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Space and Myth:
*Reimagining Faustus
in Intertextual Progressions*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION: SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL COORDINATES OF THE FAUSTUS MYTH

This dissertation examines the multi-spatial and multi-temporal rewritings of the Faustus myth in English and American drama and fiction to show how the myth has been adjusted to various metaphoric spaces. The main texts analysed are the following: in point of dramatic adaptations, Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1592); *The Devil to Pay* by Dorothy L. Sayers (1939); *An Irish Faustus: A Morality in Nine Scenes* (1963) by Lawrence Durrell; *Tomorrow Morning, Faustus! An Infernal Comedy* by I. A. Richards (1962); David Mamet's play *Faustus* (2004); and *Wittenberg* by David Davalos (2008). From the novel adaptations of the Faustus myth, I have selected a novel by Robert Nye, *Faust* (1980); and *Eric* (1990) by Terry Pratchett. Each of these case studies will examine the intertextual depiction of the Faustian figure, in dramatic and novelistic rewritings of the myth, and the psychology connected with striking a deal with the devil, as well as the cultural, historical and political factors of the time and space of each literary representation of the Faustus myth. Whereas Marlowe views Faustus as a nonconformist, whose fall from grace comes as a result of his ego and self-satisfaction, modern and postmodern writers are less concerned with Faustus freely giving up his soul and choose to examine how Faustus' arrogance blinded his mind to absurdist limits, rather than leading him to any misfortunes.

The main methodological framework is geocriticism and spatial literary studies (Bertrand Westphal and Robert T. Tally, but also

and horrid place, where Wagner ends up in murdering Faustus in the catacombs, thus fulfilling the predestined ending of Faustus' story. Time in Nye's novel means memory (Wagner's about Faustus and Wagner's about his childhood at Wartburg castle; about his university days at Wittenberg; and about his sexual experiences as a youth; but also, Faustus' memory about his encounter with Mephistopheles). Yet memory is distorted according to the narrator's emotions.

Subchapter 2 of Chapter 5, entitled "Discworld and Parodic Space: *Eric* (1990) by Terry Pratchett" (5.2), debates the significant locations in the novel as a parody of the Faustus myth. The hero is not even called Faustus, but Rincewind, and the character is a vague allusion to Faustus, just as Eric may be an embodiment of the magician's disciple, but he may also be a teenage version of the magus. Time and space are merged into a spatiotemporal continuum and readers are implicitly invited to imagine their own spaces, constructed from the fragmented versions of imaginary space represented in the novel: the garden of Death and the Land of Death, the city of Ankh-Morpork; the Dungeon Dimensions; the city of Pseudopolis; the city of Pandemonium; the jungle, or the rain forests of Klatch; the Tezuman Kingdoms; the ancient city of Tsortean; Hell, the road to Hell, and the cosmogonic image of Nowhere and Total Nothing. The Discworld is generated by the narrators' and readers' emotions (mostly negative and stressful) and there is no point of stability for the story. Faustus' narrative is only one of the multiple myths created by humanity (as narrated in biblical stories, literary fiction, or even suggested by historiographic fictions). The historical myths of the Amazons, the Incas, stories from the *Iliad* and allusions to Milton's *Paradise Lost* are mingled with quantum physics and scientific theories about the creation of the universe. The in-between space-time of possibility is associated with the fluid universe of the literary text and with critical interpretations of literature, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1 THEMATIC, INTER-GENERIC AND SPATIAL PROXIMITY

What this dissertation brings new is the spatial perspective, which follows my argumentative line like a red thread, in order to prove that space and place have a role to play in the economy of each Faustus narrative—whether this is the original German story or several modern or postmodern dramatic and novelistic adaptations. The study of space and place as distinct dimensions of culture—apart from ethnographic accounts—has since the 1990s proliferated in a number of areas of anthropological research, but also studies in cultural geography, architecture, media communication, literary studies, etc. The Faustus paradigm is a well-known theme that forms an arch across time and space, from its inception in sixteenth-century Germany to various modifications and transformations operated in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In contemporary spatial studies, space is often defined by an abstract scientific, mathematical, or measurable conception, while place refers to the elaborated cultural meanings people invest in or attach to a specific site or locale. Anthropologists' interests in space and place have intensified during late-twentieth-century's global economic restructuring, migratory flows, and deterritorialization, which have undermined assumptions about the fixity of the people they study in space/place. Although spatial and environmental factors have always been present in ethnographies, they have appeared most often as background without being problematized. In the latter half of the

twentieth century, anthropologists armed with theoretical concepts and inspired by scholars in other disciplines have consciously sought to demonstrate the relevance of new concepts in ethnography, philosophy, spatial sciences and literature.

