastic inversion of the expected plot of the ancient romances, which always conclude with a happy ending and the marriage of the couple. Some scholars have suggested that this is due to the influence of European Romanticism, and it is indeed clear that parallels, especially with Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, are very close.<sup>20</sup> Be that as it may, it does not elucidate the meaning of this pessimist ending within the framework of the adventure chronotope and its ideological implications.

There are, however, other remarkable changes in this section that help clarify the reasons for this ending. The crucial opposition between the contemporary setting and the sites from the past as *lieux de memoires* is no longer valid. Indeed, space seems strikingly empty and elements with a nationalistic connotation are completely absent. There are no longer any references to Antiquity, to the War of Independence or the future of the Greek state. In view of the weight these issues have carried in previous parts of the novel, it is highly unlikely that this sudden silence is without significance. In a similarly striking way, nature as a space also plays a subdued role and is no longer an idyllic, romantic safe haven. At one point it is even depicted as dangerous:

Την νύκτα μανιώδης εξήλθον από τον κοιτώνα μου εις τα πέριξ δάση, ανέβην εις τα όρη, κατέβην εις τας κοιλάδας. Από τας πέριξ καλύβας υποθέσαντές με

οι γεωργοί ληστήν νυκτερινόν, εκένωσαν κατ' εμού τα όπλα των. Υπήγον υπό το παράθυρόν της, το παν κατείχεν η ησυχία, η ησυχία η πρόδρομος του θανάτου.

At night I manically got out of my bed and went into the surrounding woods, climbed the mountains and descended into the valleys. The farmers from the huts nearby thought I was a night thief and emptied their guns in my direction. I went up to her window. Silence enveloped everything; silence the herald of death.

Here, the symbolic function of nature is again highlighted: the idyllic setting no longer brings comfort, but instead reflects the extreme state of the love couple and foretells the death of the protagonist. This negative end is all the more conspicuous in view of the above-discussed structural build-up. In both the first biographical time-space and in the adventure time-space we observed an evolution from a pessimistic to an optimistic mood. In both sections, the pessimistic mood was dominated by the dark, melancholy atmosphere of European Romanticism and characterised by typical romantic features, such as a restless nature and a profound *Weltschmerz*. The optimistic part of both sections was typified by idyllic nature scenes and the use of references to Antiquity through historical places and quotations from ancient authors. In the biographical time-space the focus of this evolution was on the love affair; in the adventure time-space it was explicitly political. But in both sections the fate of the love affair and that of political Greece were clearly intertwined: whenever there is hope for the lovers, there are also great expectations for Greece. In moments of love's despair, the hopes for Greece's future grow small.

The second biographical time-space significantly results in the death of both the protagonists and in the symbolic absence of any kind of future for the nation. In other words, there is only a pessimistic mood, with no corresponding evolution to optimism. Considering the close link between the couple and the nation, the death of Leandros and Koralia and the impossibility of their love must have implications for the fate of the nation.

The most logical conclusion, therefore, is that the death of the couple should be read as an allegory, as a warning that strengthens the appeal for progress that Soutsos launched in the prologue. It expresses the belief that the policies of the current ruling faction are harmful for the true Greek identity and that sweeping changes need to be made in order to revive the glory of the Greeks and reunite them. In other words, the death of the goddess of Love also means the death of the goddess of Freedom.

## Conclusion

While Tziovas claims that Panagiotis Soutsos failed to achieve synthesis in his novel, my analysis has shown the opposite. *O Leandros* follows the typical tripartite structure of the adventure novel, as described by Bakhtin's chronotope theory. The parallels with and deviations from both the ancient adventure novel and the European romantic novel play a semantically significant role in the basic plot structure. At the same time, Soutsos

infuses the historical and contemporary spaces in his novel with symbolic meaning and creates an elaborate web of connotations. This makes space a key element in understanding the ideological content of the work. Soutsos reinforces this point with a surprising move in the final part of his book, where he suddenly leaves space bare and meaningless, void of explicit nationalist and political overtones. This sudden absence has a great symbolic bearing on the message of the novel.

Within this carefully designed structure Soutsos creates an allegorical story in which he expresses his ideological ambitions for the future of his country. On the one hand he claims Greek history for the newly founded state in order to further establish the grounds for a national identity. At the same time, he sends a particular political message for his contemporary fellow citizens.

Thus the question whether *O Leandros* is a sad, romantic story or a political narrative is inappropriate. It is both. With his novel Soutsos clearly intended to contribute to the nationalist discourse of the nation as a rebirth of Antiquity (Hellenism). He aimed at further introducing European culture and Enlightenment thinking into Greece, so that the country could progress. He wanted to import the genre of the romantic novel into Greek literature, which in itself is an act of introducing European culture. And with his allegorical narrative he also expressed a clear political message, a warning for the future of Greece. All these ambitions may turn *O Leandros* into a complicated novel to assess, but it cannot be deemed a literary failure. It is, on the contrary, a formidable intellectual effort to synthesise the disparate challenges of his time into a meaningful whole: the legacy of the past, the need to build a national identity, and the latest philosophies and innovations of his day. And all this for the nation's sake.

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## Notes

1. The Phanariots were a group of Greek merchant families in the Ottoman Empire who acquired great wealth and influence during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and who occupied numerous high posts in the Ottoman administration from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. They also played an important role in the launch of the Greek War of Independence as well as in the political organisation of the new Greek state in its early years.

2. Tonnet (1994) had connected *The Orfan of Chios* of Pitsipios (1839) and the ancient romance, a year earlier but on a purely intertextual level without reference to the structural similarities of the genre on a more theoretical basis.
3. Bakhtin expounded his theories in two essays, Bakhtin (1982) and (1986). For clear summaries of his theories and a discussion of their reception, see Beaton (2000, 3-7) and Borghart (2009, 2-4).
4. Borghart (2009) further developed this allegorical framework and applied it to the novel *The Exile of 1831* by Panagiotis' brother Alexandros.
5. Quotations are taken and referenced from Soutsos (1996a). As there is another modern edition of this novel (i.e. Soutsos 1996b), both the Greek number of the letter and the page is cited. All translations as well as highlighting are mine. A French translation with extensive explanatory notes is also available (Soutsos 2002).
6. There are several other places in *O Leandros* where fate is presented as the main factor in human life: ΚΓ' 100, ΛΒ' 108, ΞΓ' 147 & ΞΖ' 150.
7. Other quotations include two *Idylles* of Theocritus (Ζ' 84 & Κ' 98), *Medea* of Euripides (Ι' 87) and a poem for the *Anacreonta* (ΙΑ' 87).
8. Tziovas, among others, fails to see the true symbolic value of these nature scenes and criticises the novel for “lacking realism” (Tziovas 2009: 219).
9. The goddess in arms is a clear reference to the recent War of Independence.
10. As in 1830 large Greek populations still lived outside the new Greek state, the idea to reunite all the ethnic Greek-inhabited areas in one nation became a dominant element in the foreign and domestic politics of Greece and remained so for over a century. In 1844 Prime Minister Kolettis launched the ‘Megali Idea’, or “Great Idea”, an irredentist concept which ideologically implied the revival of the Byzantine Empire. This goal received a decisive blow in 1922 with the defeat by the Turks under Ataturk.
11. In his much cited article Vagenas (1997) analyses both the social views in the novel as well as the symbolic meaning of the reference to the mythical King Danaos in Argolis (ΝΓ' 126) and the use of the word κοινωνισμός as a translation of socialism (same letter).
12. For a general survey of the political situation of the period, see Clogg (1994: 7-51) and Lefas (1991: 1-33). See Lefas (1991: 59-70) for Panagiotis' personal dealings with Kapodistrias.
13. He did this not least in the newspaper *Ilios*, which he published and wrote together with his brother from June until December 1833, the same period in which he wrote *O Leandros*. The aim of the paper was to spread the recent achievements of Western European culture and to advocate the reforms necessary in Greek politics (see Fournaraki 1986: 1'-κβ'). The importance of these activities for Soutsos' novel is clear because at least four episodes in the wanderings of the protagonist are based (sometimes almost literally) on anonymous travel stories which Panagiotis wrote for the paper (Veloudis 1996: 37-38, note 37).
14. For this notion of inversions of motifs, I am very much indebted to the MA thesis of Brecht Van den Bossche, in which he analyzes the relations between Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* and Alexandros Soutsos' *The Exile of 1831* and identifies several inversions in the latter novel (Van den Bossche 2008: 87-102).

15. Both the Soutsos brothers were actively involved in the War of Independence and were often on the island of Hydra. These meetings and descriptions of men such as Kountouriotis and Karaïskakis (NE' & ΝΣΤ' 131-135) in *O Leandros* quite likely contain many autobiographical elements (cf. Lefas 1991: 43-55). It is mainly these passages, relating events from the revolution, which led scholars to regard this novel as historical.
- Also noteworthy is that the visit to Hydra is a more pessimistic passage in this second section of the adventure time-space, as it describes the impoverished and dispirited situation of these once heroic figures. Their situation was also a contentious political issue at the time: many felt that those who actually fought the Turks had been overlooked when Greece became a free country and a government had to be organised. The 'French faction' was particularly passionate about this issue.
16. In these letters the murder and the figure of Kapodistrias is treated quite equivocally. On the one hand he is referred to as a tyrant and his murderers compared to Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who rid Athens of a tyrant in the fourth century BCE. On the other hand his death is called tragic. In the paper *Ilios* and in Alexandros' novel much harsher opinions are offered, such as praise for the murder. See note 12 and 13.
17. They would, however, be proven wrong, as Otto continuously resisted the implementation of a constitution. It took a military coup in 1843 to make him accept one (Clogg 1994: 51-53). It is in this passage of the novel that Otto is linked to Danaos and Saint-Simonianism. Cf. note 11.
18. Other quotations include a passage from the *Deipnosophistae* attributed to Callistratus (ΝΓ' 127) and a verse by Bion of Smyrna (NH' 139).
19. Though not made clear, this feature may also show the influence of ancient romance, where the heroes are often supported by a good friend or an older wise man (cf. Létoublon 1993: 93-105).
20. Indeed Tonnet (1995) and Moulas (1992) have pointed out that in the final section of the novel the parallels with Goethe are most abundant: there is the same use of diary fragments and personal notes to replace the letters, and some passages can be traced as almost literal quotations.



