Space

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Abstract and Keywords

Since space and time are the two fundamental modes of locating experience, the first chapter of the book considers their interaction. Specifically, the ways in which descriptions of space further the sense of the passing of time are explored. Space has been traditionally thought of as the opposite of time, and critics have suggested that spatial description in narrative actually stills time. In this chapter, it is suggested that the opposite is true; that, in fact, describing objects and settings contributes to the multilayered, multidirectional, complex view of temporality that narrative affords. The chapter includes analyses of Mann’s *Tonio Kröger*, *Death in Venice*, and *The Magic Mountain*, in comparison with Kafka’s short story *Home-Coming*.

*Keywords:* spatial form, pictorial present, Kafka, Lessing, Doreen Massey, going back, moving forward, interaction of space and time, function of spatial description

... my timescapes. Evocations of places at a time that has passed. I first wanted to call this book Stations and tie my diverse memories to the names I connect with them.
Since time immemorial, space and time as the fundamental aspects of experience have been inextricably linked. Indeed, Kant stressed that ‘there are two pure forms of sensuous intuition, as principles of knowledge a priori, namely, space and time’; by the twentieth century Albert Einstein named time as the fourth dimension of space, branding this concomitance ‘space-time’; and Mikhail Bakhtin transposed it into literary terms as the ‘chronotope’. More recently, the writer and literary critic Ruth Klüger suggested that historical spaces cannot be seen simply as objective sites, but instead she proposes that ‘there should be a word like timescape to indicate the nature of a place in time, that is, at a certain time, neither before nor after’ (‘das Wort Zeitschaft sollte es geben, um zu vermitteln, was ein Ort in der Zeit ist, zu einer gewissen Zeit, weder vorher noch nachher’). Considering questions of time in narrative unavoidably also raises questions of space. On a close linguistic level, moreover, the sense of time passing is furthered through descriptions of space. In The Magic Mountain, Death in Venice, Tonio Kröger, and Kafka’s short story Home-Coming, space is not, however, merely an incidental aspect of experience or a backdrop to emotional action; it instead forms a central theme of the works. Location, movement, and stasis, as well as the social significance and literary symbolism of space, are fundamental forces in these narratives.

The narrator of The Magic Mountain suggests that space may have as powerful an effect on individual experience and development as time:
Space, as it rolls and tumbles away between [Hans Castorp] and his native soil, proves to have powers normally ascribed only to time; from hour to hour, space brings about changes very like those time produces, yet surpassing them in certain ways. Space, like time, gives birth to forgetfulness, but does so by removing an individual from all relationships and placing him in a free and pristine state [...] Time, they say, is water from the river Lethe, but the air of distant places is a similar drink; and if its effects are less profound, it works all the more quickly.

In this respect, space is more important to Hans Castorp than time. Indeed, it is Hans’s inability to leave the ‘Fernluft’ of the mountain that leads to the convolution of time in the novel. Rather than a Bildungsroman showing development over time, the novel almost acts instead as a development in space. Like a snow globe, the mountain sanatorium is suspended from everyday reality, and has the appearance of movement and change (through the falling snow), but this occurs on the spot in a hermetically sealed environment, shaken by external events without being wholly part of them.
At the opposite end of the time and space spectrum is *Death in Venice*. Where Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain* is at the beginning of his life, maturing in the sealed-off Alpine community, Gustav von Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* is much older, and faces his final days in the seemingly wide expanse of the Venice Lido. Mann intertwines the narrative experience of time and space in this novella too, where the narrator observes: ‘in empty, unarticulated space our mind also lacks a sense of time, and we enter the twilight of the immeasurable’ (‘im leeren, im ungegliederten Raume fehlt unserem Sinn auch das Maß der Zeit, und wir dämmern im Ungemessenen’). In both works, space also acts as a marker for time when the latter appears to grind to a halt. Space symbolizes the temporal stasis felt by the characters uprooted from familiarity and suspended from their traditional life-trajectories. But where Hans, as a young man, looks forward in a temporal sense, Aschenbach looks backwards. They form a natural comparison as Mann originally conceived *The Magic Mountain* as ‘a kind of humourous counterpart to *Death in Venice*’ (‘eine Art von humoristischem Gegenstück zum “Tod i[n] V[enedig]”’). The temporal direction is disrupted by the complexities of desire in both works. Hans, young and optimistic and progressing forwards like the good *Bildungsroman* hero, is in love with one of the living emblems of death: Clawdia Chauchat, who is, like the rest of the sanatorium, marked by her illness and constantly living on borrowed and precarious time. Aschenbach, by contrast, turns his back on the death that inexorably creeps towards him and instead pursues the archetype of youthful beauty and innocence: the boy, Tadzio. His project shifts from self-development to a blind pursuit of an impossible object, which prevents him from leaving even in the face of the rising plague. Both characters plan to leave these places, but the desire for death/Chauchat or life/Tadzio binds them there. As even love and sexuality become representatives of temporal movement and impediments to spatial movement through Chauchat and Tadzio, time and space become ever more tightly intertwined in these works.
Mann’s poetics of time does, then, have much to do with space. In this respect, he builds on a tradition developing in the nineteenth century that saw the interrelation of time and space. Hubert Ohl explores the ‘temporalization of space’ and the ‘spatialization of time’ (‘Verzeitlichung des Raumes und Verräumlichung der Zeit’) in Wilhelm Raabe’s *The Odin Field* (1888). Ohl suggests that ‘the temporalization of space [...] means that not only human beings, who with their lives also have their own history, are moved into this time perspective [...] but also nature, in this case a specific landscape’ (‘ “Verzeitlichung des Raumes” [...] bedeutet, dass nicht nur der Mensch, der mit seinem Leben auch seine Geschichte hat, in jenen “Zeitperspektivismus” gerückt wird, [...] sondern auch die Natur, in diesem Falle eine konkrete Landschaft’). We see this too for example in Theodor Storm’s novella, *Immensee*, which I discuss in Chapter 3, where spaces and objects—which in Kant’s view belong to the experiences of ‘external intuition’ rather than the ‘internal intuition’ where we experience time—are imbued with temporal power that shapes the direction of the narrative. Indeed, Storm’s legacy for Mann in this respect is particularly visible in *Tonio Kröger*, which I juxtapose with another modernist text, Kafka’s short story *Home-Coming*.

Time and space are inextricably linked in a somewhat different way in these two stories from that of *The Magic Mountain* and *Death in Venice*. In both of these narratives, the protagonists return to—rather than turn their backs on—familiar spaces from times past. *Tonio Kröger* and *Home-Coming* differ from *The Magic Mountain* and *Death in Venice* in the respect that they do not look forward or back, but are about the ‘now’ of experience. Ironically, however, the ‘nows’ depicted in these two works exist in the spaces of the past. That is, both protagonists return to their childhood homes and mark the time that has elapsed since ‘those days’ back then by registering the changes in space. Space in these works deepens the temporal experience of the present, while simultaneously evoking times gone by and anticipating what might happen next.
Overall in these narratives, space is important as a symbolic setting and as part of the plot structure—the narratives are all about some kind of movement either as an escape from the present or as a return to the past. Also, as with time, space is unavoidable in any narrative. Just by virtue of narration—in any grammatically correct sentence that includes a subject and a verb—there is presence and there is time. But one of the primary focuses of this book is to consider the way in which time is told on a close linguistic level. In view of this aim, this chapter explores the fundamental ‘bricks’ of the narrative: particular words and sentences, and how they overtly refer to space and movement, and implicitly inflect temporal progression. I consider the central tenets of the space-time union: movement, stasis, and returns in space but not in time. From a select group of scenes, it is impossible to make overarching generalizations about how the narration of space interacts with the subjective construction of time. But a consideration of this union from several different standpoints, albeit with a small number of scenes, may allow some indication of the intricate workings of space and time in Mann’s works and in fiction more generally.

