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What we talk about when we talk about space and narrative (and why we're not done talking about it)

https://doi.org/10.1515/fns-2018-0017

Abstract: Narrative has often been considered "an art of time." This essay traces some of the historical reasons for this state of the field, or fields, of narratology, pinpointing spots in classical, postclassical and contemporary narrative theory where compensation was attempted or is being made through a focus on space instead of time. It suggests that as geography and geographers have become increasingly interested in narrative approaches in dealing with concepts, visualization, and digitalization, it is perhaps (once again) time narratology itself, while continuing to focus on and explore space and place, took account of its history of treating them and looked at how geography has implemented narratological concepts in its technical and philosophical approaches.

Keywords: narratology, space, setting, time, geographical narratology

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.
> What might have been is an abstraction
> /Remaining in perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.
>
> —T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

A "lack of symmetry in the relationship between space and time is evident not only in their status in the text, but also in the extent of the progress of research on these concepts," Gabriel Zoran wrote in 1984. "Although the subject of space has been dealt with more than once, research in general on the subject is quite diffuse," with "few assumptions that have become generally accepted." Because

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of this, Zoran wrote, theorists still considered narrative as "basically an art of time" (310). His sentiment was echoed a quarter century later by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz's 2012 assertions that narratology has even now only recently begun taking up "more sophisticated questions about space and setting and to give them the attention they deserve" (84).

Narrative was seen by and large by theorists of Zoran's time as an "art of time." This essay begins with an exploration of some of the reasons why this was so in the field, or fields, of narratology, pinpointing spots in classical, postclassical and contemporary narrative theory where the focus was drawn away from time and temporality toward space. It suggests that, as geography and geographers have become increasingly interested in narrative approaches when dealing with concepts, visualization, and digitalization, it is perhaps time narratology itself, as it explores and focuses on space and place, (once again) took account of its historical treatment of them and looked to how geography has implemented narratological concepts in its technical and philosophical approaches.

Philosopher Nathan Oaklander lays out two basic ontologies of time: an "A-theory" of "temporal becoming," which involves a "now" — what's in the future moves into the "now," then into the past; and a "B-theory," in which "events stand in various different temporal relations to each other, but no one event, or set of events, is singled out as having the property of being present or as occurring NOW" (Oaklander 2004: 17). Experiences, Oaklander writes, "occur in the sequence (A), (B), (C), (D) and not the other way around. Thus, to account for change, we must account for [...] changing experiences taking place in the direction from earlier to later (A) to (D) and not from later to earlier (D) to (A)." This is called "intrinsic direction" (2004: 21). The difference between space and time is explained with a metaphor of a man walking around a house: in the front, the lawn is green, but toward the back it is brown. Here, Oaklander argues there is no "intrinsic direction" as in time, maintaining that left and right or up and down are not the same as time's "intrinsic direction" (2004: 21–22). In this sense, space's true and perhaps only meaningful distinction from time is that it has no "intrinsic direction."

"Narrative sequences," writes Gerald Prince, "are semantic, and not semiotic in nature. Contrary to signs, they are not recognized but rather apprehended as such" (Prince 2016: 15). One thus imagines that any "intrinsic direction," like that of temporality, is automatic, "apprehended," uncodified, unmysterious, plain. Yet as one moves out of narratology into other fields dealing with narratives, such as history, one finds a history quite at odds with notions of the "intrinsic direction" of temporality, and quite willing to experiment with it, at least philosophically, perhaps even necessarily. Louis O. Mink, noted philosopher of history, suggested during the rise of American post structuralism that "[t]o comprehend

temporal succession means to think of it in both directions at once" (1970: 553). Eric S. Rabkin, a decade later, wrote that "all reading of narrative is both diachronic and synchronic", and [that] "all narratives have always played on both perceptual modes" (1981: 80). One can "easily imagine a paratactic plot in which one event is juxtaposed to another without connections being drawn" such as are found in Faulkner's novels, *Absalom, Absalom!* or *The Sound and the Fury* (1981: 97). More recently, Claudia Breger has offered a model in which "the processes of *connection*, *association*, and *attachment* form the core element of narrativity," with "no requirement for particular trajectories, forms, degrees, or effects of connection — such as causality, coherence, or stability [...]" (2017: 231).