**PART 5**

**SPACES AND THE DECONSTRUCTION  
OF POWER**



## Small Places

### Global Nativism In Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988)

Murat Aydemir

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, published in 1988, offers a novelistic essay on the history and present of the Caribbean island of Antigua. What I find most pertinent about the book is the way in which Kincaid, or the text's narrator, navigates the relationship between Antigua and the world, between island and mainland, between "small place" and big place; or, more generally, between *place* as such and the comprehensive frames of modernity, postmodernity, and globalization. For, it would seem, in that respect, that the book's narrator shows considerable ambivalence, alternating between two perspectives that appear contradictory, if not incommensurable. The contradiction hinges on whether or not Antigua would indeed be "a small place," a backwater separate or different from larger contexts.

For, on the one hand, the narrator criticizes the perception of Antigua as an exceptional place as little more than a convenient tourist projection, which requires the studied ignorance of the island's present reality as well as history. The natural "harmony" and exotic "quaintness" the modern tourist comes to enjoy are merely repackaged products of colonialism, all but synonymous with an assumed backwardness (16). But, on the other hand, the narrator comes preciously close to sharing that view when she claims the island's inhabitants would lack the awareness of their insertion in a larger world. "[T]he people in a small place," she writes, "cannot see themselves in a larger picture, they cannot see that they might be part of a chain of something, anything" (52). The ignorance of tourists and inhabitants alike pertains to the relationship between the small place and "a larger picture." But while the narrator sarcastically corrects the insular perception of the tourist as the effect of neo-colonial marketing, she simultaneously appears to indulge the common Eurocentric view of islanders as, well, *insular*, that is to say, small-minded and parochial.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the islanders somehow both are, and are not, "premodern," backwards; Antigua is both part of, and not quite part of, the modern world.

The contradiction poignantly illustrates Kincaid's recalcitrance, her customary unwillingness to come up with politically opportune truths; and I do not wish to push this point to blame either Kincaid or *A Small Place* for complicity or hypocrisy. Rather, what I hope to demonstrate is that this very ambivalence pinpoints a peculiar and provocative way of dealing with what might be called the place of place in a globalizing world. In what follows, I first try to historicize the common perception of islands as "small places." Subsequently, I consider Kincaid's topical island story in relation to two influential conceptu-

alizations of place: Michel Foucault's *heterotopia* and Mikhail Bakhtin's *chronotope*. And finally, I attempt to account for *A Small Place*'s particular strategy of localization in a nominally postcolonial, globalizing world.

## **Islands Are Not Insular**

The title of Kincaid's book sets up Antigua as “a small place” – which may seem readily obvious considering the fact that Antigua is an island of 281 square kilometres. However, the perspective in which “island” and “small place” are near-synonyms is the product of a specific imaginary rather than astute geographical observation. Islands are not necessarily small but vary wildly in size; neither are they commonly isolated, as most are part of sprawling archipelagos, such as the Caribbean in the case of Antigua.

Paul Rainbird argues that islands attain their special relevance in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. The discovery (or perhaps rediscovery) of the Atlantic islands broke up the classical view, in which the known Mediterranean was encircled by Oceanus, prompting the imagination of new and different worlds. Godfrey Baldacchino adds that the view of islands as invariably small, round or semi-round, and finite answers an apparent need for totalisable space, an environment that can be fully described and controlled, which he associates with the historical emergence of self-contained and territorial nation-states, in sharp contrast to the sprawling, territorially opportunistic empires of the past (247).<sup>2</sup> Both Rainbird and Baldacchino adduce a specifically Western and modern context for the geographically faulty imaginary of the island as “a small place.”

That imaginary, moreover, is inherently anachronistic. The Canary, Cape Verde, and Caribbean islands quickly became integral stopovers for the developing mercantile capitalism of the intercontinental, or triangular, trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas that ushered in the modern era. Modernity is not so much European or Western as it is *Atlantic*, as Paul Gilroy has convincingly argued. In other words, the literary and cultural imagination of the island as semi-round, small, and closed in on itself takes shape precisely when the Atlantic islands increasingly function as hyper-connected commercial and cultural hubs. Arguably, then, Kincaid's characterization of Antigua as “a small place” participates in the modern imaginary that divorces the island from the larger historical and economic contexts that produces it, thereby *making* it small and marginal.

At the same time, Kincaid moves beyond that imaginary by demonstrating that *this* island is all but totalisable, fully knowable. In contrast to the indigenous inhabitant who may not be able to see the big picture, but who can be assumed to know her or his “small place” exceedingly well, the narrator offers little nativist knowledge or experience of what life on Antigua is really like. Instead, the text offers three divergent perspectives on the place, alternating between disparate time layers and points of view. Each time, the narrator speaks about Antigua with a fierce commitment, yet never from a position of unequivocal native or experiential authority. The first chapter sketches a tourist's experience of the island – but the narrator is not a tourist; with a poignant mixture of outrage and nostalgia, chapter two deals with the colonial Antigua of the narrator's childhood – but that place no

longer exists; and the third and final part details present-day, postcolonial life on the island – which the narrator, an expatriate, does not share.

It is in this insistence that the small place may be small but not therefore also readily assimilable that one might see the beginning of the particular understanding of the place of place in the world that Kincaid's book advances.<sup>3</sup> It participates in what James Clifford has described as the endeavour of “unmaking the exoticist or colonialist concept of the homebody native, always firmly at home, in his or her place” (477). Premodern and postmodern ways of living, Clifford continues, have in common dispersed patterns of dwelling. As the result, modernity becomes the temporary exception rather than the norm. Today's expat or migrant does not so much depart from an indigenous existence as reinstate it.

A small place, then, does not necessarily offer a fixed or snug form of emplacement; on the contrary, it may consist of a dizzying overlay of scales and frames. According to the narrator, Antigua's native inhabitant struggles to get the big picture. Meanwhile, however, the narrator herself struggles to get the small picture fully into view. It may not so much be the big picture that is particularly hard to see or get after all, couched as it is in the familiarizing narratives of modernity, postcolonialism, and globalization, but rather the small place that falls within, while yet somehow simultaneously exceeding, those very frames. This island, it appears, is far from insular. How does this peculiar vision of location fit or modify influential conceptualizations of place?

## Heterochronotopia

The so-called “spatial turn” in the humanities and the social sciences has provoked variegated responses. Roughly, postmodernists have welcomed it as the ultimate victory over modernity and historicism, while Marxists repudiate it as the ultimate victory of capital, symptomatic of the encroachment of a socioeconomic order that no longer sees the need to historicize its genesis, nor to factor in the possibility of qualitative change. As Michel Foucault wrote in an influential essay as early as 1967, “One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics oppose the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space” (22).

Despite the faint irony of that phrasing, which seems to extend equally to both parties, Foucault's “Of Other Spaces” is routinely cited in support of the postmodernist or globalist reification of space. “We are,” Foucault writes, “in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (22). A further repudiation of historicism can be found in the essay by Foucault's pithy repudiation of utopias, so central for both liberal and Marxist accounts of modernity, as “fundamentally unreal spaces” (24). Instead of unreal modernist utopias, Foucault champions postmodernist *heterotopias*, existing pockets or enclaves that are part of the spatially integrated world, while yet remaining qualitatively different, somehow off. The heterogeneous is no longer situated faraway, somewhere across the border of known space, but is now included in and distributed through the world that we know, or

at least assume we do. Nonetheless, heterotopias are not situated altogether outside time; on the contrary, they remain tied to “slices in time” (26). Hence, heterotopias are not so much atemporal but differently temporal, *heterochronic*; they are not so much unhistorical but differently historical. In a final twist, Foucault’s argument itself depends on a rough historical timeline that moves from the spatial hierarchies of the Middle Ages via Nineteenth-Century historicism to arrive at the present epoch of the network (22-3).

What I find productive about Foucault’s essay is, to begin, its effective implication that no one can be understood to occupy a larger, cosmopolitan, let alone global condition. We all inhabit a particular, hence limited, if not small, *place*. “We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light,” Foucault argues, “we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (23). In that sense, the phrase “a small place” is in fact redundant: lived, inhabited space is always, necessarily, small in relation to the enveloping frames of postmodernity and globalization. In addition, postmodern or global space is not so much smooth or open, as is often averred, but rather intricately textured by manifold pockets or sites that remain spatiotemporally heterogeneous. Finally, while the sites we inhabit are singular and irreducible, a tight and volatile relationship holds between normal and different places, between homotopical and heterotopical spaces. For, heterotopias both divert from other places, possibly converting their logic, while yet also *representing* them in some or other way. By “exert[ing] a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy,” Foucault suggests, heterotopias not just reverse and displace but also *reflect* something of where I am. In other words, heterotopias are not just about different places *over there*, but also about the supposedly normal places *over here*, enabling us to see them again, but differently. This weird logic can only be described oxymoronically as that of a paradigmatic exception: the exception does not so much prove the rule as instantiate it, demonstrate it. The heterotopic place shows something general about the world in its very difference.