Authors such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Baudrillard have inspired new lines of inquiry in the study of time, space and place. According to Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space* (1991), “space and time appear and manifest themselves as different yet inseparable” so that questions of space must not be separated from time (Lefebvre 175). My argument is that the project of spatial history that distinguishes Henri Lefebvre’s approach and invites to rethinking the relation of space to history is significant in addressing the politics of space, the reorganization of space, and the production of space in the adaptations of the Faustus myth throughout the centuries. Similarly, Michel Foucault makes the connection between history and space when he writes, in “Of Other Spaces” (1986) that “The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (22). This juxtaposition of past and present moments and spaces can be applied to modern and postmodern adaptations of the Faustus myth, which link across time the metaphoric space of Renaissance Germany to the variant spaces of each adaptation of the story—a Court of Heaven and several mansions; the court of Galway; the board of a modern company called the *Futurity Foundation*; the tower space; the Discworld; the Black Forest; or a timeless and placeless setting.

The metaphoric spaces and places suggested by the Faustus myth, transposed into several adaptations, are at once ancient and contemporary, there and here, and the avatars of the characters create mystical spaces that denote the durability of the Faustus story. Michel de Certeau, in *The Mystic Fable* (2015), reflects on mystic religious texts, in what he calls “mystic historicities” (de Certeau 1). Writing about the “mystic tragedies” (5), great or small, of individuals along

history who embraced mysticism, de Certeau touches upon the notion of intellectual space as something relative and amorphous, which changes according to each mystic’s psychological state. According to de Certeau, “There is no longer any autonomous space in which truths and proofs can be discussed objectively. ‘Either you convert or you reject life’” (5). This mystical state of illumination, as a point of no-return, can be extrapolated to the description of Faustus’ dilemma in striking a deal with the devil, when there is almost no individual choice in going forward on the road of the relationship with what appears to be the unknown forces of evil. The absence of the individual’s “autonomous space” (5), in de Certeau’s understanding, creates a void which leads to the inevitability of collusion with the devil. Perpetuated throughout the centuries in the form of various literary adaptations, Faustus’ mystical space of individual choice, plus the replicated variants of the story (which create a mythical space of literary or philosophical encounter), are as many possibilities of intersection between the Faustian protagonist and the Faustus literary tradition.

During the intellectual debate about space and place in the past century, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987; 2003) make a distinction between smooth and striated space. In the chapter entitled “1440: The Smooth and the Striated” (474-500), Deleuze and Guattari focus on space, specifically on the distinction between smooth and striated space, by applying certain models: the technological, the musical, the maritime, the mathematical, the physical, and the aesthetic model. In their discussion of these models, it becomes clear that Deleuze and Guattari are less interested in the pure difference between the smooth and the striated space than they are in the interaction between these two kinds of space. How does smooth space become striated and vice versa? These are not symmetrical operations and their mixtures and tendencies produce different kinds of assemblages. For example, woven fabric is a striated space, while felt is a smooth space in technology. In music, Deleuze and Guattari identify smooth space with rhythm and striated space with harmony and melody. In the maritime model, the sea is

a smooth space and it becomes striated by the cities and states that crisscross it. In the mathematical model, smooth space has fractional dimensions, while striated space has whole dimensions. In the physical model, smooth space is homogeneous rather than heterogeneous, but a smooth space is traversed simultaneously by multiple heterogeneous flows. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, smooth and striated space are associated with changes on the continuum between stasis and change. From the perspective of the Faustus model, as I see it, smooth space is the generic Faustian story (itself multiply striated ever since its inception by several variants), while the striated space is generated by many variant adaptations and appropriations of the myth. Each alternative brings new valences to the mythical space engendered by the repetitive story.