Such thinking had already been suggested by Lévi-Strauss's work with mythologies. In literature, it had even earlier roots in the immediate postwar period with Joseph Frank's "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," which indicated that modernist fiction allowed readers to imagine elements juxtaposed in simultaneous space instead of "unrolling in time" ([1945] 1981: 10). At the end of the 1960s, "the spatialization of time" had been "one of the agents of space's 'counter-attack' on time, of geography on history" (Westphal 2007: 43, translation mine). But its effects had been diffuse, and it was not until 1990 that "many different theoretical approaches" had truly "seen a shift in focus from a poetological reflection oriented towards categories of time to an approach which tends to give precedence to categories of space" (Fischer-Lichte 1990: 15). Meanwhile, even today, writes Doreen Massey, space is widely imagined as "'conquering time.' It seems in general to be perceived that space is somehow a lesser dimension than time: one with less gravitas and magnificence, it is the material/phenomenal rather than the abstract; it is being rather than becoming and so forth; and it is feminine rather than masculine [...] counterpositionally defined simply by a lack of temporality" (Massey 2005: 29). An "historically significant way of imagining space/spatialisation," Massey writes, "not only derives from an assumption that space is to be defined as a lack of temporality (holding time still) but also has contributed substantially to its continuing to be thought of in that way." Such assumptions have "reinforced the imagination of the spatial as petrification and as a safe haven from the temporal" or as a flat surface, and "not only diminish our understanding of spatiality but, through that, they even make more difficult the project" of authors focused on space [Massey mentions Laclau, de Certeau and Bergson]: that of opening up temporality itself" (2005: 28).

Tzvetan Todorov, in laying the groundwork for narratology in 1969, imagined three equally important types of relationships as constitutive of narrative: relationships of causality, relationships of temporality, and relationships of space. Yet having set up this triad and having expounded at length on the first two of these relationships, Todorov didn't go on to treat space at any length. Todorov

explained his reluctance to discuss relationships of space by remarking that "the spatial order functions, in a certain measure, independently from" causality and temporality (which are more closely linked). Yet it carries great importance, Todorov noted, in narrative: "The basic spatial relationship is one of parallelism." "Thus, in the story of Solomon," he explained, "Solomon's advice to Joseph [Giosefo, in the *Decameron*'s ninth tale of the ninth day] is, 'Do like this other person does!'. This *like* indicates a parallelism of intrigues and a precise syntactic role: thanks to it, we can anticipate the story's development" (1969: 20, translation mine)[1]. This *like*, a metaphor as an indication of a spatial relationship (for, as Todorov reasoned, it is neither temporal nor causal, and can thus only be spatial), offers a narrative template for the unfolding story. This might seem like a minor form of "narrative," but it's worth remembering that it is the basis of parable, one of the central structuring forms of Biblical narrative (particularly those in which the narratee is encouraged, after hearing a narrative, to "go and do likewise").

It was only a few years later that Juri Lotman was contrasting "'plotless' texts, which define and respect a topological system of boundaries (e.g. purely descriptive texts), and 'plotted' (or narrative) texts, in which these boundaries are violated. But even plotted texts presupposed the static structure that Lotman regards as plotless: "The movement of the plot, the event, is the crossing of that forbidden border which the plotless structure establishes. It is not an event when the hero moves within the space assigned to him. A plot can always be reduced to a basic episode – the crossing of the basic topological border in the plot's spatial structure" (Lotman 1977: 238). "The usefulness of Lotman's model depends, however," write Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth Foote and Maoz Azaryahu, "on whether or not the text's relevant semantic features (or themes) are associated with distinct spatial areas. When spatial concretization takes place," they write, "the concept of boundary crossing can be applied quite literally; but when it does not, the idea of crossing becomes a metaphor so thin that one might just as well replace it with a 'a change of state' or 'switch of value of a semantic feature'" (Ryan et al. 2016: 36–37). So, while Todorov's "spatial relations" constituting narrative basically involve a single modeled event being transferred (or enacted) from one place to another, Lotman saw spatiality's constitution of narrative as the actual crossing of a border between places (settings), a carrying of perception from one locus or locale to another (and the adaptation required for this transference). Likewise, Edward S. Casey suggests "a species of edge as inherent to

1 Solomon's advice to Giosefo, who seeks his wife's obedience, is simply to go to a certain place (Goosebridge, where Giosefo sees a man beating a mule to make it cross the bridge).

human interaction": a boundary is "the place where time and space join forces" and "*boundaries are where places happen*" (2007: 508–509, italics not mine).

References abound to Todorov's *Grammaire du Décameron* in contemporary English-language narratology. And with good reason. It was in this foundational text that Todorov coined the term "*narratologie*" itself. Yet there remains today still no published English translation of the volume, and little detailed direct discussion of its contents.

Influential studies published in the following years, though often admitting, like Todorov, the importance of space to narrative, tended, like Todorov's study, to avoid focusing on it, focusing instead on time and causality, and backing off from analysis of spatial relationships as narrative building blocks. While post-classical narrative theory tends to consider structuralism's work to be fulfilled, the third part of Todorov's essential triad of narrative, which might be seen as closely related to symbolism, still remains largely unexplored. Genette in that same year of 1969 perhaps weakened the prospects for a potential focus on the relation of space to plot by broadening the discussion of notions of space in literature so generally as to include even the shape of the printed word on the page. Barthes, meanwhile, ostensibly tied causality and temporality in plot together further, with his observation that "[e]verything suggests that the mainspring of narrative is precisely the confusion of consecution and consequence, what comes *after* being read in narrative as what is *caused by*." Narrative is, in effect, an application of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (1977: 94).