If Foucault’s notion of heterotopia seems equivocally postmodern, Bakthin’s concept of the *chronotope* is decidedly a-modern or non-modern. It does not affirm the watershed between the traditional and the new, but insists instead on longer continuities. Portions of history, Bakthin argues, are erratically and unpredictably assimilated into literature in the shape of generic settings that endure. Thus, a culture may retain and combine chronotopes from wildly different, incommensurable historical periods. Those settings form the “primary point[s],” Bakthin continues, from which narrative events unfold, effectively unseating the primacy of the temporal and causal relations of the plot (22). Narratives usher in particular “timeplaces,” in which events happen to occur; stories are first about places, only secondly about plots. Finally, the chronotope repudiates the split between time and space that “abstract thought” establishes as it conceives of “time and space as separate entities and conceive them as things apart” (16). The assertion becomes poignant as soon as we take into account that the split between the modern and the archaic, the West and the rest, also cleaves apart time and space, discriminating between a placeless, because universalized, Time on the one hand and an atemporal, static place on the other.<sup>4</sup> The modern or global is a specific timeplace like any other. In this sense,

too, Bakhtin's conceptualization of the chronotope undercuts the privilege of Western modernity.

Put Foucault and Bakthin together, and we can begin to appreciate the island as the condensation of an aesthetic setting we inherit from the past, and an existing place that may epitomize as well as off-set the contemporary world: a *heterochronotope*.<sup>5</sup> A current chronotope in literature, film, and popular culture, the island is simultaneous and on a par with a number of other generic settings, such as, for example, the castle, the big city, the boudoir, the suburb, and the road. At the same time, it assimilates an extensive array of historical layers, ranging from the classical commonplace of the “blessed” or “fortunate isles,” Plato’s Atlantis, and the modern utopia (or dystopia) inaugurated by Thomas More in 1516. As heterotopia, furthermore, the island marks the demise of the utopian promise of Western modernity, out of place and out of date within Foucault’s spatialised world. At the same time, it supplies a heuristically privileged setting that may both reveal and contest aspects of the larger world. The specific aspect Kincaid’s text brings out, I wish to argue, is the island’s potential to contest the insularity of the supposed margin while demonstrating the insularity of the (post)modern subject, whether at home or abroad. Indeed, *A Small Place* advances what may be described as a generalized insularity or nativism in a world that fancies itself “global.”

### “Sitting Somewhere”

In a passage intermixing narration, address, and free indirect speech, the narrator of *A Small Place* voices the desire of the tourist in the following way:

But one day, when you are sitting somewhere, alone in that crowd, and that awful feeling of displacedness comes over you, and really, as an ordinary person you are not well equipped to look too far inward and set yourself aright, because being ordinary is already so taxing, and being ordinary takes all you have out of you, and though the words “I must get away” do not actually pass across your lips, you make a leap from being that nice blob just sitting like a boob in your amniotic sac of the modern experience to being a person visiting heaps of death and ruin and feeling alive and inspired at the sight of it (16).

Modern individuality, the fragment implies, precisely consists of the misrecognition or ignorance of the larger context of modernity. The cliché of “being alone in a crowd” shifts the prized attainment of autonomous individuality, an individuality that is supposed to transcend its context or background, to a condition of pathetic isolation. While Descartes could still assert, with a sense of accomplishment, that “among the crowd of large and active people … I have been able to live as solitary and retired as in the remotest desert,” this subject suffers only from displacement and disconnection (qtd. in Damrosch, 378). The modern experience is twice described as “sitting” (“sitting somewhere,” “just sitting like a boob”), suggesting an anchored emplacement, a containment so constraining and regressive it can be adequately compared to the life of the foetus inside the amniotic sac.

Place does not get much smaller than this! The modern subject does not inhabit Time, nor “big space,” but partakes of an entirely “nativist” and “insular” form of dwelling.

Once the subject makes the leap from his or her blob-like existence, he or she can only “get away” by admiring “heaps of death and ruin” somewhere else, coming away feeling refreshed. Those “heaps” are of course the remainders of the history that connected the West and Antigua in the first place: “monuments to rottenness” turned into tourist sights, as the text later describes them (69). The big getaway turns out to be a roundabout return, a new enclosure. The enjoyed feelings of aliveness and inspiration do not quite suggest that the tourist recognizes the historical continuity between those ruins, monuments, and sights and his own displaced and isolated experience. In other words, not just the Antiguans live in a small place, so do Western subjects with disposable income; not just the Antiguans fail to see the Big Picture, so do the supposedly cosmopolitan travellers. *A Small Place* suggests a kind of generalized nativism within the touristic, globalized world.

The generalized nativism that Kincaid’s text develops puts the difference between the modern individual “self” and his requisite “other” on a different footing. “Every native everywhere,” Kincaid writes, “lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom and desperation and depression, and every deed, good or bad, is an attempt to forget this. Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives – most natives in the world – cannot go anywhere. They are too poor” (18-19). The charged oppositions between self and other, between Westerner and non-Westerner, between big city-dweller and islander, are all replaced by the one between “tourist-native” and “native-native.” And that opposition is boiled down to the question whether or not one has disposable income at hand; a perspective that surely amounts to a severe rejoinder to the current generalization, conceptualization, and idealization of mobility and migration.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, *A Small Place* appears to ascribe to the Antiguans a special talent to deal with, even enjoy, their lives in a small place, which the tourist lacks, or is perhaps never forced to develop. While the tourist only comes alive at the ruinous sights of a history that also made him possible, the Antiguans are characterized as “children, eternal innocents, or artists who have not yet found eminence in a world too stupid to understand, or lunatics who have made their own lunatic asylum, or an exquisite combination of all three” (57). Nevertheless, this intriguing description may allude to the ways of dealing with one’s place in the world we all share to some extent, modalities necessary to both know and yet “unknow” the terrible continuities between the big picture and the small places where we feel so at home, and so bored: studied ignorance, creative imagination, and a type of madness. In that sense too, then, the Antiguans in their small place and we in ours may not be all that different.

The realization informs the stunning re-appreciation of the island that closes the book. After having worked her way through the overlapping contexts of colonial, postcolonial, and touristic Antigua with a mixture of sarcasm, outrage, nostalgia, indignation, passion, and sadness, the narrator observes the island anew: “Antigua is beautiful. Antigua is too beautiful. Sometimes the beauty of it seems unreal” (77). For a moment, it seems we are

back at the glossy, commodified, and exoticist aesthetic of the island paradise that the Western tourist comes to enjoy. This time around, however, the ontological suspension of the place, its unreal aspect, does not suggest a (premodern) otherworldliness, a place away from it all, but on the contrary an ordinariness that resists perception. Antigua was outrageously beautiful when it was inhabited by slaves; it is as beautiful now that it is inhabited by “just human beings.” “[J]ust human beings,” who are like children, artists, and lunatics in that they are able to summon up the talent, madness, as well as innocence to live their lives in an impossible, yet perfectly everyday, place. What *A Small Place* dares to imagine, Suzanne Gauch aptly states, is an oxymoronic “spectacle of ordinariness” (911). When the pathos and hurt of the colonial, postcolonial, and global contextualisations of Antigua drop away for a moment, the island reveals itself in a shocking everydayness that is too beautiful to apprehend. Thus, Kincaid moves the imagination of the island from the *small place* we know all too well in its predictable exceptionality (insular, parochial, backward, exotic, quaint, etcetera) to a *place* we struggle to take in aesthetically and epistemologically in its everyday existence. The discovery of Kincaid’s *A Small Place* may be that the island, the place of such insistent imaginings and urgent European projections, may ultimately be just a place, inhabited by “just human beings.”

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## Notes

1. Hoving characterizes the narrator’s voice as a mixture of anticolonial outrage and colonial mimicry, enacting an “angry exercise in identification” that nevertheless “stays unsettlingly close to colonial discourse” (2001: 192-4).
2. Marin’s classic study on More’s *Utopia* analyzes the totalizing strategies of the modern society it projects in detail. The island is a circle, “a line closed off to itself” (1984: 103), in which oppositions are neutralized (1984:109). Utopia’s society is fully transparent and knowable (1984: 99). Jameson describes Utopia as “entirely totalized and closed-off … self-enclosed and autonomous” (2005: 39).
3. Comparing *A Small Place* with *My Garden (Book)*, Murray argues that Kincaid resists an “isolated aesthetic” in both cases. Both island and private garden are revealed as “cultural and historical formation” (2001: 116). Boletsi also compares the two books, concluding that the later text offers a more productive way of dealing with boundaries.
4. “Modernity starts when space and time are separated from living practice and from each other and so become ready to be theorized as distinct and mutually independent categories of strategy and action, when they cease to be, as they used to be in long premodern centuries, the intertwined and so barely distinguishable aspects of living experience, locked in a stable and apparently invulnerable one-to-one correspondence,” Bauman writes (2000: 8-9).
5. Drawing on Bakthin, Bal uses the term to account for spatiotemporal shifts in artistic video installations dealing with migration and mobility (2008: 36).
6. Chrisman faults the allegorisation of (post)colonialism into the fated encounter between Western self and non-Western other for ignoring the historical network of practices, including those of capitalism and political economy, that have produced that opposition to begin with (1980: 38-41). Gauch argues, “*A Small Place* addresses otherness by rejecting it in favor of ordinariness, an ordinariness that levels many of the distinctions upon which self and other are predicated” (2002: 910).

## Writing space, living space

### Time, agency and place relations in Herodotus's *Histories*<sup>1</sup>

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#### Aristagoras's engraving and Herodotus's narrative

In the fifth book of his *Histories*, Herodotus describes the arrival in Sparta of one Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, there to win support for a revolt of Ionian Greeks from Persian control.<sup>2</sup> Aristagoras enters into discussions with Cleomenes, one of the Spartan kings, armed with ‘a bronze tablet on which the way around the whole earth was engraved, and all the sea and all the rivers’ (ἔχων χάλκεον πίνακα ἐν τῷ γῆς ἀπάστης περίοδος ἐνετέμητο καὶ θάλασσά τε πᾶσα καὶ ποταμοὶ πάντες, 5.49.1).<sup>3</sup> With this visual aid Aristagoras points out the string of places to be conquered, until he arrives at Susa, ‘where the great king lives and where the storehouses of his wealth are located’ (ἐνθα βασιλεύς τε μέγας δίαιταν ποιεῖται, καὶ τῶν χρημάτων οἱ θησαυροὶ ἐνταυτά εἰσι, 49.7). His promises are persuasive enough to gain another hearing; it is only three days later, when Cleomenes asks how many days’ journey it was from the Ionian Sea to the king (50.1), that his mission fails. For Aristagoras makes the mistake of telling the truth – the journey from the sea was some three months (50.2) – at which news Cleomenes bids his Milesian guest leave Sparta before sunset (50.3).