Marking tempo in ‘spatial form’

Most discussions of space in narrative begin with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s distinction in his *Laocoon* between the ‘temporal arts’, such as the novel or music, and the ‘spatial arts’, including painting, sculpture, and architecture. Lessing deems it impossible to convey time adequately in the plastic arts or to convey space adequately in narrative. As Joseph Frank observes:

> No matter how accurate and vivid a verbal description might be, Lessing argued, it could not give the unified impression of a visible object; no matter how skilfully figures might be chosen and arranged, a painting or piece of sculpture could not successfully set forth the various stages of an action.
But Frank’s essay ‘Spatial Form in Modern Literature’ complicates this assumption. Writing in 1945 in the wake of literary modernism, Frank suggests that ‘modern literature, exemplified by such writers as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust and James Joyce, is moving in the direction of spatial form’. This literature, Frank says, exhibits a shift towards depicting moments in time. This refocuses the narrative onto the spatial dimensions of experience, which is, in Frank’s view, necessarily at the expense of temporal progression. He gives the example of the day of the county fair in Madame Bovary, which presents three stages of action: that of the mingling crowds, that of the speakers on stage announcing the prizes, and that of Emma and Rodolphe on the balcony exchanging amorous declarations. This scene displays the simultaneity of distinct experiences within a unified space. What Flaubert does in a single scene, Frank continues, Joyce attempts over the course of a vast novel in Ulysses, and we may also add to this Mrs Dalloway or more recently Ian McEwan’s 2005 novel Saturday as further evidence for this shift to ‘spatial form’: all present distinct character experiences told in a reasonably cohesive space over a concentrated period of time. For Frank, such narratives construct that for which Proust also strove in his search for ‘pure time’: ‘But “pure time,” obviously, is not time at all—it is perception in a moment of time, that is to say, space.’
The problem with Frank’s argument is that it considers only large lapses of time—told perhaps through considerable elision—to be instances of time passing at all. Even in Flaubert’s county fair scene, Joyce’s depiction of Dublin over the course of a day, or Woolf’s or McEwan’s twenty-four hours in London, time does continue to tick by, however slowly, and that is part of the point. Frank does not blandly suggest that static scenes stop time, but he does propose that the shifted balance between narrative time and narrated time—where the events are now told at greater length than the time that they occupied intradiegetically—amounts to taking the time out of narrative and replacing it with space as a central focus. But what of the minute passing of time? And in particular how is this in fact propelled by the depiction of space? Even in instances of spatial stasis and short moments of time, the sense of time flowing may be fast or slow, or elided or recollective, depending on the subtle inflections of voice and language. A consideration of instances of ‘spatial form’ suggests that movement conjoins space and time; Frank’s examples of spatialized description all depict movement through space, and this is what injects space with temporal momentum.

In _The Magic Mountain_ there is one scene in particular that plays with both ‘spatial form’ and the ‘pictorial’ narrative (to the latter we shall return later): when Hans and Joachim visit Doktor Behrens’s house to view his collection of paintings, the narrator focuses increasingly on the spatial location. This scene is useful for analysis of the interworkings of time and space because it fluidly shifts between the description of setting, movement, and static images. Doktor Behrens, Hans, and Joachim arrive at the house:

> A few semicircular steps led up to an oaken door, which the director opened with a latchkey, one of many on his key ring. His hand trembled as he did it; he was definitely nervous. They entered a vestibule where you could hang your things, and Behrens placed his hat on its hook. Once they were inside the short corridor, which opened on both sides to the rooms of his small private residence and was separated from the rest of the building by a glass-panelled door, he called for the maid and placed his order. Then with several [p.25] jovial and encouraging phrases, he admitted his guests through one of the doors on the right.
Two rooms furnished in banal bourgeois style, one opening into the other and separated only by heavy curtains, looked out on the valley. (251–2, adapted)


Ein paar banal-bürgerlich möblierte Räume, nach vorn, gegen das Talblickend, gingen ineinander; ohne Verbindungstüren, nur durch Portieren getrennt. (387)

Here, almost every sentence begins with a description of setting: the steps, the vestibule serving as a cloakroom, the corridor separated from the rest of the house, and the couple of rooms furnished in a banal, bourgeois style. Interspersed amongst these observations are descriptions of the characters’ movement: Behrens unlocks the door outside, hangs up his hat in the vestibule, calls to the maid inside. Every architectural aspect appears as the characters arrive at it and perceive it, and—mostly—it is narrated before they are. But the form of description gives varying priority to different characters and in so doing suggests a subtly changing temporal experience.

Although most sentences in this passage start with spatial description before moving onto character action, this is not uniformly the case. Outside the house, and in the vestibule, we see the setting and then Behrens acts. The narrator notes that, on unlocking the door, Behrens’s hand is shaking, adding: ‘he was definitely nervous’ (‘entschieden war er nervös’). This immediately gives a focalized lean to the description; although Behrens’s movement through space—rather than that of Hans or Joachim—takes the proverbial centre stage at this juncture, the observation that he was clearly nervous based on his body language indicates that it is not Behrens’s perspective we are
sharing, nor is it even that of an omniscient and impartial narrator (who would have known Behrens’s state of mind rather than having to guess). Instead, the deduction suggests that the perspective is here focalized most likely by Hans (and perhaps shared by Joachim). The construction of space, where setting is seen before character movement within it, reflects Hans’s and Joachim’s unfamiliarity with the location. Although Behrens leads them into the house and dictates the intradiegetic action, the form of spatial depiction indicates that the narrative pace is set by Hans. It is Hans who perceives the details of the room, dwells on the structure of corridors and separating doors, and dismisses in a sweeping glance the ‘banal bourgeois’ (‘banal-bürgerlich’) furnishings of the house. But there is an exception to this focalized conjuncture of space and pace. In the midst of it all, there appears an anomaly to the pattern: ‘Then with several jovial and encouraging phrases, he admitted his guests through one of the doors on the right.’ (‘Dann ließ er seine Gäste unter jovialen und ermutigenden Redensarten eintreten.—durch eine der Türen zur Rechten.’) Here, Behrens acts first and then the space is described, and in the original German this is further separated by dashes. The words ‘with several jovial and encouraging phrases’ (‘unter jovialen und ermutigenden Redensarten’) indicate the simultaneity of the speech and the movement, finally placing Behrens in step with the (s)pace. The narrator gives priority to Behrens’s speech and action before—almost as an afterthought—appending the door on the right. Movement momentarily displaces setting, and this movement is Behrens’s. Only when Behrens directs the other characters’ movement does the narrator mention the door. The movement through space at the beginning of this episode not only constructs the temporal pace of the narrative, but also subtly inflects it with individual perspectives. Because the surroundings are described before character location within them, the voice indicates that the space is unfamiliar, and all the more interesting for its novelty. As the description shifts towards action, moving space into the secondary position, it suggests that another character assumes control of the scene, dominating the space and thereby controlling the movement of the other characters and therefore also the overall narrative pace.
We can see this pattern in other literary works more generally. In *Mrs Dalloway*, for example, as Clarissa moves through London, space unfolds in step with movement. The perspective is predominantly focalized by Clarissa as it follows her around the city, although there are subtle slippages that remind us of the presence of an omniscient narrator. It does not, however, involve the same subtle distortions of perspective as are visible in *The Magic Mountain*. On leaving the house,

She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnell’s van to pass […] There she perched, never seeing him [her neighbour Scrope Purvis], waiting to cross, very upright […] a suspense […] before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. (p.27) The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street.¹⁴

And so it continues, intertwining sensory perception, movement, thought, and space. The exclamation (‘There!’) and subjective description suggest free indirect discourse, whereby the narrator reflects Clarissa’s thoughts without marking this focalization. But the mention of her neighbour and the fact she ‘never see[s] him’ indicates that this description is not purely Clarissa’s experience even though it may be infused with her perspective. The phrase, ‘Such fools we are, she thought’, confirms the presence of the narratorial filter. Nevertheless, each new location, each new sight, marks the progression of Clarissa’s movement, unifying narrative time and narrated time. But, more than that, her reactions to the sights and sounds—the stream of consciousness—implicitly consume the time taken to move from place to place. They become, in effect, spatial fillers. Time is therefore used to construct space, distance, speed, and so on, as much as space is used to suggest the passing of time.