The reasons for this leap of logic – a leap which is, in effect, a reader's or audience's (or a writer's or designer's or painter's or film maker's) own leap of logic – were largely left unexplored by narratology itself. Warmly welcomed explanations would later be proposed by cognitive theorists. But they were first offered by psychology and psychiatry, then by literary theory's somewhat short-lived interest in reader response theory, which, without eschewing theory, focused more pragmatically on how "we" (often meaning undergraduates in research universities) approach texts.

Suggestions of a sort of "return of the repressed" (space) is hinted at by recent revisitings of psychoanalytic theory. If narrative is "the progressive transformation of a spatial order into a temporal series" (de Certeau 1986: 22), then narrative itself, Slavoj Žižek summarizes, emerges in human consciousness "in order to resolve some fundamental [binary] antagonism by rearranging its [two "antagonistic"] terms into a temporal succession. It is thus the very form of narrative which bears witness to some repressed antagonism [...] the narrative silently presupposes as already given what it purports to reproduce" (1997: 10–11) — namely, temporality and the resulting inference of causality. Or, as Lévi-Strauss put it similarly in his structural analysis of myth, "the purpose of myth is to

provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction" (1963: 229). Myth, or perhaps any narrative, while seemingly organizing our perception of history (fictional or nonfictional), actually creates it as we narrativize or make meaning of sequential events.

In narratives, "the effect somehow finds or shapes or invents the cause," writes Meir Sternberg (1992: 529), while "the appearance of narrative sequences," writes Denis Wood, results from "our propensity as readers willfully to confuse first in time and space with logically or developmentally prior" (1987: 32). Indeed, as Massey writes, "what is going on here is the taming of space. The suppression of what it presents us with: actually existing multiplicity" (2005: 69). "What space gives us is simultaneous heterogeneity; it holds out the possibility of surprise: it is the condition of the social in the widest sense, and the delight and the challenge of that" (2005: 105). Space, for Massey, is "the dimension of multiple trajectories, a simultaneity of stories-so-far. Space as the dimension of a multiplicity of durations" (2005: 24). And, Massey notes, for Jameson, as much perhaps as for any philosopher, political theorist or historian, such "multiplicity can provoke terror" (2005: 78).[2]

"Narrative," according to a more recent narratological reading of Lacan, is "a kind of package deal in which one gains meaning at the price of accepting temporal order, coherence and unification. The very existence of such a package deal testifies that it strives to cover something repressed" (Biberman 2006: 244). Lacan describes narrative as created (or perceived) whenever two or a series of terms are presented to our consciousness at once.[3] We fixate first on a single term, then attempt to solve the contradiction between it and another otherwise synchronous term by imposing a temporal order on them as a means of explanation. As a result of this imposed temporal order, we suppose (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*) that the "second" term likewise follows the "first" in a *causal* chain. In creating a narrative, it is our own fixation on one term of a pair that creates (or from which is drawn forth) both temporal order and causality. As Efrat Biberman writes, "Narrative is thus a result of construction that takes place during analysis, and the image [term] is a cover for something that one has no direct access to. In addition, the image posits a reversed temporal and causal relation to the event which apparently caused it. The image [term] comes first, while its reason only emerges later in an attempt to justify it" (2006: 243).

2 "If space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far," Massey writes, "then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space" (2005: 130).

3 Biberman here refers to Lacan's first, eleventh and thirteenth seminars.

Narrativity thus offers the "lure" (Biberman 2006: 244) of being able to solve (meanwhile obscuring) the uneasy coexistence of two contradictory terms by imposing on them an organization in time and by logic. Yet "one event does not cause another event but rather the opposite," Biberman explains, describing our perception of events (for Žižek, "terms"), or, as one might expand his idea here yet further, places: "initially, fixation on an object [or place] occurs, and only as a result of that fixation does the phantasmatic narrative emerge as a way of explaining the choice of the specific object [or place] of fixation" (2006: 245). Whenever two clearly distinct terms (or places) exist in our consciousness at once, we instinctually explain their coexistence by imagining a temporal relationship between them, then suppose that one follows another not only in a temporal but also in a causal chain.[4] These imagined temporal chains of causality are what give us narratives and, Žižek explains, they begin with our distinguishing a single term (or place) in a pair as coming "first" in time, as a means of camouflaging their opposition. Viewed from this perspective, narrative is less, as Peter Brooks famously put it, "the play of desire in time" (1984: xiii) than it is the play of our desire *for* time.