Coming at a critical juncture in the narrative, as Herodotus bridges the transition from mapping out Persian power to detailing the first moment when Greeks and Persians clash, this episode brings to light a number of important issues for thinking about Herodotus’s representation of space.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this volume we focus on the tensions between Aristagoras’s cartographic visualization and Herodotus’s *discursive* space – that is, how spatial ideas and concepts are put into words. Aristagoras’s bronze engraving attempts to capture the topography of the world – its ways, sea and rivers – in a form that is at once complete (ἀπάστης... πᾶσα... πάντες), abstract and fixed.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Aristagoras puts these very qualities to use. Using deictics throughout his pitch to Cleomenes – ‘next to the Ionians here are the Lydians’ (Ιώνων μὲν τῶνδε οὖδε Λυδοί, 5.49.5); ‘next are the Phrygians here’ (οὗδε ἔχονται Φρύγες, 5); the Cilians ‘possess land that reaches this sea here’ (κατήκοντες ἐπὶ θάλασσαν τήνδε, 6), etc. – Aristagoras exploits the world in miniature to collapse the distance and differences between places and make the effort of traversing them seem easy.<sup>6</sup> Yet, this strategy and these qualities of completeness, abstraction and fixity ultimately flounder when confronted by the ‘reality’ (τὸ ἐόν, 50.2) of Cleomenes’s question, ‘just how far is it from the Ionian Sea to the King (i.e. Susa)?’

Where Aristagoras had concentrated exclusively on general spatial properties like water bodies, territories and proximity to emphasise links and movement, Cleomenes introduces the concept of time that disrupts the flow – how *long* does it take? In other words, we are invited to consider what this space signifies.

Herodotus's narrative neatly underlines the difference between space as abstractly represented and what it means to those on the ground. First, Herodotus records the delay in time (of two days) from Aristagoras's initial appeal to Cleomenes's answer, as if the very act of interpreting the engraving were resisting the attempt to capture the whole world all in one go. Second, Cleomenes's decision is itself marked by shifts in location – initially ‘to the place that had been agreed’ (ἐξ τὸ συγκείμενον, 50.1), then to his house (ἐξ τὰ οἰκία, 51.1), finally ‘to another room’ (ἐξ ἔτερον οἴκημα, 51.3) – as the engraving's persuasive power is finally undone by the kind of detailed contextual mapping that its generalised representation glosses over and where each place is invested with a particular meaning.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, Herodotus supplies his own discursive representation of the equivalent space. Ostensibly going over the same ground in order to bear out the accuracy of Aristagoras's (foolishly) true answer of thirty days, Herodotus rewrites Aristagoras's bird's-eye visual display as *hodological* – that is, from the perspective of someone making the journey.<sup>8</sup> And far from the ‘ease’ that had characterised Aristagoras's abstract modelling, Herodotus's narration emphasises complexity, the labour required to traverse the space, even the difficulty of apprehending it, an effort which takes him over two chapters to document (5.52-54). Where Aristagoras's engraving presents an abstract product of contemplation, Herodotus's text represents the idea of space as *something lived*.<sup>9</sup> We see this not only in the fact and manner of Cleomenes's answer, which exposes the meaningless of a generalised topographical model if one cannot tell how far away places and peoples are from each other. It is also represented in and to a certain extent *performed* by Herodotus's subsequent narrative, which fills the space with measurements to take, obstacles to overcome, and a sense of what it is like to travel from the Aegean Sea to Susa.

There are at least three important aspects to the idea of lived space that contributes to Herodotus's discursive representation. The first of these, *time*, we have already mentioned: whether it is the thirty days' journey or the simple chronological movement of Herodotus's narrative, time provides the context in which space is experienced.<sup>10</sup> Herodotus explicitly confronts the issue of temporality in his prologue, when he describes his inquiry being based on him ‘seeking out towns of men both small and great alike: for of the places that were once great, most have now become small, while those that were great in my time were small before’ (όμοίως σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιόν. τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε: τὰ δὲ ἐπ’ ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά, 1.5.3-4). A few paragraphs earlier, some unnamed Persians present a world that is sharply differentiated along ethnic lines between Greeks and barbarians, with the Greeks holding sway over Europe, the Persians Asia (1.4.4). By contrast Herodotus suggests a different, more complex, path through the places of history, differentiated not so much by their spatial location as by their temporal dimension – how they *do not* remain the same over time.<sup>11</sup> *Agency*, which is already implied by our description of ‘lived space’, is important here too – whether we think of the Persians presenting their

account of the history of the conflict with the Greeks, or Herodotus taking an active role in hunting out historical data from the places to which he travels. And agency permeates the *Histories'* space, not only in the actions, thoughts and accounts of the historical participants or of Herodotus himself, but even in non-human objects such as Aristagoras's engraving, which attempts to present the world in a way that highlights movement (ways, rivers, seas), or the pillars by which Darius seeks to map out his dominion over the Black Sea territory (4.87), or the cult statues which the Aeginetans send as assistance to the Thebans – and which are sent back with a polite request for men instead (5.81). Thirdly, lived space is *relational*. For Aristagoras, the chain of places that he sketches out emphasise a linked world with clear and direct lines of communication, which in turn casts this space as attractive for a would-be conqueror. At the same time, however, the very fact that the man from Miletus is in Sparta seeking an alliance against the Persians shows the interconnectedness of the world, but in a different way, one that connects places from across the waters, which are not topographically proximate to each other (as Cleomenes's question makes clear), but which are somehow conceptually and culturally linked.<sup>12</sup> Different relational models are available, and differ according to the context, purpose and persons involved.

For the rest of this chapter we want to think more carefully about the *Histories'* lived space and explore how the picture that emerges from the narrative differs from abstract depictions of space presented within it. Such overly schematic representations we see articulated by the Persians at the very beginning of the *Histories*, or explicitly challenged by Herodotus when he 'laughs at' the maps produced by his Ionian contemporaries that similarly divide the world into two regions of equal size (4.36.2), or more subtly undercut when Aristagoras turns up with just such a map and puts it to service an argument in favour of conquest.<sup>13</sup> In particular, we want to challenge conventional readings of the *Histories* as presenting a polarised world of East versus West, which, while grounded in Herodotus's concern to explore how 'Greeks and barbarians came into conflict with each other' (1.1), fail to take into account either Herodotus's implicit rejection of the Persian model of an Asia-Europe divide in favour of an inquiry that recognises how places change over time, or the extent to which Herodotus or his historical agents relate those places to each other.<sup>14</sup> Using the features of lived space – time, agency and relation – that have emerged from the scene between Aristagoras and Cleomenes, we sketch out the beginnings of a network analysis of book 5, which in turn helps pave the way for a close textual study of that book's opening episode. Both methods help to give form to the idea of the *Histories'* lived space that underpins and greatly complicates the historical agents' own understanding of the world around them.

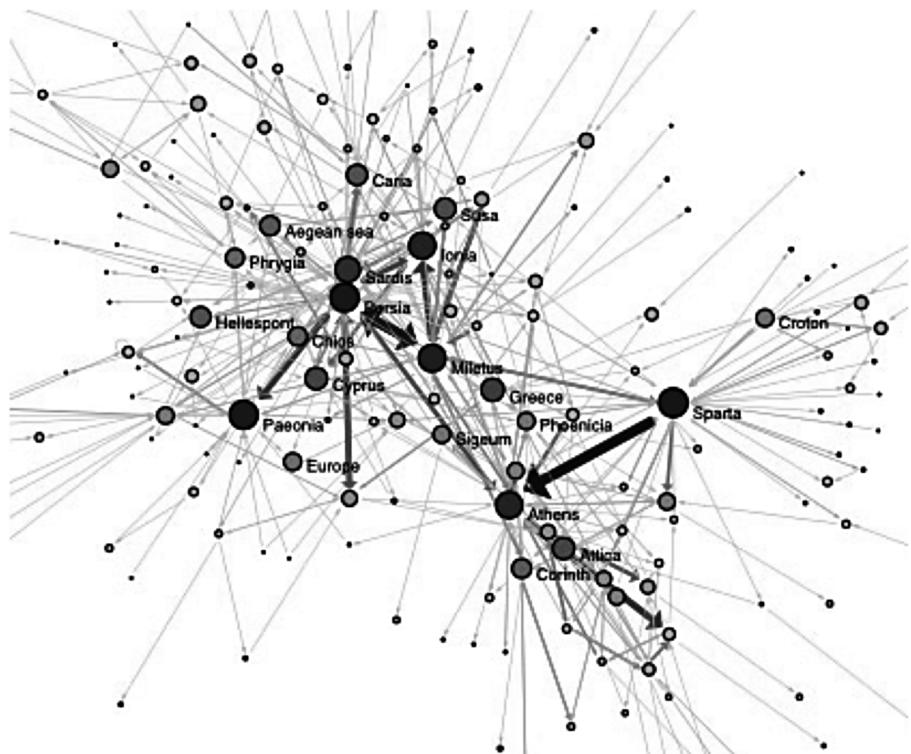
## Towards a network analysis of Herodotus book 5

Even a cursory reading of the *Histories* reveals the wide array of different places Herodotus hunts out in the course of trying to explain the conflict between Greeks and barbarians.<sup>15</sup> Because of their sheer volume, in order to make some inroads into understanding how space functions in the *Histories* requires a close analysis of one stretch of narrative.