So too, for all its uniqueness, does space pass the time in *Ulysses*, to cite a further example of the concomitance of the two facets of experience unified by character movement. The opening sentences illustrate this:
Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressinggown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him by the mild morning air [...] Solemnly he came forward and mounted the round gunrest. He faced about and blessed gravely thrice the tower, the surrounding country and the awaking mountains.¹⁵

Movement in moments such as these in The Magic Mountain, Mrs Dalloway, and Ulysses unites time and space, in effect balancing narrative time and narrated time. Static description—such as ‘Stately, plump’, ‘a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed’—may slow the sense of movement, but it nevertheless continues to imbue the narrative with a strong temporal momentum, indicating an action interrupted or a state achieved, and thereby an implicit past and future contained in the image of the present. It is Behrens’s quivering fingers on the lock of the house that at once give space its meaning—the house contains something exciting or scary—and suggests a temporality with both a past (what has Behrens achieved artistically that causes this excitement in front of (p.28) company?) and a future (we the reader, and Hans and Joachim are about to find out!). Space propels time onwards in part then through the characters’ movements through it. It is not ‘static, closed, immobile, as the opposite of time’, but constantly animated by what happens at it and to it, as the geographer and space theorist Doreen Massey suggests.¹⁶

By way of further illustration of the importance of space for time, we may consider the counter example of Kafka. Although written within the same ten years as Joyce’s Ulysses, Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, and Mann’s The Magic Mountain, Kafka’s The Trial uses space to disrupt the temporal flow in a way that demonstrates its importance in a very different way. If we again take the opening scene of this novel, we can observe a very different process occurring here:
Someone must have slandered Josef K., for one morning, without his having done anything wrong, he was arrested. Frau Grubach’s cook, who brought him his breakfast at around eight every day, did not appear on this occasion. That had never happened before. K. waited for a little while—from his pillow he saw the old woman who lived opposite watching him with what was for her a quite unusual curiosity—but then, both perplexed and hungry, he rang his service bell. Immediately there was a knock at the door and a man he had never seen in the apartment came in. [...] ‘Who are you?’ K. asked, immediately half-sitting up in bed [...] the man [...] turned to the door and opened it slightly to say to someone who was obviously standing just behind it, ‘He wants Anna to bring him his breakfast.’ Brief laughter ensued in the neighbouring room.

(Jemand mußte Josef K. verleumdet haben, denn ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet. Die Köchin der Frau Grubach, seiner Zimmervermieterin, die ihm jeden Tag gegen acht Uhr früh das Frühstück brachte, kam diesmal nicht. Das war noch niemals geschehen. K. wartete noch ein Weilchen, sah von seinem Kopfkissen aus die alte Frau, die ihm gegenüber wohnte und die ihn mit einer an ihr ganz ungewöhnlichen Neugierde beobachtete, dann aber, gleichzeitig befremdet und hungrig, läutete er. Sofort klopfte es und ein Mann, den er in dieser Wohnung noch niemals gesehen hatte, trat ein. [...] ‘Wer sind Sie?’ fragte K. und saß gleich halb aufrecht im Bett [...] der Mann [...] wandte sich zur Tür, die er ein wenig öffnete, um jemandem, der offenbar knapp hinter der Tür stand, zu sagen: ‘Er will, daß Anna ihm das Frühstück bringt.’ Ein kleines Gelächter im Nebenzimmer folgte.)17
Etcetera. What is startling in this passage, which is admittedly not wholly representative of the rest of the novel, is the lack of setting. Kafka mentions (p.29) furnishing tropes (bed, pillow, door, flat, room next door), but does not, to any degree at all, give a sense of place. And indeed, why should he? The point is that Josef K. awakes at the normal time in the normal place—all of this is entirely familiar to him, if not to us—but something major has changed. For K., there is no need to register the setting, and furthermore, he does not really move; he remains in bed moving from head-on-pillow to a sitting position, but, at this point, nothing more. And this lack of movement, this lack of place, means that it does for us feel like time is on hold for a moment. It powerfully conjures the ‘just awoken’ feeling of disorientation and desperation to work out what exactly is going on. In her analysis of the cognitive presentation of space, Emily Troscianko observes that in the opening of *The Trial*:

> We ‘see’ a man lying in bed looking out of his bedroom window at a window in the house across the street and hearing a knock at his bedroom door; because of the channelling effects of the narrative perspective [...] to some extent we may also look out ourselves, hear the knock from ‘over there’ ourselves.¹⁸

In this description of space, ‘[j]ust enough seems to be given to negotiate the threshold between the superfluous and the sufficient’.¹⁹ This whole scene seems to take place ‘at around eight’ in the morning (‘gegen acht Uhr früh’) because nothing really moves and setting is not created, let alone altered over time. By the time we are offered a morsel of spatial description, it only serves to disorient further:

> At first glance the neighbouring room, which K. entered more slowly than he intended, looked almost exactly the same as it had the previous evening. It was Frau Grubach’s living-room, crammed full with furniture, rugs, china, and photographs; perhaps there was a little more space today than usual, it was impossible to tell at a glance, especially since the main difference consisted in the presence of a man who was sitting by the open window with a book, from which he now looked up. (6, adapted)
(Im Nebenzimmer, in das K. langsamer eintrat, als er wollte, sah es auf den ersten Blick fast genau so aus wie am Abend vorher. Es war das Wohnzimmer der Frau Grubach, vielleicht war in diesem mit Möbeln, Decken, Porzellan und Photographien überfüllten Zimmer heute ein wenig mehr Raum als sonst, man erkannte das nicht gleich, um so weniger, als die Hauptveränderung in der Anwesenheit eines Mannes bestand, der beim offenen Fenster mit einem Buch saß, von dem er jetzt aufblickte. (239))
This raises numerous new questions about space and time: K.’s first reaction is that everything looks more or less as it did the previous evening. (p.30) but of course, we, the reader, do not know what it looked like then. The narrator then makes a concession to the reader, acknowledging our existence with the plain fact, ‘It was Frau Grubach’s living-room’ (‘Es war das Wohnzimmer der Frau Grubach’), complicating Troscianko’s assertion that ‘[t]he immediate environment exists only insofar as K. interacts with it’.20 This then is no stream of consciousness but, like Clarissa’s city stroll, the presence of a higher narratorial agent subtly becomes evident. We do hear K.’s ponderings that perhaps a little has changed in the room, perhaps it is a little emptier than normal. But this returns to the moment K. entered—why did he enter ‘more slowly than he intended’ (‘langsamer […] als er wollte’), particularly if the room is less crowded than normal? The phrase, ‘it was impossible to tell at a glance’ (‘man erkannte das nicht gleich’), sets the tone for the rest of K.’s tale. If space is recognizable and familiar, it is barely worth mentioning, giving the reader a sense of dislocation and groundlessness, even timelessness. If there is something unusual, K. (via the narrator) is slow to spot the difference. Movement, in *The Trial*, does not bring together time and space in the same way as in *The Magic Mountain*, *Mrs Dalloway*, or *Ulysses*. Rather than static description slowing time, as shall be discussed below, Kafka slows time by avoiding spatial description almost entirely. Troscianko observes: ‘We don’t have to wait while the story stops and a new scene is set in which the action can then continue to unfold; the scene is constructed through the character’s temporal exploration of it.’21 She terms this ‘[t]he “translation” of space into time’.22 My conclusion is slightly different from Troscianko’s. Where she argues that Kafka’s ‘cognitively realist’ view of space creates a more even tempo than would static description, I would contest the assumption this makes about static description, a contention I explore in the following section. Instead, I would suggest that the lack of spatial description in *The Trial* creates a precarious time that follows K.’s perception of space without giving the reader sufficient orientation in time. We might say that this is then the exception that proves the rule: movement through space indicates the varying tempos of the various characters. If we lose a sense of space, we are also destabilized in time.