Space and place are relative concepts, depending on their representation in various modes. Social theorist Jean Baudrillard, in *Simulacra and Simulation* (2003), writes of the “hyperreal” (2) produced by various combinatory models of space, an imaginary representation which does not correspond to the commonly held ideas of maps and territories. As Baudrillard observes, “By crossing into a space whose curvature is the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials—worse: with their artificial resurrection in the systems of signs, a material more malleable than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalences, to all binary oppositions, to all combinatory algebra” (Baudrillard 2). Baudrillard gives the example of Disneyland, which he sees as “a space of the regeneration of the imaginary” (13), in which people recycle the waste of their dreams and phantasms. I would say that the Faustus myth and the Faustus tradition is such an imaginary hyperreal space, where various authors (of plays and of novels) try to come to terms with their own cultural phantasms and reconsider their age’s spatial and cultural paradigms. Whether the Faustus mythical space is a phantasm created by people in various epochs to reconsider an imaginary past that communicated Christian ideas about the loss of the soul to the devil, or a present construction of that imaginary

past—in which Faustus plays the role of the archetypal human being striking a bargain with the devil—all literary constructions of the Faustus tradition have something of the hyperreal simulacra that can be found in postmodern literary works.

Poststructuralist analyses of space and place, therefore, which are focused on unconscious or hyperreal symbolic structures, have given way to spatial practice theories. Inquiries into how cultural phenomena as representations of multiple and often quite contradictory meanings have been complemented by studies of agency and embodiment. Coping with mobility and displacement, anthropological and cultural studies about space and place now consider migration, place-making, and identity construction in social life and literature. Notions of hegemony, surveillance, and the actions of the state interpenetrate local ethnographic sites that now must consider context in more complex ways than simply adapting to the physical environment. I focus rather on new areas of research that have emerged as a consequence of the study of space and place, where a concentrated emphasis on space and place concepts can be found—the literature on place-making in the construction of the Faustus myth; on local knowledge and development of the mythology of the intellectual bargain; as well as the metaphoric spaces constructed by each literary work under discussion. By no means is this literature review of space and place comprehensive, but it does sketch the outlines of some of the developments in new areas of research that take space and place concepts seriously.

From the point of view of anthropology, space and place concepts have posed challenges to theorizing in completely coherent ways. Critics have reviewed the materiality of the built environment, the materiality of bodies across space, or disrupting traditional borders and politics. For example, Denise L. Lawrence and Setha Low, in “The built environment and spatial form” (2003), have reviewed the historical development of special consciousness among anthropologists and the ethnographic problematization of built forms and spatial orientation (453–505). By looking at how and why built forms conform to society and the effects they have, it is possible to explain the ethnographic

traditions, social organization, symbolism and ritual, as well as the psychological approaches and the social production of built form. Similarly, in *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000), Tim Ingold argues that one cannot understand space or place without moving through it, so the emphasis is on practice, moving towards a more sensory view of space. These studies by anthropologists reveal the significance of the concepts of space and place for human experience. Since the Faustus tradition is a long-enduring archetypal story that has succeeded in creating its own mythical space in literature—through the proliferated versions of the story—I will discuss the ways in which the multiplied spaces of the various adaptations converge and interact in order to generate a fairly consistent narrative that has changed little for more than five centuries.

1.1. Space, Place and Mythical Space

To the humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), space and place are components of the environment and experience, but there is a difference between the two concepts, although they require each other for definition. Whereas “space” is something “unrestricted” (Tuan, *Space and Place* 3) and vast, as well as more abstract, “place” is related to identity, the human body and personal relations. In the article “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective” (1979), a text that is slightly different from the book, Tuan argues that the humanistic study of space is “the study of a people’s spatial feelings and ideas in the stream of experience” (Tuan, “Space and Place” 388). As Tuan observes, “A comprehensive study of experiential space would require that we examine successively felt, perceived, and conceptual spaces, noting how the more abstract ideas develop out of those given directly to the body, both from the standpoint of individual growth and from the perspective of history” (Tuan, “Space and Place” 388). As concerns the notion of place, as Tuan avers, “[w]ithin the humanistic tradition places have been studied from the historic and literary-artistic perspectives” (Tuan,

“Space and Place” 388). I follow, in this dissertation, the complex ways in which the metaphoric time–space of Renaissance Germany is transformed into specific (dramatic or narrative) place in each of the literary adaptations discussed. Alternatively, I demonstrate how these individualized and constructed places—which are and are not the same as the settings of each play and novel—acquire mythical dimensions in relation to the archetypal character represented by the Faustus figure, in interaction with the other characters in the respective play or novel.