Book 5 offers a good example, since, as well as providing the broader context for the meeting of Aristagoras and Cleomenes, it stands at the centre of Herodotus's *Histories* and marks the pivotal moment when Asia and Europe – the Persians and the Greeks – come into conflict for the first time.<sup>16</sup> But to approach the question of how space is represented in the *Histories* means first considering the ways in which Herodotus relates different places to one another and then exploring the nature, form and significance of those relationships. In what follows we briefly set out the beginnings of a network analysis of the place relations configured by Herodotus in book 5 that will provide the broader cultural framework in and against which to read the opening movement of this book.

In recent decades network analysis has become increasingly important in the study of ancient history,<sup>17</sup> with Herodotus even being used as a prime witness for many of the historical networks sketched.<sup>18</sup> Rather than using network theory to reconstruct a historical reality based on the *Histories*, our interest lies instead in using a study of the connections Herodotus makes between spatial concepts to represent his construction of geographic space and help prepare for a close textual examination of its lived experience. Above all, this has meant reconsidering what kind of spatial information ought to be captured. In previous work, we have used a digital text of Herodotus's *Histories* to extract and analyse all place-name data.<sup>19</sup> In the episode discussed above, however, the two figures involved reflect in some way the places from which they come – Aristagoras represents the outward-looking city of Miletus on the Ionian coast, Cleomenes, the inward-looking military state of Sparta. Thus, in order to encompass those phenomena that occupy a physical space in the topographical reality described by Herodotus, the notion of place needs extending to encompass 'proxies' – the peoples, individuals, or even non-human agents that convey important spatial information.<sup>20</sup> From this point our analysis of book 5 proceeds on a clause-by-clause basis, assigning any single mention of a connection between two geographical concepts (places or their proxies) a single value (per verbal form), while noting the directionality of the relationship (how place/proxy x acts on place/proxy y).<sup>21</sup>

The results of this systematic approach are presented in figure 1. At a glance, the sheer complexity of spatial relationships in Herodotus (book 5) is evident, even after some necessary simplification to make the data readable.<sup>22</sup> All places and/or proxies mentioned in book 5 are represented in the graph by a single point (or node), the size and boldness of which corresponds to the number of times they occur – the more they are mentioned, the larger and darker the node. The lines (or edges) mark a connection of some kind between two places and/or proxies, their thickness indicating the frequency by which the connection is drawn in the text. Arrows show the direction of the connection – whether place (or proxy) A is acting upon place (or proxy) B, or vice versa. Above all, the places are represented not in their 'real-life' geographical locations but according to their importance in the network: that is to say, those places/proxies which are mentioned most often in a relationship of some kind to others gravitate towards the centre of the graph, while those places/proxies on the fringes are those which are least related (though they may be important in other ways).



**Figure 1: Total network for Herodotus book 5**

With careful analysis the network graph can be used to paint a general picture of spatial relations in Herodotus book 5. The places that occur most frequently, indicated by the largest nodes in the graph, are (in rough order of magnitude) Persia, Paeonia, Sparta, Ionia, Miletus, Athens, Sardis, Greece, Attica, Cyprus, Susa, Hellespont, Caria, Chios, etc. Many of these will come as no surprise for a reader familiar with book 5, though even this basic information has the potential to flag up some unanticipated outcomes, such as the distinction that Herodotus makes between Attica and Athens – that is, between the settlement and its territory – or the strong unidirectional link from Sparta to Athens, which indicates Spartan dominance over Athens. It is this relationship that puts Athens under so much stress that Attica comes under threat. What the graph fails to depict, however, is Athens's resistance to that influence and Sparta's ultimate failure.<sup>23</sup>

The most frequently occurring places cited above appear to divide roughly into two distinct, though to some degree interrelated, spheres – Sparta, Attica, Athens and Greece (along with Corinth, Croton and Phoenicia) on the one hand, with Miletus, Susa, Ionia, Cyprus, Chios, Hellespont, Caria, Paeonia, Phrygia, the Aegean Sea and Persia on the other. These groupings would appear to substantiate the polarised split between East and West, which we had earlier contested; but the network picture is a good deal more nuanced than that. There is a significant asymmetry to the networks: while the 'Greek'

network centres on two places, Athens and Sparta, the ‘other’ network more complexly builds around a number of places – Miletus, Ionia, Sardis, Paeonia, Cyprus, Susa, etc – with Persia at the centre, suggesting Persia’s influence both east and west. The presence in this sphere, moreover, of two important transit regions, the crossing point of the Hellespont and the Aegean Sea, underlines the coverage of Persia’s reach westwards, to the extent that Sardis sits next to Persia – Sardis is here almost synonymous with Persian power. But it is important to note the dual-directionality of the relationship between Persia and Miletus – Persia is not the only agent for change here, and Ionian culpability is an important part of the story (as we will see below in our narrative explication of the graph). Finally, the relationship between Persia and Miletus is reflected in that between Athens and Sparta, only this latter relationship is unidirectional and points to strong inter-Greek currents, which significantly complicates the impression of a coherent opposing sphere. This is no simple division between Greeks and barbarians.

The depiction of the broader conceptual categories, Greece and Europe, supports this more complex picture. It is notable that the former is situated in the ‘no-man’s land’ between Miletus and the sphere of Greek city-states, suggesting that Greece is an idea that is being fought over as the divisions begin to open and conflict ensues. More mysteriously, Europe is located in the Persian ambit, perhaps indicating that it is Persia’s activities that lead to the concept of Europe gaining hold in the narrative. Bringing together our initial impressions, we suggest the emergence of two spheres of influence coalescing around Persia, on the one hand, and Athens and Sparta on the other, with Miletus as the gateway between the two. But this scenario includes relationships that cut across that any notional boundary in ways that both underpin and undermine polarised readings of Herodotean space.

As is clear, while the network graph usefully bring to light interesting and not altogether anticipated relationships that are worthy of further investigation, it is not an end in and of itself. Rather, we suggest that such visualisations, while a product of close textual analysis, are inevitably also *part of* a continuing interpretative process. Their utility lies in helping us shine a light on the dense spatial relations that underpin the text, and in prompting further explanation and exploration of identifiable patterns. Hence, for the rest of this paper we will tease out some of the patterns observed in this brief survey, notably the striking prominence of Paeonia in this network graph and in particular its relationship to Persia, as we read the opening episode of book 5 in the light of this conceptual framework.

## **The Paeonians: a world on the move**

For the first twenty-three chapters of book 5, Herodotus uses the story of the Paeonians to stitch together his narrative. As an ethnic group, the Paeonians are already a good example of the kind of additional information not captured by place-name alone – the category of ethnicity fixes people spatially just as the patronymic fixes them vertically.<sup>24</sup> But this section is also useful for picking away at the main narrative impulse toward the clash between Greeks and Persians. Through his description of the Paeonians’ spatial relations, Herodotus subtly suggests alternative routes through the gathering storm that do not easily

or comfortably fall back on an East-West dividing line. In contrast to his historical agents' hardening attitude towards conflict, Herodotus's discursive space depicts an ever-evolving world that allows for a more complex and flexible understanding of the ties that bind them.

## Identity issues

The beginning episode of book 5 introduces the various players. Herodotus describes the Persians as those 'whom Darius left in Europe under the command of Megabazus' (5.1.1), thereby defining this group through two key individuals, Darius, their primary signifying agent, and his proxy, Megabazus. In contrast stand the Thracian peoples to whom Darius now turns, both of whom Herodotus introduces in terms of natural features – the Paeonians live by the river Strymon (*οἱ γὰρ ὁν ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος Παίονες*, 1.2), the Perinthians belong to the Hellespont (*Περινθίους Ἐλλησποντίων*, 1.1). These definitions are important for setting the scene for the rest of the book. The Persians will be a catalyst for and protagonist in many of the relationships in book 5, on the basis of Darius's concern to extend the reach of his empire. The Thracians, however, defined by their land, introduce another important theme – the difficulty of enforcing control over other peoples and places because of the nature of the geography. Indeed, the Hellespont is going to be a critical 'hotspot' for Persian movement, as suggested already by the network graph. Similarly, the Strymon will be important for fluid notions of Thracian power,<sup>25</sup> ironically not by virtue of being a river – for rivers in Herodotus tend to be markers of fixed lines that one crosses at one's peril<sup>26</sup> – but as the one stable feature in the landscape that highlights a dangerous new turn of events – the founding of a city.<sup>27</sup> Thracian lived, and not lived (empty), space will become a major obstacle to Persian conquest.

When discussing the graph above, we already had cause to mention Herodotus's use of the large conceptual category 'Europe'. To expand on that point here, its presence in the opening sentence of the book (as in 'The Persians whom Darius had left in Europe') harks back to the earlier narrative, which had been about Persian expansion into other areas (Egypt, Scythia), and also looks forward to the stakes in this and subsequent books.<sup>28</sup> Asia and Europe are coming together, again (cf. 1.2-4). In the beginning of the *Histories*, Persian wise men suggest a clear division between Europe and Asia – Asia is theirs, they say, and all the barbarian peoples who inhabit it, while Europe and the Greeks are separate (1.4.4). Book 5 is going to complicate that picture, even as it reignites the conflict.