**Marking tempo in the ‘pictorial present’**
Doreen Massey indicates that any representation of space will be reductive, and her discussion implicitly recalls Frank’s theory of ‘spatial form’:

\[(p.31)\]

Representation is seen to take on aspects of spatialisation in the latter’s action of setting things down side by side; of laying them out as a discrete simultaneity. But representation is also in this argument understood as fixing things, taking the time out of them. The equation of spatialisation with the production of ‘space’ thus lends to space not only the character of a discrete multiplicity but also the characteristic of stasis.\(^23\)

In Frank’s analysis of *Madame Bovary* and *Ulysses* as examples of ‘spatial form’, he does indeed place emphasis on what Massey terms ‘discrete multiplicity’, or expressed another way, the simultaneity of distinct experiences. But as Massey says: ‘not only can time *not* be sliced up (transforming it from a continuous to a discrete multiplicity) but even the argument that this *is* not possible should not refer to the result as space’.\(^24\) This appears to be in direct contrast to literary discussions of space. And there are other instances of spatial representation that involve an even more extreme ‘deprioritization’ of time. One such instance is what Jean Hagstrum identifies as the ‘pictorial’ image, which he analyses primarily in terms of poetry, although it is applicable also to narrative. He proposes:

\[
\text{In order to be called ‘pictorial’ a description or an image must be, in its essentials, capable of translation into painting or some other visual. It need not resemble a particular painting or even a school of painting. But its leading details and their manner and order of presentation must be imaginable as a painting or sculpture. [...] The pictorial in a verbal medium necessarily involves the reduction of motion to stasis or something suggesting such a reduction. It need not eliminate motion entirely, but the motion allowed to remain must be viewed against the basic motionlessness of the arrangement.}\(^25\)
\]
Hagstrum constructs an intriguing proposition, but—as with Frank’s—it also comes with limitations. Massey is quite right to say that you cannot ‘slice up’ time, although in literary terms at least, the idea that representation takes the time out of things requires more qualification. This is especially true when we consider the subjective sense of time going by as reflected, prompted, and emphasized by space. Contrary to Hagstrum’s thesis that the ‘pictorial’ image somehow halts the passing of time, or Massey’s criticism that the representation of space detemporalizes it, an analysis of Mann’s works illustrates that—even in the case of apparently static images that correspond to Hagstrum’s notion of the ‘pictorial’—narrative constructions of still spaces do in fact play a distinct role in the subjective passing of time in literature.

(p.32) In *The Magic Mountain* and *Death in Venice*, Mann creates an ironic play on the pictorial narrative. In the former, when Hans and Joachim are invited to visit Doctor Behrens’s house, spatial description becomes increasingly important. But initially the emphasis is placed on movement rather than stasis, creating tempo rather than pausing time. Hans then stops in front of a series of Behrens’s paintings and the descriptions of these images are not only pictorial in Hagstrum’s sense, but also examples of ekphrasis because they ‘evoke existing or imagined works of art’ in literary form.26 In *Death in Venice*, as Aschenbach views the beach scene, the narrator paints it almost as a still picture, and here too an element of irony is added by the presence of an artist within the image painting an actual picture. Even at these ostensibly ‘still’, ‘pictorial’, or ekphrastic moments, however, time continues to march inexorably onwards.

In *The Magic Mountain*, Mann does not describe Behrens’s house in objective, impersonal terms, but instead details it as it appears to the characters, both in terms of their movement through the space and in terms of their feelings about the space. Furthermore, this movement unifies the subjective sense of time for Hans and Joachim: as they progress through the house, their experience of time and space is in step both with each other’s and with the reader’s. Or so it initially appears. The paintings in this scene vary between slowing and speeding time and it soon transpires that this varying pace is focalized by Hans.
First, we pause at various images of Behrens’s wife. The narrator comments that she was ‘conspicuously present, in several oils and also in a photograph on the desk’ (252) (‘mehrmals zu sehen: in Öl und auch als Photographie auf dem Schreibtisch’ (388)) before bringing the focalized gaze to rest on one image. This resembles what Genette terms the ‘iterative narrative’, where ‘a single narrative utterance takes upon itself several occurrences together of the same event’.27

But rather than indicating a repeated event, the description of this picture stands for multiple paintings and photos dotted around the room. Genette talks of temporal elision: each event consumes a discrete period of time but one description stands in for these repeated episodes. Concentrating on one image in the case of the portrait of Behrens’s wife—the clothing, the posture, and so on—reflects the relative quantity of time spent on the observation of this object compared to the others. It thereby mirrors the erratic sense of time as Hans quickly takes in the sight of many images and then pauses for a moment before one in particular. Having dwelled on the close-up of the mysterious blonde framed on the writing table, the narrator offers a brisk overview of the landscapes (p.33) adorning the walls. The same narrative space is given to these as to the single image of Behrens’s wife but in terms of both their quantity and the scope of the subjects, they occupy a much larger plane:

Otherwise, the paintings were mostly Alpine landscapes—mountains draped in snow and evergreen, mountains with peaks veiled in mist, and mountains whose crisp, sharp outlines stood out against a deep blue sky and betrayed the influence of Segantini. There were also other themes: Alpine dairy sheds, dewlapped cows standing or lying in sun-drenched pastures, a plucked hen among vegetables with its twisted neck dangling over one side of a table, floral arrangements, local mountain folk, and so on.  (252)

The description begins with broad, sweeping views of ‘timeless’ landscapes, mountains in a range of seasons, snowy, verdant, and misty. It then zooms in a little, observing ‘Alpine dairy sheds’ (‘Sennhütten’), and closer still with the ‘cows’ (‘Kühe’), before turning to the antithesis of the majestic mountains: ‘a plucked hen’ (‘ein gerupftes Huhn’) with its neck pathetically twisted, surrounded by vegetables and waiting to be eaten, and finally the ‘floral arrangements’ (‘Blumenstücke’) and ‘local mountain folk’ (‘Gebirglerotypen’).