Narrative, de Certeau wrote, is "a 'logical' discourse of history, the 'fiction' which allows it to be thought" (1986: 18). If "[s]tories as we know them begin as interpretations" (Kermode 1981: 81), and "narrative is basically a formal mode of structuring events" (Ronen & Biberman 2006: 120), Žižek's explanation of Lacanian fantasy posits, finally, that narratives themselves (like topography) can be imagined as growing out of the projections of temporal and causal arrangement of *places* in a text (or other experience), and not, as one might normally assume, that setting is called into use as a backdrop for a pre-determined series of actions undertaken by characters in time. Here, rather, actions and their results (and indeed intentionality itself) are revealed as nothing more than rationalizing tools brought forth from the imagination to explain (or to avoid direct consciousness of) our fixation on one of a binary set of essentially atemporal antagonistic terms and our repression of the second term.

4 Hume "concluded that when we thought that one thing was a cause of another, this view was not derived by any form of reasoning from any sense experience but was the result of habit. Causal reasoning was nothing more than a conditioned reflex" (Lucas 1984: 28). "Hume's empiricist critique of causality forced him to regard the causal relation not as being something in the external world and discovered by us, but rather as being something imposed on our understanding of the external world by our minds in consequence of their being conditioned to do so by the association of ideas." Despite their differences on this, "Both Hume and Kant agree at least in regarding causal relations as being not discovered in the world but imposed on it" (Lucas 1984: 69).

Narratology and literary theory have taken up such issues, particularly in the last decades. "Sideshadowing" was Gary Saul Morson's term for the narrative development of nonlinear plurality, the "open sense of temporality" generated when narrative represents the variety of possibilities that actually condition the present moment and its futures (1996: 118). Morson shifted attention from the linear structure of narrative time to the diversity of temporalities enacted in the practice of it. Around the same time, Margaret R. Higonnet said that one "wide-ranging complex of images [...] is that of narrative splits, subversive subsurface layers, and breaks, which can all be seen as forms of resistance to totalizing images of narrative wholeness and closure" (1994: 196). Indira Karamcheti suggests that as "readers help create the text through 'gaps of indeterminacy,' an "imaginative geography" can provide "some of these gaps or windows of opportunity in a text where the reader can connect the work with prior socially constructed assumptions about the world and thus generate meaning" — both positively and negatively, in limiting and opening ways (1994: 126–127).

Since then, Kelly Marsh has examined "submerged plots" which, like Susan Lanser's "shadow stories" or Robyn Warhol's "unnarratable," seem to be psychologically-repressed alternatives to central narrative plots in literature, but with their footing or groundwork well-laid and potentially uncoverable. Dan Shen has suggested a similar "dual plot progression" or "covert plot progression" through symptomatic readings. Meanwhile, just as the early groundwork for much of this kind of thinking was being laid, William Cronon argued that "[f]ar from being a formal distortion of the events it relates, a narrative account is an extension of one of their primary features" (1992: 1368–1369). Biberman herself concludes that "[v]iewing narrativity as a consequence of an object that explains it retroactively [...] opens new narrative horizons for both the visual and the verbal medium" (2006: 246). These "new narrative horizons" promote a turn from approaching narratives as stories – or histories – toward approaching them as psychological symptoms.

Despite this reading of narrative structure, the notion that "[t]ime, rather than space, shapes such salient features of narrative as directionality, causality, and agency" (Gomel 2009: 335) persists in even the most recently published theory. The arguments continue to be compelling: "Space is isotropic while time is not: we can move in any direction in space but only in one direction in time. The past and the future are phenomenologically distinct in a way, in which, say, breadth and length are not; and this distinctness creates causal chains" (2009: 135). This seems essential in arguments for time's shaping of narrative's most "salient features": the notion of character agency based on active choice and linked to time. This notion is most likely able to stand so easily unquestioned as narrative's most essential and underlying feature, I will propose next, because it had its

structuralist underpinnings laid out in a text whose American take on French structuralist theory has largely been considered airtight.

Time and causality stood largely unquestioned as narrative's most essential feature (at least until the early 1990s) largely thanks to Seymour Chatman's highly influential *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, which appeared in 1978 as one of the first comprehensive syntheses and adaptations of "classical" European narrative theory published in English. Chatman's work was, in fact, the "royal road" to European narrative theory for many postclassical Anglophone theorists. Chatman based narrative on "kernels," his translation of Roland Barthes's "*noyaux*": the smallest unit of narrative structure. Chatman defined the "kernel" as a causal event in time. In his reading of Barthes, each "*kernel*" advances plot by raising and satisfying questions. Kernels are "narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events" (1978: 53). Basically, these "kernels," the building blocks of narrative, are imaginary, ideal actions, disembodied and situated in "moments" – which is, according to Lacan, exactly what narrative is: an imaginary projection made to explain (or explain away) the antagonism between two temporally coinciding spatialized terms. Lacan's understanding of narrative could help us to conceptualize reversing Chatman's focus on events (or mobile characters) to a focus instead on what, in this view, seems the more essential underlying factor in narratives, or indeed its originary trigger. To do so, we would need to see narrative actions or events are merely imagined pretexts for explaining the coexistence of two antagonistic states ("repressing" the state which is not the object of fixation – the "minor events").