Other relationship types set the scene for what is to follow. This is clearest in the link between the Paeonians and Perinthians, whose conflict extends over five clauses in 5.1 and leads to one of the groups, the Perinthians, being transformed as a result – the Paeonians triumph over them. But, Herodotus is keen to observe, this conflict is just an example of a time 'before' (*πρότερον*); now, in the chronological present of Herodotus's narrative, the Perinthians were the 'first' (*πρώτους*) to be subdued by the Persians. Thus Herodotus looks both forward and back, back to a time when neighbourly conflict led to the defeat of the Perinthians, forward to a time when the Perinthians will be just the first of many groups subjugated by a far superior invading force. That earlier conflict with their

neighbours cannot have been all that catastrophic apparently, since the Perinthians have retained their identity enough to be now subject (again) to invasion – but will it be the same here, or are the Persians the game-changer? That certainly seems to be the implication of Herodotus's description of how the Perinthians now (*τότε*) fought bravely ‘for their liberty’ (*περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας*, 5.2.1) – the first mention of the war against the Persians as a fight for freedom.<sup>29</sup> Only then, when they have been (irrevocably?) conquered, does Herodotus record the actual city of Perinthus (*ώς δὲ ἐχειρώθη ἡ Πέρινθος*, 2.2). This is a good example of the meaning of space changing before our eyes. With the people having lost their liberty and the city having fallen, the place is named. Now it is simply a plot of land or resource to be possessed by its conquerors.

### Filling in the gaps, making the connections

Darius is the prime mover behind the change in function of this territory. But, while the Perinthians may have been conquered (again), there is a suggestion that the rest of Thrace might not be all that easy, even as Megabazus marches through the land subduing ‘every city and every people of those living in that place’ (*πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ πᾶν ἔθνος τῶν ταύτῃ οἰκημένων*, 2.2). The distinction between place and people picks up on the capture of Perinthus – a place to be possessed now that the people are defeated – as well as on Darius's most recent (and unsuccessful) campaign in Scythia, where there were no cities and the people remained unconquered. Something similar will happen here, in spite of the apparent complete (*πᾶσαν...πᾶν...*) success of Megabazus's blitzkrieg. Indeed, at this point, with the conquest of Thrace in Persian sights, Herodotus breaks off to supply details about this place. The sudden shift in tone and break from the chronological account of Persian conquest disrupts that narrative. And, by filling in our knowledge of Thrace, Herodotus sets the scene for its resistance to Persian rule.<sup>30</sup>

First, Herodotus compares Thrace to India, which has been used as a point of comparison before, when Darius himself had tested cultural norms (3.38). There, Herodotus had again broken with chronology in order to use Darius to raise issues about cultural relativism in the context of Cambyses's assault on Egyptian customs. Here, Herodotus returns to that same comparative example to turn the tables on Darius. At first sight, the comparison seems somewhat exaggerated – after all, Thrace is not quite at the ends of the earth (certainly not so far out on the margins as was Scythia). However, Herodotus's point seems to be more political than geographical: in his judgement Thrace would be by far the strongest of all nations (*πολλῷ κράτιστον πάντων ἔθνεων*) ‘if they were ruled by one man or had the same intention in mind’ (*εἰ δὲ ύπ’ ἐνὸς ἄρχοιτο ἡ φρονέοι κατὰ τῶντό*, 5.3.1). There is more to a place than natural geography or size alone: power rests largely on the kind of political settlement a place enjoys and the relationship between the inhabitants it promotes. The irony is that it is precisely Thrace's *plurality* – the tribes have many names, each according to its place (3.2) – that will prove difficult to control.

How to place Thrace will be important for Darius's Persians, of course, but no less so for the reader. Are they Greek (*πᾶσα πόλις*) or non-Greek (*πᾶν ἔθνος*, 2.2)?<sup>31</sup> Or, rather, how (non-) Greek are they, and from whose perspective? And how do factors like ethnicity and

topography impact on the ability to resist Persian expansion? Continuing his Thracian ethnography, Herodotus recounts a ritual for the dead (5.4) that, while appearing to be typically outlandish – they celebrate when someone dies! – actually hints at the pessimistic vein that runs deep in Greek ideas about the human condition.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, he describes the Thracians as worshipping *only* Ares, Dionysus and Artemis while their kings worship Hermes – all still *Greek* gods (5.7). This case of defining non-Greek beliefs by Greek means includes a fascinating description of the distinction between kings and *citizens* (*οἱ δὲ βασιλέες αὐτῶν, πάρεξ τῶν ἄλλων πολιητέων*, 5.7). ‘Citizens’ is a highly charged term in the context of a narrative that places so much stress on the importance of being free politically. But it begs the question what status these citizens have, if they are governed by kings and live in tribes, not cities. Thus this episode continues many of the themes hanging over from Darius’s failed invasion of Scythia, raising the spectre, as Darius moves westwards, whether his invasion will be replaying the Scythian catastrophe over again. Furthermore, it anticipates another marginal group whom Megabazus’s Persians are soon to encounter, the Macedonians, somehow closer to the mainland Greeks topographically and culturally, but also crucially different too, though in what ways and with what significance is hard to say. Uncertainty about Macedonian identity – Are *they* Greek? How Greek are they? – has consequences for thinking about the space they occupy too and how it is *lived in*.<sup>33</sup> What is clear is that the political and cultural alterity of these quasi-Greek groups skirts around their geographical marginality to confuse foreign invader and historical inquirer alike.

Herodotus demonstrates the problem of conceptualising Thracian space in the chapters that follow. If he had earlier couched some of his language in vague terms (such as ‘those above’: *κατύπερθε*, 5.3.2; cf. 5.5.1), now the flow of his prose becomes almost choked with uncertainty. ‘As for the region which lies even north of this country’ (*τὸ δὲ πρὸς βορέω ἔτι τῆς χώρης ταύτης*, 5.9.1) – the interesting addition of *ἔτι* (‘even’) marks a serious distance from chartered territory. ‘What lies already beyond the Ister’ (*τὰ πέρην ἥδη τοῦ Ἰστρου*) – the shift in time signified by *already* (*ἥδη*) underlines a conception of space that is both experiential and hodological, as if Herodotus were following some (unspecified) route. The way north signals the direction, but the river marks a boundary between what can be known and what really cannot. The men who live out here are very broadly defined as ‘persons’ (*ἄνθρωποι οἰκέοντες αὐτήν*), while the land itself ‘appears’ (*φαίνεται*) boundless and empty (*ἔρημος χώρη φαίνεται ἐοῦσα καὶ ἀπειρος*), *unlived in*.

The narrator’s rhetoric abounds with similar expressions of ignorance: ‘none can tell with certainty’ (*οὐδεὶς ἔχει φράσαι τὸ ἀτρεκές*, 9.1); ‘I am able to learn only of certain persons dwelling beyond the Ister’ (*μούνοις δὲ δύναμαι πυθέσθαι οἰκέοντας πέρην τοῦ Ἰστρου ἀνθρώπους*, 9.1); ‘they say’ (*λέγουσι*, 9.3); ‘I am not able to work out’ (*ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω ἐπιφράσασθαι*, 9.3).<sup>34</sup> The space seems so foreign that, it is said, its borders reach almost as far as the Eneti on the Adriatic, while the inhabitants themselves, ‘Sigynnae’, say they are colonists from Media. Herodotus does not pass judgement on this remarkable claim; he simply comments that ‘all is possible in the long passage of time’ (*γένοιτο δὲ ἀν πᾶν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ*, 9.3), before noting that the people who dwell about Massalia use the term ‘Sigynnae’ to describe traders, while Cyprians use it for spears. The shift to the

*longue durée* to account for the comparably stretched spatial dimension is a feature of the *Histories*, in which time and space go hand-in-hand. Above all, it represents a world in flux, neatly captured by Herodotus's prose, as he brings together in some kind of conceptual network places as far flung as Thrace, Media, the Adriatic Sea, Massalia and Cyprus.<sup>35</sup> Even the etymological wordplay on the name of this people to mean *traders* hints at movement and exchange or, in the language of the Cypriots, a particular kind of movement and exchange – *spears* foreshadow the onset of war from Media.<sup>36</sup> Cyprus is another place highlighted in the network graph. Soon enough it will be part of a rhetoric of conquest (5.31.3; 49.6), and soon after that it will be full of spears (5.104–116), winning and losing freedom. The Medes are coming.

These borders of Thrace are another matter, however, and the difficulties confronting whichever force would seek to conquer such a place are clear – what cannot be grasped cannot be controlled. In lieu of apprehending this inland territory, Megabazus keeps to what the Persians do know, the area by the coast (*τὰ παραθαλάσσια δ'*, 5.10), which he now subjugates. While this happens, Darius returns to the Persian sphere of influence (Sardis, after crossing the Hellespont, 5.11.1), and offers his Greek allies a choice of *place* – rewards in this political climate take the form of land possession. Accordingly, one of these special advisors, a man by the name of Histiaeus of Miletus, asks for Myrcinus in Thracian Edonia (5.11.2). Histiaeus's desires seem to match Darius's narrative, for the time being at least.

## Moving through space and time

An essential feature of the *Histories*' lived space identified above is the idea that space does not stay the same – groups move in and out, cities wax and wane. Book 5 begins with the Persians moving into Thracian territory with an eye on controlling (and thereby) changing it. Similarly Darius invites his Greek allies to Sardis to offer them a choice of place over which to preside. This story already suggests that the division between East and West is not going to be so clear-cut as all that – Greeks are involved in this business of land-grabbing too.<sup>37</sup> But the clearest example, which introduces another kind of occupying movement, relates to a people – and here we return to the Paeonians.