Through the description of these paintings, multiple spaces become unified in one time, quite the opposite of the multiple (subjective) times passing in one space, evident in Ulysses, Madame Bovary, and Mrs Dalloway. The narrator notes the features of the landscapes, the mountains, trees, sky, and animals, but also reminds us of their artificial nature: the ‘outlines’ (‘Umrisse’), the influence of the painter Giovanni Segantini, the ‘dilettante style’ (‘Dilettantismus’). This recalls us repeatedly back from the views of mountains and into the room. Time is arguably frozen in these views, but the emphasis placed on their amateurish artifice means that the immobility of time in the pictures does not completely infect that of the narrative. Murray Krieger suggests that ekphrasis prompts ‘two opposed feelings [...] in the poet and the reader’:

one is exhilarated by the notion of ekphrasis and one is exasperated by it. Ekphrasis arises out of the first, the exhilaration that craves the spatial fix, (p.34) while the second, the exasperation with ekphrasis, yearns for the freedom of the temporal flow.28
This echoes Troscianko’s assumption cited above that describing space or stasis rather than movement necessarily halts time. But such assumptions ignore the complexities of language that imbue description with temporal flow despite spatial stasis. In *The Magic Mountain*, the presence of the viewer means that time does not simply stop during ekphrastic description. For Hans, seeing two spaces simultaneously thickens the sense of time. Not only is he present in the room considering the artworks, but in them he also sees the painting process of the past:

all of them painted in a kind of brisk, dilettante style, with brash clumps of colour that often looked as if they had been squeezed onto the canvas directly from the tube and must have taken a long time to dry. The technique occasionally proved effective at covering bad mistakes. (252)

(gemalt dies alles mit einem gewissen flotten Dilettantismus, in keck aufgeklecksten Farben, die öfters aussahen, als seien sie unmittelbar aus der Tube auf die Leinwand gedrückt, und die lange gebraucht haben mußten, bis sie getrocknet waren—bei groben Fehlern war es zuweilen wirksam. (388))
The consideration of the ekphrastic images does not straightforwardly pause time for Hans but instead it suggests an implicit past. At this moment, however, Mann does not give Hans’s perspective overt priority. The narrator uses the third-person plural to encompass the movement of Hans, Joachim, and possibly also Behrens as ‘they moved along the walls as if at an exhibition’ (252) (‘wie in einer Ausstellung gingen sie die Wände entlang’ (388)). Their movement follows the contours of the room, and so space unfolds in step with their pace. The narrator then reaches the portrait of Clawdia Chauchat and the mood changes. He admits: ‘Hans Castorp had spied it with one quick glance as he entered the room, although it bore only a very distant resemblance to her’ (252) (‘Hans Castorp hatte es schon beim Eintreten mit raschem Blicke erspäht, obgleich es nur eine entfernte Ähnlichkeit aufwies’ (388–9)). This uses what Genette terms ‘analepsis’, referring to ‘any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment’. This jars the narrative flow. The critical description (p.35) of the objects in the house (‘two rooms furnished in banal bourgeois style’, ‘a dining room done in “antique German”’, ‘a small smoking alcove, done in “Turkish” style’ (251–2) (‘ein paar banal-bürgerlich möblierte Räume’, ‘ein “altdeutsches” Eßzimmer’, ‘ein Rauchkabinett, das “türkisch” eingerichtet war’ (388–9)) complete with sardonic quotation marks) and the emphasis on the amateurism of the paintings, had already indicated that this perspective could not possibly have been that of Behrens, and moreover was unlikely to have been that of the gentle and gentlemanly Joachim. It seemed to be the voice of Hans. But then the ‘anachrony’, whereby there exists ‘discordance between the two temporal orders of story and narrative’, confounds us. What appears to be a phenomenological description of space and time in this scene, narrating the room and temporal experience as it was experienced by Hans, in fact leaves out a crucial and pressing detail: that Hans’s observation of Clawdia’s painting dictates the movement and pace for the rest of the scene, but we only discover its presence and its effect on Hans after the fact.
The narrator continues: ‘He intentionally avoided the spot, keeping his companions pinned down in the dining room by pretending to admire a verdant view of the Sergi Valley with bluish glaciers in the background’ (252) (‘Absichtlich mied er die Stelle, hielt seine Begleiter im Eßzimmer fest, wo er einen grünen Blick ins Sergital mit bläulichen Gletschern im Hintergrunde zu bewundern vorgab’ (389)). Describing the static scene out of the window, the narrator conveys Hans’s increasing impatience and rising tension, before falling on the word ‘finally’ (‘Endlich’) with relief as they arrive at Clawdia’s portrait. In terms of the interaction of time and space in this scene, space operates as the objective setting of experience and time as an implicit subjective facet; that is, space is described in measurable detail, and temporal movement is only implicit. But in fact the room is depicted through the subjects’ movement through it and therefore it assumes a subjective gloss of its own. The pace through the house, and the contrast between the spaces of representation in the paintings and the spaces of ‘reality’ beyond the frames, dictate the speed at which time appears to go by. Although we first perceive time (like the movement around the house) as something regular and collective, it then becomes apparent—belatedly—that our temporal experience has been filtered through Hans although the narrator has not shared all of Hans’s perspective with us. Hans uses space to delay time, but actually his temporal experience is nervous and erratic as it builds to the excitement of arriving at the image of Clawdia.
The relationship between the stasis and animation of space is rather different in *Death in Venice*, where we also find instances of the ‘pictorial’ image in the wider sense of a description that could be translated into a visual art form. The protagonist, Aschenbach, is similarly pursuing his object of desire, and space reflects the convolution of time in the spiralling process of confounded eroticism. Where Hans in *The Magic Mountain* uses the ekphrastic depiction of paintings to thicken the sense of ‘real time’ in which he is situated, Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* does the reverse. On his first visit to the beach in Venice, he sees the ‘scene on the beach’ (223) (‘das Strandbild’ (535)) as a still and picturesque image. This lends the scene a timeless quality as both narrator and protagonist are within the picture unlike the intradiegetic paintings in *The Magic Mountain*. The description emphasizes bold, bright colours and explicit artistry in the image of the intradiegetic painter:

> the grey, shallow sea [...] colourful figures [...] in little boats painted red and blue [...] some in white bathing-robes [...] a complicated sandcastle [...] bedecked with flags in all the national colours [...] a young Baltic woman sitting at an easel and, amidst exclamations of exasperation, painting the sea. (223–4, adapted)

> (die graue und flache See [...] bunte[n] Gestalten [...] in kleinen rot und blau gestrichenen Booten [...] einzelne in weißen Bademänteln [...] Eine vielfältige Sandburg [...] rings mit kleinen Flaggen in den Farben aller Länder besteckt [...] ein baltisches Fräulein, das an einer Staffelei sitzend unter Ausrufen der Verzweiflung das Meer malte. (535–6))

This then straightforwardly conforms to Hagstrum’s description of the pictorial image (cited above), where a literary description could be easily transformed into a painting. Space in this image is furthermore constructed in a geometrically specific way. All the components of the scene are situated in careful relation to each other:
In front of the long row of beach huts, with their platforms like little verandahs to sit on [...] Ahead, on the moist firm sand [...] On the right, a complicated sandcastle made by children and bedecked with flags in all the national colours [...] On the left, in front of one of the huts in the row that was set at right angles to the others and to the sea, forming a boundary ending the beach on this side, a Russian family was encamped [...] he let his gaze lose itself in the sea’s wide expanse [...] But now, just as he was dreaming so deeply into the limitless depths, the horizontal line of the sea-shore was suddenly intersected by a human figure [...] it was the beautiful boy who, coming from the left, was walking past him across the sand. (223–4, my italics, adapted)

(Vor der gedehnten Zeile der Capannen, auf deren Plattformen man wie auf kleinen Veranden saß [...] Vorn auf dem feuchten und festen Sande [...] Eine vielfältige Sandburg zur Rechten, von Kindern hergestellt, war rings mit kleinen Flaggen in den Farben aller Länder besteckt [...] Links, vor einer der Hütten, die quer zu den übrigen und zum Meere standen und auf dieser Seite einen Abschluß des Strandes bildeten, kampierte eine russische Familie [...] ließ er seine Augen sich in den Weiten des Meeres verlieren [...] Wie er nun aber so tief ins Leere träumte, war plötzlich die Horizontale des Ufersaumes von einer menschlichen Gestalt überschnitten [...] da war es der schöne Knabe, der von links kommend vor ihm im Sande vorüberging. (535–7, my italics))