Even while insisting that "kernels" don't exist in space, and are purely temporal, in retrospect one can hardly help but stumble over how many spatial metaphors Chatman uses to describe them ("hierarchy," "chain," "the direction taken by events," "points"). Kernels, for Chatman, are "hinges in the [narrative] structure, branching points which force a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths. Achilles can give up his girl or refuse; Huck Finn can remain at home or set off down the river; [James's] Lambert Strether can advise Chad to remain in Paris or to return; Miss Emily can pay the taxes or send the collector packing. Kernels cannot be deleted without destroying the narrative logic" (1978: 53). True enough. Yet this "narrative logic" itself is essentially illusory, masking the essential antagonism between two states (or, as half of Chatman's own examples underline, *places*), ie., Huck at home or on the river, Chad in Paris or Chad in Woollett, etc. We might justly review Chatman's scenario in light of Julia Kristeva's assertions that the "conception of linear temporality [...] is readily labeled masculine and [...] is at once both civilizational and obsessional" (1981: 18). For Chatman, the "kernel" acts of the seventy-five percent male characters he

takes as examples theoretically do not take place in space, yet half the time are described . . . spatially.[5]

Let's look at Chatman's source for the idea of the narrative "kernel." Whether Chatman read Barthes's "*Introduction a l'analyse structurale des récits*" (1966) in the original French, I don't know. English translations appeared three years, then again one year, before Chatman's publication. For Barthes, a "function" is the smallest unit of narrative – and the "'soul' of any function [a narrative unit]" is "its seedlike quality [the kernel], which enables the function to inseminate the narrative with an element that will later come to materiality" (1975: 244). Like Chatman, Barthes mainly treats categories of action, situation and character. Yet, in his last example, he draws from the opening of an Ian Fleming novel to insist that a telephone call James Bond receives from Hong Kong and which opens the story is not primarily a matter of mimesis (thrown in to add a realistic touch to an otherwise fabulous story), but one of semiosis: "the true information, the information that will spring up from its seed later, is the tracing of the call back to its origin, namely *Hong Kong*" (1975: 271). Tellingly, the final detailed example Barthes provides of a seedlike "soul" from which plot grows is not an event but a *place*.

Chatman divided narrative structure into "events" (of which kernels are the most important type) and "existents," which include setting. With a generosity bordering on obsequiousness, he concluded his abbreviated discussion of "existents" with: "it seems clear that the notion of existent is no less critical than that of event, and that narrative theory cannot neglect it." Following Todorov's example, Chatman ended his treatment of "setting" with a tepid call for research in this area, but one seemingly damning, as well, with faint praise. Work following his often paid similar lip service to setting's importance in narrative, while ignoring *how* setting is critical to narrative.

Place is, after all, as Dolores Hayden once wrote, "[o]ne of the trickiest words in the English language," "a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid" (1995: 15). But I would like to point out a few traces that might be taken up by any more profound development of Todorov's notion of spatial relationships, from work published over the years that followed, and in sources by no means obscure.

5 Narratology, of course, has a long history of using spatial metaphors to describe (temporal) narrative sequence, as Mihály Szegedy-Maszák and others have pointed out, and perhaps with reason. Spatial metaphors, writes Philip J. Ethington, are "'grounded metaphors' in Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 1999) terminology. It is not accidental that we use them to talk about time, because our experience of time is movement in space" (2007: 477).

Juri Lotman's *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1973), like Chatman's work, suggested that narrative "can always be reduced to a basic episode," yet Lotman defined this "episode" as "the crossing of the basic topological border in the plot's spatial structure" (1973: 238). Ironically, only three years later, Alexander Gelley was lamenting that scholars had still "barely begun to construct a rhetoric of fiction dealing primarily with the scenic aspect of the novel" (1973: 188). It has been a long, slow road since then. Joost van Baak noted that spatial archetypes "not only have a cognitive (psychological) or symbolic meaning," but also "a narrative potential," which can be "re(activated) in a narration, or remain present as a 'nucleus', with associative potential" (2009: 66). And Susan Stanford Friedman proposed there may be "a spatial source of narrative energy – the engine that drives the story – one that exists distinct from the specular, temporal circuits of desire." Friedman wrote that a "spatial model" would define the development of a character not so much "as a consequence of the play of desire but rather as the result of changing locations" (1998: 143).