Following hard on the heels of Histiaeus and Coes's dream locations comes the story of two Paeonian brothers, who travel to Sardis in the hope of becoming tyrants of their people – more space-power dynamics. In their gambit for absolute power, they already seem to have grasped the Persian way of ruling; but, by inviting the Persians in, they get much more than they bargained for. Perhaps they should have taken greater note of their present location: a Lydian city presided over by a Persian king – as Herodotus keenly observes (5.12.2), while the two brothers are made to wait for Darius. Certainly, they fail to appreciate the full consequences of parading their sister before the king. ‘Darius took note of the woman as she passed by him, for what she did was not in the manner of the Persians or Lydians or any of the peoples of Asia’: once again a woman is used as both the instrument through which power is sought and symbolic of it.<sup>38</sup> Her attractions mirror those of their land, Paeonia, which is precisely the danger that the brothers have evoked. Held in

thrall (θωμάζων, 13.1) by her, Darius wants to know more. ‘What persons (ἄνθρωποι) are the Paeonians and what land do they live in (κοῦ γῆς οἰκημένοι), and why have they come to Sardis?’ (13.2), he asks in the manner of a proto-investigator.<sup>39</sup> But his three questions, relating to the people, the land in which they dwell, and their relationship to Sardis, also reveal the nature and extent of the king’s gaze. He seeks to possess knowledge of their land as a precursor to possessing the land itself.

The brothers subsequently, and unwisely, advertise the benefits of their land to the king: Paeonia is on the Strymon, close to the Hellespont – water here is described in terms of facilitating communication rather than as a boundary to it, while the Hellespont represents the point up to which Persian influence is clear and through which they can pass over to the other side. And, even more unwisely, they advertise themselves: ‘we Paeonians are *apoikoi* of the Teucrians from Troy’. They are, and always have been (according to the brothers’ account at least) under the control of an Eastern potentate. What they hope to get out of this bargaining is left hanging; certainly they fail to sense the danger of making their request and their sister *too* desirable. The catastrophic consequences are sudden. Darius sends a letter to Megabazus back the way that the brothers had come with the order to bring all the Paeonians to him (5.14). The Paeonians are coming home.

The reader has already been alerted to the outcome of the brothers’ desire for tyranny right at the beginning of the episode (5.12.1). There Herodotus had used the large conceptual categories of Asia and Europe to mark the high stakes involved. That is replicated too in the very grammar describing the messenger’s journey, for whom it now takes two clauses to pass the Hellespont, one to get to it, the other to cross it (5.14.2) – a movement and pause that will be echoed when Megabazus returns, carrying the Paeonians away in captivity (5.23.1). The conflict itself is swift. The Paeonians march to the sea (πρὸς θαλάσσης, 5.15.1), thinking that the Persians would attack there, as they had done before (5.10), but the Persians instead use local guides to take the high road (τὴν ἄνω ὁδὸν, 15.2). From there they fall upon cities deserted of men (ἐξ τὰς πόλιας αὐτῶν ἔουσας ἀνδρῶν ἐρήμους), resulting in the Paeonians each going their own way and giving themselves up. (Even in Thrace, the identity of the group is inextricably tied to *cities* – where people live and rule together.) The Paeonians who are taken are then defined as ‘Siriopaeones, Paeplae and those dwelling as far as the Prasiad Lake’. This strikes a concluding note with respect to Persian activities in Thrace. All these groups are forcibly relocated into Asia (5.15.3; cf. 17.1, 23.1).

Will a Greek campaign be the same as these events in Thrace, or will it be different because of Greek cities (*poleis*)? For sure there are echoes here of Xerxes’s invasion. The Persians’ use of guides to take the high road recall the later, more famous ruse by which they eventually succeed in circumventing the first line of Greek resistance at Thermopylae. Or the fact that the Persians meet so little opposition even in Greece, as their opponents simply melt away and relocate to fight another day – as the Athenians paradigmatically demonstrate or the Scythians before them. Even here, however, the Persians meet with resistance, as this story of relocation gets more complicated than either we or the Persians could imagine.

## Location, location, location

The Paeonian story, introduced from the beginning of book 5 in the context of their victory over the Perinthians, is dominated by repeated movement – a theme which points to the slipperiness of control, the instability of lived space in the *Histories*, and the diffusion of power through the unwinding narrative. The movement of coming into conflict with their neighbours; the movement of the two brothers to meet the king in Sardis; the movement of the messenger who returns the same way carrying Darius's instructions; the movement of Megabazus who carries out those instructions to the letter, first rounding up the Paeonians, then forcibly relocating them to Asia. Even the stories relating to the Paeonians' origins stress movement – their ancestors come from Troy and made *apoikia* settlements in Thrace. But this latter story, which introduces a historical perspective, unsettles the otherwise straightforward tale of an Asian conquest of Europe. Though Herodotus uses these conceptual labels to show what is at stake in these movements, and he marks out the Hellespont as the fulcrum around which the two worlds revolve – or, better, the place through which one must travel either way –, the neat division between East and West appears more fluid than that. The Paeonians do not even come from Europe. Should their forcible relocation, then, be viewed as something of a return?

The challenge to the story of a neat division does not end there – it was after all a pair of Paeonians who invited the Persians to intervene in the first place, and it was after all the Paeonians who started this narrative of conquest in book 5, when they overcame the Perinthians. (The Perinthians begin as the group defeated at the hands of the Paeonians, but subsequently anticipate what will happen to their former rivals: as Herodotus points out, while they, the Perinthians, are the first to group to fall to the Persians, the Paeonians will soon follow suit.) After this apparently concluding note on Paeonian forced movement (5.15.3), Herodotus's tale takes a surprise twist that has *not* been trailed: he turns his attention to all the Paeonians whom the Persians did *not* conquer (5.16.1). Of the Paeonians who resisted Persian domination are those who live 'near the Pangaean mountains and the Prasiad Lake itself'. In what follows, it is not only the case that the natural features (mountains and lakes) define the conquered peoples; those features help perhaps to explain why they avoided capture. Megabazus 'did in fact try' (ἐπειρήθη δὲ καὶ, 16.1) to take the lake-dwellers, but the difficulty he encountered is hinted at in an ethnographic excursus that traces this people's habitation back, Herodotus supposes, 'to olden times' (τὸ μέν κού ἀρχαῖον, 16.2). The struggle of the narrative to capture this type of terrain goes some way towards explaining why the Persians failed in their attempt to capture them.

The point is underlined by a far lengthier excursus of some six chapters about Persian mis-adventures in Macedonia. At first Herodotus states that 'there is a shortcut from the Prasiad Lake into Macedon' (ἔστι δὲ ἐκ τῆς Πρασιάδος λίμνης σύντομος κάρτα ἐξ τῆς Μακεδονίης, 17.2), as if the going was going to be easy. But the nearby mine is the one from which Alexander later draws his daily talent of silver. Note that at this unspecified later date the land still serves the treasury of Macedon's king not the Persians' – already the tale anticipates (successful) Macedonian resistance. Even the name of mountain, which one has only to cross to be in Macedon, implies a harder time – Δύσωρον, derives

from δύσ-ωρος to mean ‘unseasonable’, but sounds like δύσ-οπος, or the ‘difficult mountain’. And so it proves. Once in Macedon Herodotus records another parade of women, mimicking the land to be conquered, only this time it is a trick, and the women turn out to be armed assassins; when the Persians come in search for their lost men, Alexander buys off their leader and the Persian rescue party depart none the wiser. The story the Persians are trying to tell of supreme military might and world domination is resisted by the narrative’s meandering path.<sup>40</sup> Not that the story can be reduced to a simple clash of East versus West either, as we have seen from Paeonians being implicated in their relocation and hints of their non-European origins. It should be noted too that Herodotus ends his Macedonian excursus with a discussion of the claims to Greek heritage of this Alexander, son of Amyntas (5.22). What that will look like in a few books time for a reader, when Alexander mediates between the Mede and the Athenians on the eve of war (8.140-144), is anybody’s guess.<sup>41</sup>

But arguably the biggest turn in this meandering narrative comes when Megabazus returns with the captured Paeonians (5.23.1). Along the way back (first to the Hellespont, then to Sardis – the two foci of Persian power at the present time) he passes Myrcinus, the place on the Strymon that Histiaeus had been given by Darius. Megabazus reports back to Darius what he sees, and he finds it worrying: not only is the Greek typically building a settlement (*polis*), but the location is a potential crossing point, there is plentiful wood for ship-building, mines of silver are nearby, and many people both Greek and foreign (Megabazus uses the term *barbaros!*) dwell about – all the tools necessary for turning this living space into a revolution of sorts. The almost ethnographer-like Megabazus views the topography in military terms and sees a threat to Persian security from someone both like them (a tyrant) and not like them (free thinking). As a result, Megabazus warns Darius against allowing Histiaeus to return ‘to Greeks’ (ἐξ Ἑλληνος, 23.3). Darius, ever alert to threats to his power, takes the advice and recalls Histiaeus in the pretence of doing him greater honour than anyone – an honour that manifests itself in the form of Histiaeus too undergoing a physical relocation. And not just anywhere in Asia but all the way to Susa – the distance neatly encapsulates the threat he poses – in the company of Darius, who now will not let him out of his sight. Thus is set in train the next movement of Herodotus’s narrative, with Histiaeus doing all he can to return to the Sea (like a good Greek) by joining forces with his cousin Aristagoras of Miletus, who will also fall out with the Persians (5.33-35). These are the humble, and self-motivated, origins of the Ionian Revolt, a movement that will set the cities of Ionia ablaze with ideas of freedom, and lead, however meanderingly, to Athens being set on fire by Xerxes.

## Conclusion: a world in flux

This chapter has investigated the *Histories*’ lived space in terms of a relational model that has identified and questioned the connections that Herodotus makes between different spatial concepts in his narrative. It has extended the idea of space from a set of geographical co-ordinates to encompass the peoples and individuals who occupy the land or who may be said to represent a particular place. Above all, it has sought to chart Herodotus’s

discursive representation of space, based on a close study of spatial relations in book 5, and using a network graph to help provide a conceptual framework for our own discursive interpretation.

Initial results show a much more complex picture than the usual East-West polarity would suggest. It is not that there is no division between Asia and Europe – in the case of book 5, in particular, we see the battle lines being drawn up in a series of clusters, as indicated in the network graph. Rather, the divisions are frequently temporary or partial or are subject to constant revision or even challenge. The picture that emerges is of a world not rigidly and schematically divided into distinct territories – a model which Herodotus directly criticises – but one that is interconnected in various ways on various levels at various times.

