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Introduction

the ideologies of 'lived space', ancient and modern

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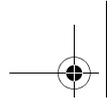
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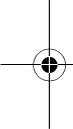
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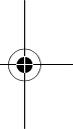
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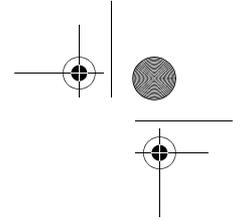
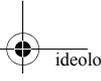


THE IDEOLOGIES OF LIVED SPACE IN LITERATURE, ANCIENT AND MODERN



??? Jo Heirman and Jacqueline Klooster ???





Introduction

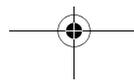
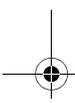
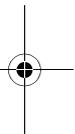
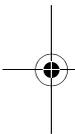
The Ideologies of ‘Lived Space’, Ancient and Modern

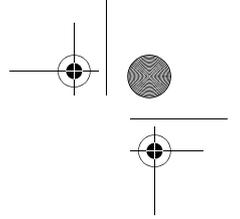
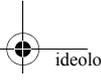
In the brief essay ‘Des espaces autres’, which was written in 1967 but published in 1984, Michel Foucault claimed that a historical outlook had dominated the nineteenth century but that the twentieth century would be the century of space (752). His prophecy has amply been fulfilled: the end of the twentieth 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 *Laocoon* (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





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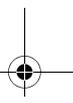
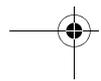
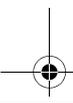
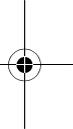
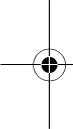
both addressed the structural make-up of narrative texts and went beyond it by applying the discussion to real-world issues, namely human interaction with the environment, imperialism, dominating space and the consequences of these interventions. The discussion of the ideological role of space fell naturally 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. An entirely 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-



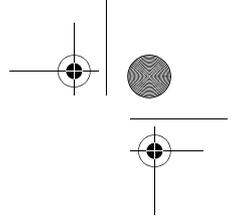
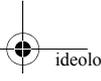
non of the chronotope, the specific way in which each literary genre couples time and space, is also evident. For these reasons, as editors of this volume, we have selected this combination of papers from experts in ancient and modern literature on the topic of space because we believe it has something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



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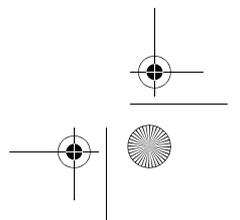
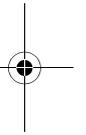
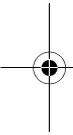
The first two contributions of this book focus on mythical ‘lived spaces’, ancient and modern. The book opens with Emilie van Opstall’s discussion of two recurrent types of sacred mythical caves in Greek epic poetry from Homer (8th century BCE) to Nonnus (5th century CE): the caves of the nymphs and 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 in which 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 Djebar'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 by studying Euripides' *Trojan Women* in relation to contemporary Athenian ideology. 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, timelessness 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.

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.

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.

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 the hereafter. Making use of a text-linguistic analysis of 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.

Finally, Steven van Renterghem argues that the use of ancient Greek historical spaces in Panagias 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 second 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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