Earlier still, theorists had been tempted by the idea of a power or quality inherent in a place or space itself (an idea entirely contrary to Freudian thought or to the sociological philosophy of Georg Simmel: "As the literary critic Kenneth Burke long ago suggested, the scene of a story is as fundamental to what happens in it as the actions that comprise its more visible plot. Indeed, Burke argues that a story's actions are almost invariably consistent with its scene: 'there is implicit in the quality of a scene,' he writes, 'the quality of the action that is to take place within it'" (Cronon 1354, cf. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 1969: 6–7). In a similar vein, Michel de Certeau remarked that it would even "be possible to construct a typology" of stories "in terms of identification of places and actualization of spaces" (1986: 118). Yet identification and actualization themselves often depend on self-identity and actualization within specific cultural traditions. Thus, some literary theorists outside narratology have begun to work on the problem of space in narrative and narrative in space as they relate to specific national, religious, or cultural identities. Thomas Bender has observed that narrative history "in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic cultures has always been linear, always beginning with a beginning," but its linearity screens much out, narrows history, and reduces "the plenitude of stories." Bender suggests we might allow "a greater *spatialization of historical narrative*" (2002: 8, my emphasis). History itself, in terms of narrative, writes Ethington, "is not an account of 'change over time,' as the cliché goes, but rather, change through space" (2007: 466), while "time is defined as the interval between one entropic state and another. It is the behavior of matter and energy that is observed, not that of time" (2007: 471).

Franco Moretti, meanwhile, has been "mapping" literature quite literally for the past two decades, though without engaging directly with traditional narrative

theory. His work has been followed by that of David J. Bodenhamer's (and others') "deep mapping," which Sally Bushell has contrasted with Moretti's distant reading, which itself "primarily treats elements within texts as single fixed entities whose value is revealed only through comparison to other similar forms understood on a horizontal axis." "'Deep mapping,' she writes, in contrast, "suggests a vertical model which contextualizes and privileges an individual item within the database allowing its full history to emerge. In so doing, it also allows the possibility of readerly mapping and spatialisation. One question (emerging from Saussure's absolute distinction between the two axes) might be whether these two forms of digital mapping imply a major divide in terms of underlying principles and conceptions (as Saussure suggests) or can be brought together and even need each other in order to be fully understood (Heidegger)." "Can we," Bushell asks, "allow for a diachronic model in which each new response need not supplant the preceding one, but instead is cumulative and accretive in nature?" (Bushell 2016: 139–40). Recent German and Swiss work, like Barbara Piatti's *Die Geographie der Literatur*, map literary settings and might fascinate both sociologists and literary scholars, though their main goal may often be, as Marie-Laure Ryan points out about Moretti's, "to show how literary works represent [...] geography, rather than illustrate how [...] geography is integrated into textual worlds" (2003: 338). Such pictorial maps, writes Ethington, "are typically synchronic 'snapshots,' but they can be drawn and even animated to represent time, motion, and processes" (2007: 485). "However daunting may seem the prospect of 'mapping' such intangible topoi as love, greed, faith, ambition, racism, justice (and all the various forms of cultural cognition that historians must address), the task is unavoidable given that all human actions inscribe topoi, and every topos is simultaneously locatable and meaningful" (2007: 487).

Many working within, with, or wholly outside traditional narratological theoretical frameworks sense that we need something new in the exploration of narrative space. My recommendation would be that we also still need to fill in the gaps in theory that several classical narratologists clearly pointed to yet left largely unexplored. These gaps, as this article has noted, may be largely subjective or culturally specific and require work, like Vladimir Propp's, within discreet circles, each with signifieds that may be specific to them and only marginally transferrable between cultures or nations – or indeed transferrable in interesting ways whose roots deserve more attention. The real debate that needs to be had may not be whether narratological concepts are transmedial, but whether or to what extent they can be transcultural.

"'Map,'" Edward S. Casey states, "needs to be liberated from its alliance with modern cartography so that it can resume its original sense *of charting one's way in a given space or region*. [...] Construed in this way, mapping is place-finding"

(2007: 512). "Place [...] comes into being," wrote Edward Soja, "from the 'short circuits' inherent in the horizontal experience" of subjectivity (1989: 134). So geography increasingly comes to narratology to look at how it might borrow from it. Meanwhile, narratology, through the unanswered questions left by Todorov, or as a shy compulsion to pay lip service to "the spatial turn," comes to borrow from geography, finally more than just by pilfering its terms for use as metaphors.