In terms of colour and positioning, Mann builds up a vivid picture of the ‘scene on the beach’ (‘das Strandbild’). Time for a moment is apparently paused. Even the action at this juncture is slight, almost on the spot (as if an optical illusion), and it rapidly oscillates between movement and stasis: the swimmers are counterbalanced by the ‘colourful figures lying on the sand-banks, their arms folded under their heads’ (‘bunten Gestalten, welche die Arme unter dem Kopf verschränkt auf den Sandbänken lagen’); the ‘playful movement’ (‘spielende Bewegung’) is tempered by the ‘prone repose’ (‘hingestreckte Ruhe’). Despite activity, the movement goes nowhere. This stasis, however, is disrupted as Tadzio wanders into view.
As cited above, Tadzio’s arrival is described in terms of the overall geometrical structure of the scene, as coming from the left and crossing in front of Aschenbach. But this arrival breaks up the image. The double emphasis on action, ‘coming’ (‘kommend’), ‘was walking past him’ (‘vorüberging’), with the present participle and the imperfect tense in the German original (‘kommend’, ‘vorüberging’), is then followed by a description of his movement. This moment contrasts with the beach scene in several crucial ways, which thereby also alter the subjective pace. Aschenbach dwells on the way in which Tadzio passes along the beach, focusing, not as in the preceding description on broad colours and shapes and vague actions, but instead on the physical aspects of Tadzio’s body, speed, and elegance. Although Tadzio’s movement is at a ‘leisured’ pace (‘langsamen’), it nevertheless contrasts with the stationary picture painted directly before, and therefore animates the scene. The metaphorical camera zooms in, discerning the expression on his face:

His expression darkened, his mouth became raised, a bitter grimace on one side of his lips tore a line in his cheek, and his brows were puckered in so deep a scowl that his eyes seemed to have sunk in under the pressure, malevolently and darkly glaring forth from beneath in the language of hatred. (224-5)

(Seine Stirn verfinsterte sich, sein Mund ward emporgehoben, von den Lippen nach einer Seite ging ein erbittertes Zerren, das die Wange zerriß, und seine Brauen waren so schwer gerunzelt, daß unter ihrem Druck die (p.38) Augen eingesunken schienen und böse und dunkel darunter hervor die Sprache des Hasses führten. (537))

Here, as in the depiction of the beach, Aschenbach via the narrator sees discrete features of the image in spatial terms but now he emphasizes direction rather than merely location: Tadzio’s mouth goes up, his lips are twisted to one side, his eyes appear to have sunk inwards. Even the moments of movement in the beach scene do not disrupt the stasis of the image because they are all on the spot, simultaneous, implicitly continuing actions, lacking change. The opposite is foregrounded here. Tadzio is described almost like a picture, in terms of the details of his body and expression, but his movement disrupts this. Unlike the swimmers or walkers on
the beach, Tadzio’s action is narrated as progression. The narrator notes: ‘He looked down, looked back again menacingly, then made an emphatic gesture of rejection with a shoulder as he turned his back and left his enemies behind him’ (225). (‘Er blickte zu Boden, blickte noch einmal drohend zurück, tat dann mit der Schulter eine heftig wegwerfende, sich abwendende Bewegung und ließ die Feinde im Rücken’ (537)). The double ‘looked’ (‘blickte’) aurally echoes this repetition, so that we too ‘see’ Tadzio look twice, and the connective ‘then’ (‘dann’) gives the movement temporal order. In the earlier description of the beach scene, all actions are simultaneous, occurring in a moment as Aschenbach surveys his surroundings. With Tadzio, consecutive action is foregrounded. Even though the movement is slow, the subject smaller, and the perspective closer, Tadzio’s appearance animates time on the beach. Where Aschenbach views the beach, Tadzio now becomes the viewer as he enters because emphasis is placed on his glances, their expression, direction, and the object of his gaze (the Russian family). This further separates the scene from the still image preceding it. As he views the Russian family just described by the narrator on the beach, we have a further echo creating a sense of succession—or rather we view Tadzio viewing them, adding to the construction of temporal order that places Tadzio ‘after’ the beach scene. The creation of time through space at this juncture of the novella is particularly telling. Aschenbach arrives, seeing everything through the eyes of an artist (‘from the desire for rest of a hard-working artist’ (224, adapted)) (‘aus dem Ruheverlangen des schwer arbeitenden Künstlers’ (536)) as a timeless, immeasurable space, where nothing will change; Tadzio then disrupts this, quickens and foreshortens Aschenbach’s ‘time’, taking over his power as viewer and himself controlling space and the gaze. Time speeds up not only here with Tadzio’s arrival on the beach, but across the novella as a whole—and this in temporal terms creates a mise en abyme of the overall narrative.
(p.39) Massey’s fear that the representation of space automatically involves stasis (and thereby detemporalization) appears to be realized in the extreme in the case of ‘pictorial’ or ekphrastic images. But the interaction between time and space is far more complicated than a kind of cinematic pausing of time. Both The Magic Mountain and Death in Venice create still, painterly images that—at first glance—might reflect a halt in the subjective passing of time. But in literary narratives, any kind of description—even that of static views—entails many other crucial elements that enrich the effect of space on time. An analysis of ekphrastic and ‘pictorial’ images in these two works suggests that it is not just the description of the scene that matters, but crucially also who is narrating, whose perspective is prioritized, and how this image relates to the surrounding context of what has gone before and what is yet to come. Even the specific choice of words used to paint the picture has a profound effect on the temporal value of the description. We may thus say that the appearance of stasis in temporal and spatial terms created by a slow description of a setting only forms a superficial facade; in fact, seemingly motionless images such as these do still involve the passing of time. Furthermore, they not only help to convey this passing of time but also help thicken the representation of subjective experience more generally.

Going back as moving forward
In her book For Space, Massey describes the phenomenon of ‘going back’. This, she says, exemplifies the widespread presumption that space is somehow fixed and timeless—indeed, space is generally deemed to be ‘the opposite of time’. When we ‘go back’, for example back to the family home of childhood days or to our home towns, we do so with countless emotional entanglements and expectations. As Massey says:

I’m ‘home’, and I love it, and part of what I love is my richer set of connections here, precisely its familiarity [...] the imagination of going home [...] so frequently means going ‘back’ in both space and time. Back to the old familiar things, to the way things used to be. [...] For me, without thinking then of its implications, part of the point of going home was to do things as we’d always done them.33
But for Massey this is not only a reductive way of viewing space—a destructive form of nostalgia—but also ‘enables us in our mind’s eye to rob others of their histories; we hold them still for our own purposes, while (p.40) we do the moving’. It thus removes the multiplicity of space, with the constant plethora of experiences of it and at it, viewing it instead as a static site to which we can return, somehow frozen in a time gone by. Detmers and Ostheimer, however, perpetuate the sense of contrast between the apparent dynamism of time and the stasis of space on this very topic. They question:

To what extent does the aesthetic organization of spatio-temporality reflect a constitutive imbalance of space and time? Space and time are indeed fundamentally interdependent, but not symmetrical. Rather they stand, according to Jacques Lévy, in the relationship of ‘a false symmetry’. At most they complement each other. While movement through space is reversible, the passing of time is irreversible. Time cannot be replaced, but the connection between spatial points can by contrast be traversed many times.