The relation of space, place and time can be regarded as one of interlocking focal points. Drawing on the philosophical and phenomenological tradition, place is often conceived in relation to the attribute of experience, as opposed to a geometric abstraction, such as geometrical space, for example. In the chapter “Mythical Space and Place,” from *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (2001), Yi-Fu Tuan defines two kinds of “mythical space” (*Space and Place* 86): one that is “a fuzzy area of defective knowledge surrounding the empirically known,” which frames pragmatic space (86); and second, “a conception of localized values within which people carry on their practical activities” (Tuan *Space and Place* 86). Mythical space of the first kind is a conceptual extension of the familiar spaces derived from direct experience, whereas the mythical space of the second kind, according to Tuan, “functions as a component in a world view of cosmology” (*Space and Place* 88), as this area is an attempt to answer the questions about the human place in nature. From this perspective of cultural geography, as I see it, Faustus’ story may be integrated into the second category of “mythical space” (Tuan *Space and Place* 86), in the sense that the events narrated allegorize the human attempt to exorcize inner psychological demons and to come to terms with the self and the surrounding world.

In the operative context defining space and place in the humanities, Yi-Fu Tuan’s concept of “mythical space” (Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective” 405) is “a sophisticated product of the mind answering the needs of the communal group” (Tuan, “Space and Place” 405-406). As I see it, the Faustus myth has been generated as a

“mythical space” created by communities in the Renaissance to respond to the conceptualization of spiritual needs, or rather to mitigate the controversy between the spiritual and the worldly emerging in the period. This process of conceptualization in the Renaissance—which is characteristic to the myth-making structure—removes the particular spatial construction from the original narrative and transforms it into a universally human story. However, in the case of the mythical space related to Faustus, unlike in other myth-making processes, the place of the hero’s evolution is so inextricably linked to the story that in very few adaptations of the Faustus narrative is the hero distanced from Renaissance Germany or from Wittenberg.

Cultural geography, therefore, informs my dissertation analysing dramatic and narrative representations of the Faustus myth. Yi-Fu Tuan’s chapter about “Mythical Space and Place” (85-100), from *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) further discusses political and geographic myths in Western culture, based on collective memory. Tuan mentions the Isles of the Blessed, Paradise, the Northwest Passage, and Terra Australis, and he says that these geographical myths date from the time when human knowledge was limited (Tuan *Space and Place* 85). Faustus’ mythical space is not mentioned here, however. Tuan argues that both kinds of mythical space (empirical mythical space and communal or social space) have continued to exist in the modern world, and they persist for individuals, as well as groups. Tuan even expresses a kind of ecological thinking *avant la lettre*, when he writes that the second kind of mythical space is a way of the human being to relate to the world and the cosmos, which leads us to “understand man’s place in nature in a holistic way” (*Space and Place* 86). This kind of thinking, according to Tuan, “imputes personality to space, thus transforming space in effect into place” (*Space and Place* 91). As Tuan cogently concludes in this chapter, “The idea of space is subordinated to the idea of the location of significant places” (*Space and Place* 92). However, Tuan refers to space and place from the perspective of the cultural geographer, not the literary critic, and he does not mention the Faustus myth directly. What I gather

from this conceptualization of space in human geography, however, is that spaces can be transformed into mentally significant places of experience if emotional involvement is attached to them. For this reason, the Faustus myth can be transformed into mythical space in literary rewritings or adaptations, given the story’s persistence and stability in the Western cultural memory and the allusions to human spirituality related to the Faustus narrative.

Yet the question arises, are human beings capable to fathom rationally the depth of their psychological or emotional space and clearly present a coherent image of the cosmos, a mythical space of their own? When extrapolating Tuan’s concept of mythical space to the Faustus story, it is clear that this is not the case. For this reason, people have created several archetypal stories that may explain—by means of symbolic interpretation—how the self relates to its inner universe. In Tuan’s view, people need to create “intimate experiences of place” (*Space and Place* 137), which are hard to articulate and fleeting, but which can express human vulnerability. My view is that the Faustus narrative is the manifestation of such an “intimate experience of place” (Tuan *Space and Place* 137) because it gives a sense of permanence to the human ontological and epistemological story. Things and places are imbued with meaning, and so the Faustus narrative may be easily turned into myth. Individualized places acquire different dimensions, in accordance with the framing of the Faustus story that is being told—whether in narrative or in dramatic form, or whether in the sixteenth century or in the twentieth century.

1.2. Geocriticism

The concept of “literary cartography” has been discussed by critics working in geocriticism and spatial literary studies. Robert T. Tally, in the introduction entitled “Mapping Narratives,” appended to *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*, writes of the spaces represented in the novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce as an example of literary cartography. As Tally observes, “From the meticulous