Literary geography is the latest term (or one of the latest) for dealing with this collision of fields. Michel Collot lays out a typology of three strains of literary geography. Geographic approaches study the spatial context in which literary works are produced (Collot links these with linguistic referents, as being concerned with literature's connections with real-world places or settings). Geocritical approaches analyze a space's representations and significations in literature itself and are concerned with the linguistic signified and with the construction of imaginary universes or landscapes. Finally, geopoetical approaches concentrate on connections between literary creation and space, on how literary works' forms are inspired by the very spaces they describe, and on a text's own spatiality. Collot's work stresses, as well, that the three strains are necessarily complimentary. The term "geopoetics" itself first appeared in France in the 1960s and 1970s in the work of Michel Deguy and Kenneth White, and has been picked up by Bertrand Westphal, as well, for whom it is the poetic transcription of human space, the "creative writing" of a territory. Collot similarly defines geopoetics as the study of a body in movement through real space, whose traces are recorded in literary space. Westphal's geocriticism, in Collot's eyes, is a hermeneutics, while geopoetics is focused less on meaning than on form, though each, he writes, is indispensable to the other. Westphal's main stateside proponent is Robert T. Tally Jr., with his *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* series.

It is the imagined difference between "literary geography" and "literary cartography" (one supposedly diachronic, the other synchronic) that David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson and Patricia Murrieta-Flores's *Literary mapping in the digital age* (2016) tries to integrate. Their work provides a sort of "how-to" book for imagining literary mapping beyond the synchronic or static image, treating "the relationship between the practice of mapping the application of geospatial technologies and the interpretation of literary texts" (2016: 1) as the practice of literary cartography approached "from a critical conviction in mapping as a practice that enriches the reader's appreciation of the literary work of art" (2016: 7); and it traces the field back to William Sharp's 1904 *Literary geography*. This group of scholars sees "literary cartography" as an approach, while seeing "literary geography" as a topic (2016: 7). One approach here is that of Ryan Heuser, Mark Algee-Hewitt, Annalise Lockhart, Erik Steiner and Van Tran, whose maps demonstrate "a spatial pattern of emotion drawn from fiction across the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. Rather than visualizing the relative presence of London places in fiction, this map reveals the structures of feeling associated with them" (2016: 34). They find overall stable points in the city across two centuries, a "chronological conservatism to London's fictional representation," a "stuckness" implying "that population growth did not substantially alter the imaginative [literary or narrative] contours of the city" or its "social-affective logic" (2016: 43).

Malcolm Bradbury once suggested that a "very large part of our writing is a story of its roots in a place: a landscape, region, village, city, nation or continent" (1996: 7). Yet, as Trevor M. Harris et al. observe, it is arguably "the insight that the author brings to human-environment relations rather than the accuracy of spatial description that is most revealing, and especially so in historical contexts where corroboration of these social-cultural-economic-environment relations are so difficult to establish" (2016: 223). More interesting for narratology here, perhaps, is Barbara Piatti's suggestion of "the distribution of fictional settings" in a text and of "gravity centers" versus "unwritten regions" (Piatti et al. 2009: 181).

While David Cooper's, Christopher Donaldson's and Patricia Murrieta-Flores's collected essays tend to focus on what they themselves would term "literary geography," Marie-Laure Ryan, Kenneth Foote and Maoz Azaryahu have recently worked to further elaborate three types of narrative cartography: (1) Maps of the spatial content of the text, as "anchored in actual geography" – including cultural landscapes like "the sites of literary activity on a street map of central Vienna in the early twentieth century" and geographic locations of plots like "the itineraries of the protagonists of sixteenth-century picaresque novels" on nonfictional geographic maps (2016: 46); (2) maps of spatial form: "not a geographic map, but rather a diagram of formal relations between narrative elements," offering "a time-transcending, totalizing perspective. The spatial form approach," they write, "was particularly popular among scholars of the structuralist school because of the movement's indebtedness to Saussure's view of language as a system that must be described synchronically rather than diachronically" (2016: 48), the most advanced of these being "the database map that underlies digital narratives organized" by hypertext, "a network of fragments connected by links" (2016: 48–49); (3) maps of narrative space, dating back to Jonathan Swift's maps published in *Gulliver's Travels*. Such maps' forms in literary texts were often "largely arbitrary" (2016: 52). Ryan et al. quote Swift's own (1726) observations on the mix of iconography, indices and symbols in contemporary map-making: "So Geographers in *Afric*-Maps/ With Savage-Pictures fill their gaps;/ And o'er uninhabitable Downs/ Place Elephants for want of Towns" (*Gulliver's Travels* II: 177–180). Maps, they write, include "all three types of signs – icons, indices, and symbols" (2016: 45). Because maps represent "a vertical, disembodied perspective – what philosopher Thomas Nagel has called 'a view from nowhere'— they are not well suited to

express a subject's lived experience in an environment, while language-based narrative, because it relies on a temporal medium, is not well suited to convey a mental image of [...] 'strategic space,'" which is "a network of relations between objects" (2016: 45). For this reason, Ryan, Foote and Azaryahu conclude, geography "needs narratives and narratology because, if it wants to capture the experience of space and place in its emotional, existential, and phenomenological dimensions, its richest source of data are the stories people create involving space and place" (2016: 225).