It is because of this tension between the possibility of moving through space multiple times as Detmers and Ostheimer suggest, and the inability to ‘reverse’ movement as Massey’s argument countermands, that makes ‘spatial returns’ in literature such a powerful tool for indicating movement forwards in time. The return to old familiar places often acts as a device for creating a sense of progression through change—precisely by indicating the very dynamism and irreversibility of space as well as time. This phenomenon operates in different ways in different narratives. Demonstrating the thickness of temporality in *Mrs Dalloway*, almost the first thing that the narrator does upon opening in medias res is to return at once—in the mind’s eye—to the space of Clarissa’s youth, where ‘she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air’ (3). *Ulysses* ends on Molly’s return in memory to ‘16 years ago’ lying ‘among the rhododendrons on Howth’ as Leopold Bloom proposes to her (731). In both instances space forms a crucial part of the sensory evocation of times past, but the characters do not—as Massey discusses—actually return to these familiar sites from the past. In Mann’s *Tonio Kröger* and Kafka’s *Home-Coming*, however, we witness actual returns home. Tonio’s (p. 41) home town, to which he travels after many years away, is a site of familiarity for the reader too, since we also witnessed his childhood days spent there. *Home-Coming* shows nothing but the threshold of the narrator’s childhood home, empty, still, and quiet, to which he has returned after an implicit gap of many years. These works present three kinds of returns, and here we will concentrate just on the ways in which actual returns in space (as in *Tonio Kröger* and *Home-Coming*) rather than their evocation in memory (as in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*) help unify multiple temporal strands. These works suggest, as Massey says, that ‘you can never simply “go back”, to home or to anywhere else. When you get “there” the place will have moved on just as you yourself will have changed.’36 And here Massey points out exactly why such scenes are so interesting for narrative ‘space-time’. In life, ‘You can’t go back in space-time’,37 but the attempt to do so in literature simultaneously recalls the past, thickens the present, and propels time forward towards the future.

Given its brevity and relative obscurity within Kafka’s oeuvre, it is worth quoting *Home-Coming* here in full.
I have returned, I have passed under the arch and am looking around. It’s my father’s old yard. The puddle in the middle. Old, useless tools, jumbled together, block the way to the attic stairs. The cat lurks on the railing. A torn piece of cloth, once wound around a stick in a game, flutters in the breeze. I have arrived. Who is going to receive me? Who is waiting behind the kitchen door? Smoke is rising from the chimney, coffee is being made for supper. Do you feel you belong, do you feel at home? I don’t know, I feel most uncertain. It is my father’s house, but each object stands coldly beside the next, as though preoccupied with its own affairs, which I have partly forgotten, partly never known. What use can I be to them, what do I mean to them, even though I am the son of my father, the old farmer. And I don’t dare knock at the kitchen door, I only listen from a distance, I only listen from a distance, standing up, in such a way that I cannot be taken by surprise as an eavesdropper. And since I am listening from a distance, I hear nothing, I hear only a faint striking of the clock, or perhaps I only think I hear it resonating from childhood days. Whatever else is going on in the kitchen is the secret of those sitting there, a secret they are keeping from me. The longer one hesitates before the door, the more estranged one becomes. What would happen if someone were to open the door now and ask me a question. Would not I myself then behave like one who wants to keep his secret.
One obvious aspect shared by *Tonio Kröger* and *Home-Coming* that demonstrates the wider ramifications for discussions of time and space is the protagonists’ common sense of alienation. In their returns to childhood homes, it is precisely a striking unfamiliarity that hits them because they are now outsiders looking in. The return in the present to spaces of the past indicates processes of subjective experience more generally. *Home-Coming* depicts a modern kind of prodigal son who is not greeted with the warm biblical welcome; the location of the narrator is symbolic, where he is simultaneously on the threshold and a little bit away from the door so that he will not appear to be an eavesdropper. Tonio’s sense of alienation from his home town in Mann’s novella is made even more extreme because he is mistaken for a convict on the run. Rather than simply the reader interpreting space at these moments, the reactions of both protagonists and the manner of description illustrate that the character interpretation of space is part of what gives it its time value. Put simply: their views of ‘home’ have changed significantly, and this implicitly indicates that a substantial amount of time has gone by since the days when these places felt like home. This resonates with Henri Lefebvre’s formative discussion of the social construction of space combined with what Klüger terms ‘timescape’ (cited above). Taking his cue from the concepts of (p.43) ‘production’ put forward by Hegel, Marx, and Engels, Lefebvre suggests that ‘social space’ is distinct in time:

(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. [...] Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others.  

He offers a subtly different view from that later posited by Massey. Although suggesting the mercurial social meaning of space in time, Lefebvre does seem to condemn ‘concrete’ space to the static role:
Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors [...] The subject experiences space as an obstacle, as a resistant ‘objectality’ at times as implacably hard as a concrete wall, being not only extremely difficult to modify in any way but also hedged about by Draconian rules prohibiting any attempt at such modification. [...] It is within space that time consumes or devours living beings, thus giving reality to sacrifice, pleasure and pain.  

He suggests that space is socially produced, while simultaneously implying that it is (just as Massey says it is not) the opposite of time. The consensus between Lefebvre, Massey, and Klüger, however, indicates the importance of the social significance of space, which changes over time. In *Tonio Kröger* and *Home-Coming*, the meaning of space depends on its social significance in time. More than that, we, as readers, see them through the subjective kaleidoscopes of the protagonists, so the depictions of these spaces imbue the narratives with temporal momentum.

*Tonio Kröger* explicitly and implicitly highlights the subjective gloss on spatial description. As Tonio arrives back in his home town, he sees ‘the narrow gables and pointed towers that send greetings from across the nearby roofs, the fair-haired, easygoing unsophisticated people with their broad yet rapid way of talking, all around him’ (‘die schmalen Giebel und spitzen Türme, die über die nächsten Dächer herübergrüßten, die blonden und lässigplumpen Menschen mit ihrer breiten und dennoch rapiden Redeweise rings um ihn her’), and he walked ‘across the bridge, with its parapets decorated by mythological statues, and a little way along the quayside’ (‘über die Brücke, an deren Geländer mythologische Statuen standen, und eine Strecke am Hafen entlang’). This description resonates with Massey’s theory of ‘going home’, where the people filling the space are part of its meaning and its familiarity: ‘I know that when I get off the train I will meet again the constant cheery back-chat which is south Lancashire.’ The mythological statues on the bridge also ironically confirm the sense of timelessness with which Tonio imbues the town. It seems, initially, that all is as it always was. But the narrator then comments in free indirect discourse (*erlebte Rede*): ‘Good God, how tiny and twisting it all seemed! Had it been like this all these years, with these narrow gabled streets, climbing so steeply and quaintly up into
the town?’ (169, adapted) (‘Großer Gott, wie winzig und winklig das Ganze erschien! Waren hier in all der Zeit die schmalen Giebelgassen so putzig steil zur Stadt emporgestiegen?’ (284)). The description of the ‘narrow gabled streets’ (‘schmalen Giebelgassen’) echoes the ‘narrow gables’ (‘schmalen Giebel’) earlier, but it is now couched within the obvious subjective perspective, thus retroactively indicating that the earlier view was also just a matter of opinion. The exclamation in the first of these sentences and the rhetorical question in the second emphasize the focalization of the description. This is very much Tonio’s view. The intertwined ‘G’ and ‘W’ alliteration in the original German (‘Großer Gott, wie winzig und winklig das Ganze erschien’—something like: ‘Good God, how tiny and twisting it all seemed’) and the poetic rhythm (with the three bacchius feet in the middle) suggestively mock the space that has become dwarfed and almost toy-like since Tonio was a child: effectively, the roles are reversed. Although the town itself is painted here as static and timeless, Tonio’s perspective has in fact significantly developed. To him, everything is now small and harmless. Space is given meaning through its subjective significance, and the change in this subjective significance—rather than in the space itself—signals temporal development.
Spatial description coloured by subjective perspective also propels time in Kafka’s *Home-Coming*, but it does so in a somewhat different way. In *Tonio Kröger*, the change in the setting is explicitly shown to reflect Tonio’s changed perspective: everything appears small because he has grown up. His emotional reception, however, implicitly marks change over time. Far from being recognized and welcomed into the arms of his home town and family house, the case of mistaken identity, which leads to (p.45) police questioning and the accusation that he is a convict, is only tacitly linked to the change in spatial significance. The opposite is true in *Home-Coming*. And part of this difference stems from the contrasting narrative contexts. Tonio’s return home is placed in contrast to his childhood days, which the reader also recalls. Kafka’s narrator, however, depicts only the ‘now’ of the story, with no past to which the reader may refer. In *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, Edmund Husserl presents a philosophical approach to temporal experience in life, which is useful too for my discussions of temporal experience in narrative. Kafka’s *Home-Coming*, however, complicates Husserl’s suggestion that much of temporal experience pertains to a sense of progression created through change over time. Husserl claims that ‘the perception of succession arises’ only because, over time, ‘the earlier sensation does not remain unchanged in consciousness, but instead is modified in an idiosyncratic way, and indeed is modified continually from one moment to the next’. 43 He suggests that '[i]n passing into fantasy, this sensation conserves the continually changing temporal character, and thus from one moment to the next the content appears increasingly pushed back’. 44 Ultimately, though ‘the sensation will now become creative in itself: in terms of content, it produces the same or almost the same fantasy invention, enriched by the temporal character’. 45 The recollection of what has gone before colours our sense of the present. This may occur in *Tonio Kröger*, but it is not how time flows in *Home-Coming* because there exists no ‘before’ with which to compare the current time.