As the book nears its end we find the Paeonians still looking for ways to return home, still resisting Persian rule. Far from being the end of the story when Darius forcibly relocates them to Phrygia (5.15, 17, 23 – and then *not all* of them: 16), the Paeonians turn up in Chios. From there they apparently make it back to Paeonia (98.4), back *home* – what they seem to regard as home, at least, the one from which the Persians removed them *not* the one to which the Persians relocated them, even if that could be considered their ancestral home; some spatial concepts are too deeply embedded in a people's consciousness for total fluidity (5.98).<sup>42</sup> Writing space as it shifts this way and that is no easy task, and it is no easier reading it. If Darius finds territories and peoples more difficult to comprehend and control than anticipated, the same goes for Herodotus's reader, for whom this partial and provisional narrative brings to life the engraved world according to Aristagoras.

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## Notes

1. This chapter is based on the work carried out by Barker, Bouzarovski, Pelling and Isaksen for the *Hestia* project, funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council. See Barker et al. (2010), (2014). We have benefitted greatly from Klaus Geus’s common sense criticism; any lack thereof remains our own.
2. On this scene, see especially: Purves (2010: 132-138, 144-150); Rood (2012); de Bakker (2014); cf. Rood (2006: 294-296); Barker et al. (2010: 6-9).
3. All translations are our own.
4. On Herodotus’s treatment of space, see especially: Purves (2010: 118-158); Rood (2012), (2014); de Bakker (2014). On the trope of the text (of Herodotus) as topography, see: Hartog (1988); Payen (1997); Chamberlain (2001); Greenwood (2007).
5. As Purves (2010: 133-138) argues, by virtue of being engraved, Aristagoras’s map only offers a snapshot of space and fails to capture its full meaning. Cf. Barker et al. (2010: 4-5); de Bakker (2014).

6. On ‘easy’ being a watchword in Aristagoras’s discourse, see Pelling (2007: 179-180, 183).
7. Cf. Purves (2010: 140).
8. Janni (1984). Purves (2010: 126) suggests that Herodotus’s periodic style deliberately challenges a cartographic approach to spatial representation. The picture is even more complicated than we suggest, since Aristagoras’s description superimposes a ‘route’ approach to space on top of the bird’s-eye view that the map presents.
9. For a discussion of some of the differences between the textual and visual mapping of geographical information, see Eide (2014). On the flattening out of spatial understanding as a result of Cartesian mapping, see e.g. Harvey (1985: 253); cf. Fabian (1983); Gurevich (1985). On political and cultural constructions of space, see e.g. Thrower (1996); Harley (1989: 1-20); Jackson (1994).
10. On space and time in Herodotus, see Rood (2014).
11. See Friedman (2006: 166) on how “Herodotus’ perspective will be a deterritorialised one”.
12. Or, in this case, not, as Aristagoras’s appeal for Ionian unity in the face of perceived Persian aggression falls on deaf Dorian ears. The same Ionian call-to-arms will enjoy more success when he delivers the same promises (and more) to the Athenians (5.97).
13. On his rejection of overly schematic representations see Munson (2001: 84-86); Thomas (2000: 98-100); Purves (2010: 111-112, 128-132). Rood (2012: 133-135) nuances this view by drawing attention to the various moments in the *Histories* when the narrator takes a bird’s-eye view of a particular place. Cf. de Bakker (2014) on Herodotus’s more authorial geography of Egypt.
14. E.g. Hall (1989); Cartledge (2002). For qualifications and some re-nuancing of Herodotus’s East-West polarity see Hartog (1988), along with the review by Carolyn Dewald in *Classical Philology* 85 (1990: 217-224); and Pelling (1997).
15. ‘Herodotus’ inquiry into other lands and customs proves to be as central to his project as his inquiry into the wars fought by Greeks and non-Greeks’: Rood (2006: 290).
16. On the centrality of book 5, see Irwin and Greenwood (2007); cf. Hornblower (forthcoming).
17. See now Malkin (2011). Cf. Malkin, Constantakopoulou and Panagopoulou (2009).
18. Malkin (1998).
19. See Barker et al. (2010).
20. Herodotus provides a classic statement of this problem, when he depicts Themistocles threatening the fragile Greek coalition with the prospect of the Athenians taking to their ships and moving *Athens* to Southern Italy (8.62.2). Thucydides offers further evidence: as the catastrophic Sicilian Expedition nears its terrible climax, Nicias tries to rouse his Athenians for one last battle on the basis that ‘men are the polis, and not the walls or ships empty of men’ (ἄνδρες γάρ πόλις καὶ οὐ τείχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κενοῖ, 7.77.7) – the mention of ships even seems a deliberate echo and distortion of Themistocles’s threat. For a collection of ancient sources, which diverge on the relative importance of people over place, see Hornblower (2008: 720-721).

21. See Barker and Bouzarovski (2014), in which the analysis is refined according to idea that geographical spaces convey movement and/or transformation. On ‘the creation of knowledge spaces in which people, practices and places are discursively linked’, see Turnbull (2007) 143. Cf. Latané and Liu (1996).
22. For the sake of intelligibility and in order to explore the possibilities afforded by general patterning, only those places that occur most frequently are labelled and discussed here, though in theory any point could be explored for its connections (or lack thereof) to the network. For the visualisation, we are indebted to the help provided by Scott Weingart for use of the Sci2 tool developed at Indiana University: <https://sci2.cns.iu.edu/user/index.php>.
23. See Barker and Pelling (2014).
24. We owe this description to Simon Hornblower.
25. The Hellespont and river Strymon symbolise themes of great significance, perhaps at the expense of strict topographical accuracy: Hornblower (forthcoming) 76-77 questions the accuracy of the geography here. On the Hellespont as a hotspot of communication, see Barker et al. (2010) and ‘moving through space and time’ below. See also Greenwood (2007) on the Hellespont ‘as a symbolic space between two continents that has geographical, ethnographical, and historical significance, [which] represents the kinds of repeated crossings that the reader of Herodotus has to make in order to comprehend the significance of the different dimensions of the narrative (128).
26. For rivers as demarcation boundaries and markers of transgression, see especially Immerwahr (1966); cf. Braund (1996). But Herodotus’s depiction of man’s control over the natural world is more nuanced: see Romm (2006).
27. The importance of the Strymon is picked up in ch.23, when Megabazus observes the strategic importance of Histiaeus’s town Myrcinus. See ‘location, location, location’ below.
28. Hornblower (forthcoming: 73) talks about how these opening chapters at first sight seem more in keeping with Book 4, ‘but there are also important pointers forward’. On how book 5 bridges the narrative see Greenwood (2007). Cf. Irwin and Greenwood (2007: 9-19).
29. Hornblower (forthcoming: 79).
30. On the *Histories* as a territory that resists conquest, see Payen (1997). Irwin (2007: 43) notes how the Paeonian ‘narrative is configured as topography’.
31. Irwin (2007: 43).
32. The idea of not being born is best (or, if that is not possible, of dying as quickly as possible) is most memorably expressed by Sophocles’s chorus in *Oedipus at Colonus* (1225-1226), but is hinted at elsewhere (e.g. Theognis 425-427), as Jebb (1900) *ad loc.* notes. This aspect of Thracians identity is even more strongly marked if we hear resonances with Patroclus’s funeral games: Petropoulou (1988: 492-493); cf. Munson (2001: 167).
33. On the ambiguous identity of the Macedonians, see Fearn (2007) and Hornblower (forthcoming: 104-105), who in passing mentions the analogous banquet of the suitors in the *Odyssey*. (Of course, slaughtering guests, even if they are barbarians behaving badly, is not exactly the sign of a good Greek heritage, but, if Odysseus did it...) Note too how Alexander prevented the truth coming out ‘by guile’ (*sophiē*, 5.21.2) – a fifth-century gloss on Odys-

seus's famous *mētis*. Herodotus is using Homer, the paradigm of Greek culture, to interrogate the values and assumptions of that culture.

34. Herodotus's language here recalls his description of Egypt (a comparison at the other extreme), where he talks about the Nile Delta as the one area that is known about or knowable (like the places next to the sea in the geography of Thrace). Nevertheless, this waterway (the Nile) does give access (like an umbilical cord) to these places, however unknown they are. On Herodotus's description of Egyptian topography and his rhetoric of unknowns, see Marincola (1987); Purves (2010: 129-130); de Bakker (2014).
35. For this phenomenon, in which Herodotus leaps from place to place, drawing a web of association across the Mediterranean, see Munson (2006: 258).
36. On the wordplay for 'Sigynnae', see Irwin (2007: 59-60, 83-87), which she relates to criticism of Athenian imperialist ambition. Certainly Herodotus's shifts in time encourage multiple ways of viewing the same space.
37. People who trigger the great east-west movements carried out by the Persians are often westerners. See Barker and Pelling (2014).
38. On women as the instrument through which power is sought and symbolised, see Dewald (1981: 113). On the resonance with the similar display of a woman (from the *deme* of *Paeania*, 1.60) as part of a ruse for gaining power, see Irwin (2007: 51).
39. See Christ (1994).
40. Rood (2006: 294), cf. Payen (1997).
41. See Barker (2009: 193-198).
42. When they are in Chios, the Persians send a message telling them 'to go away back' (ὅκως ἀν ὄπιστο ἀπέλθοιεν, 5.98.4), which the Paeonians ignore and return to Paeonia under their own steam. Does 'go away back' mean 'go back to Phrygia'? Or is the instruction 'to go back to Paeonia', in which case, are the Paeonians refusing to return under Persian escort rather than independently? (Thus Hornblower (forthcoming) *ad loc.*, with the suggestion 'because they feared a trick?') Spatial categories are becoming so confused that finding a way 'back' may mean different things for different people.



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