The question remains: what can narratology itself do with visual cartographic maps? Only "metareading," conclude Ryan, Foote and Azaryahu – that is, examining maps for some purpose beyond its "degree of accuracy with respect to external reality" (2016: 66n) or, in other words, analogizing their mentally-constructed and imagined (ideological) models of (or suggestions of) spatial relations. For this, synchrony remains a valuable standpoint left to us by structuralism. Maps, among other things, are a means of structuring and storing knowledge (Ryan et al. 2016: 76; cf. Tuan, "Images and mental maps" 1975: 210–211). And the way humans structure them, and read or consume them, is often unconsciously narrative, as Kenneth Lynch notes: "the observer [of an environment] selects, organizes, and endows with meaning what he sees" (Lynch 1960: 53). Maps can thus intriguingly "possess narrativity" without "being narratives" (Ryan 2004). But here, we pass into the realm of reader response theory, or even considerations of authorial intentionality.

This article has avoided lengthy discussion of the work of Bertrand Westphal and Michel Collot up to this point because Ryan et al.'s overview takes much of their previous publication into consideration. But it's worth noting how both their projects veer toward aspects of authorial intent or reader response: "Whereas what Collot calls geopoetics is mainly concerned with the subjectivity of the authors who describe place and space, [Westphal's] geocriticism is the study of the impact of real-world geography on the collective imagination [of readers]" (Ryan et al. 2016: 209), much like psychogeography was of individual experiencers of space and place. "The domain that might benefit the most from a collaboration between geography and narratology," Ryan et al. conclude, "is literary (or narrative) cartography." That is, studying the *ways* narratives are mapped, rather than mapping them ourselves.

In the mid-1960s, as theorization on narratives took an increasing interest in narrators and the narrator's discourse, there were scattered suggestions discourse itself might replace plot. Genette noted (or warned) that perhaps plot (as opposed to narratorial discourse) was already something of the past, out of date, and that one might best hurry to consider it as it retreated, before it completely disappeared from our horizon (Genette 1966: 69). It would be as idle today to imagine

once again, amidst an increasing interest in space in narrative, that plot in narrative may soon either escape from our view or die off of exhaustion. "What," after all, "should replace the role of plot in prose?" asked Viktor Shklovsky. "A fundamental change would be brought about by shifting the point of narration, either spatially, as in the case of journeys, or temporally, as in the case of memoirs. There is in our literature, however, a pure interest in material and in the conventional method of moving from fact to fact" (1991: 208).

Still, in seeking to imagine narrative space without plot itself, contemporary thought moves toward ideas of human-less narration, or seeks to jump across wider periods of time to describe long-term events unwitnessed in full by any single point of view, in the dawning age of the anthropocene. "By writing stories about environmental change," for example, writes William Cronon, "we divide the causal relationships of an ecosystem with a rhetorical razor that defines included and excluded, relevant and irrelevant, empowered and disempowered. In the act of separating story from non-story, we wield the most powerful yet dangerous tool of the narrative form" (Cronon 1992: 1349). There is, among other future directions for any geographical narratology, the importance of the anthropocene's attendant theories for how we see the non-human as a causal actor.

But this is hardly a stopping place. Space has, at least since Aristotle, served as a modeling structure for narrative time and event. Perhaps the term "geography" becomes most useful here because it lends itself less to metaphor (for synchronic time) than the term "space." Geography calls attention to the fact that we are talking about storyworld. The question is: after having used "space" for so long as screen or metaphor for diagramming temporal narrative structure, once we use the term "geography," will we not find ourselves still doing the same in the storyworld of narrative, as we seek to reveal its structures? Space, conceived in geographical terms, is a way of perceiving a certain organization in a narrative. Of course, we can use space, place, setting or geography to *describe* narrative, or even to map it. But this, I think, is not our most difficult task, conceptually or technically. Perhaps the most difficult task now facing us is to find ways to allow space to work as an *explanation* of narrative, while avoiding the temptation to use it as a hermeneutics. Truth, Turgenev famously wrote to Tolstoy, is like a lizard: you can catch it by the tail, but it will only break off in your hand, while the lizard itself runs off, knowing it will grow another. The lizard has escaped by the temporal action of running, the decisive kernel act of escape, perhaps, but what matters for the one intent on chasing it is that it was *here*, then *there*.

> [...] And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and present are gathered. Neither movement
> from nor towards,

Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still
point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.

—T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

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