Time is unbalanced by space from the start of *Home-Coming*. The anonymous narrator describes the setting in a cool, matter-of-fact way:
It's my father's old yard. The puddle in the middle. Old, useless tools, jumbled together, block the way to the attic stairs. The cat lurks on the railing. A torn piece of cloth, once wound around a stick in a game, flutters in the breeze. (445)


The statement of fact, ‘It’s my father’s old yard’ (‘Es ist meines Vaters alter Hof’), at once brings with it temporal ambiguity. The present tense—the pervasive tense of the story—locates the state as ‘now’. But does ‘old’ suggest ‘ancient’ or ‘former’? This ambiguity exists particularly in the original German word, ‘alter’. Are the father and family still there, while the house has fallen into disrepair? Or is the father dead, while only the house remains? Even as the narrator purportedly orientates us in time and space, he simultaneously disorientates us. In that vein too, he plays with inner and outer. The first sentence says: ‘I have returned, I have passed under the arch and am looking around.’ (‘Ich bin zurückgekehrt, ich habe den Flur durchschritten und blicke mich um.’) In the German, ‘der Flur’, translated here as ‘arch’, also has the sense of corridor or hall, suggesting that the narrator has entered, and passed through, a spatial interior. He then describes the ‘yard’. In the German, ‘Hof’ might refer to a farm in general, but the narrator goes on to see that ‘a torn piece of cloth, once wound around a stick in a game, flutters in the breeze’ (‘[e]in zerrissenes Tuch einmal im Spiel um eine Stange gewunden hebt sich im Wind’), which places us firmly outside in a yard. This precarious footing in the narrative reflects the narrator’s own feeling of being neither inside nor outside, neither straightforwardly at home nor clearly unwelcome. The space no longer represents the security and certainty it presumably once did as the paternal home. The change in perspective signals a significant change over time.

*Home-Coming* constructs in narrative what Massey terms ‘a slice [of space] through time’. This, she suggests, indicates the inextricability of time and space: ‘If you really were to take a slice through time it would be full of holes, of
disconnections, of tentative half-formed first encounters’. And that is just what we perceive here. Every object has a past, painted through an evocative use of adjectives and verbs, and each is simultaneously pregnant with expectation about what will happen next. In the seemingly static image of the yard, Kafka alternates between references to the past and tacit expectations of the future. The first sentence in this description is temporally unstable as it lacks a verb: ‘The puddle in the middle’ (‘Die Pfütze in der Mitte’). It could be in any time: a recollection of the past or a sight in the present. The second sentence uses adjectives (‘Old, useless tools’ (‘Altes unbrauchbares Gerät’)) and the participle phrase (‘jumbled together’ (‘in einander verfahren’)) to conjure the past before the verb situates it spatially back in the present (‘block the way to the attic stairs’ (‘verstellt den Weg zur Bodentreppe’)), while also evoking the likely future trajectory of the narrator, whose way is thus blocked. We then return to the present with the cat, whose stasis—as a living being rather than an inanimate object—is unavoidably only temporary: ‘The cat lurks on the railing’ (‘Die Katze lauert auf dem Geländer’). Finally, as mentioned above, the narrator sees ‘a torn piece of cloth, once wound around a stick in a game’ (‘Ein zerrissenes Tuch (p.47) einmal im Spiel um eine Stange gewunden’) (the greatest nod to nostalgia exhibited in this homecoming), recalling—through adjective and adverb—a time long since departed. And this then 'flutters in the breeze’ (‘hebt sich im Wind’), creating (as witnessed in Death in Venice) a kind of static movement on the spot and once again in the present. The narrator shifts rhythmically back and forth between implicit past and explicit present, occasionally intimating a possible future. The narrator’s own position framing this description of stillness and silence also adds to this precarious moment between past and present. He opens ‘I have returned’ (‘Ich bin zurückgekehrt’) and ends this initial description with ‘I have arrived’ (‘Ich bin angekommen’). As verbs of movement, ‘zurückkehren’ and ‘ankommen’ in the German original, that take the auxiliary ‘sein’ (to be), they also suggest states-of-being in the present (‘Ich bin’, ‘I am’ directly translated) rather than simply actions completed in the past. These ‘holes, [...] disconnections, [...] tentative half-formed first encounters’ of which Massey speaks are conjured here in the narrative construction of space in a way that temporalizes a static setting to a far more intricate degree than action alone might afford. Where action creates a sense of the relative
‘now’ of the narrative (be it past or present, or even in rare cases the future), the description of space in *Home-Coming* combines multiple times through the subtle, intertwined employment of verbs, adjectives, and participle phrases.

The precarious present conjured through space, reaching at once forwards while casting its eye simultaneously backwards, is created in rather a different manner in *Tonio Kröger*. Here the topography of light and darkness suggests the minute progression of the day, as daylight fades, night draws in, and the next morning awakens in bright sunshine. Simultaneously, these images hold symbolic value. The combination of the temporal minitiae as the day goes by with the wider symbolic reach of these descriptions creates a space with multiple temporal trajectories. The day Tonio arrives back home is ‘a dreary afternoon’ (‘ein träuber Nachmittag’), by the evening he walks ‘in the wind and the dusk’ (‘in Wind und Dämmerung’), on his way to the hotel the ‘arc-lamps […] were just coming alight’ (he says a man ‘zündete die Gaslaternen’), in his room ‘lights were brought’ (‘[m]an brachte Licht’) (Eng. 168–70; Ger. 283–6). This progression indicates the day going by in the relative present, but the ‘dusk’ (‘Dämmerung’) also brings with it resonances from the past. The narrator questions: ‘What was he really feeling? Under the ashes of his weariness something was glowing, obscurely and painfully, not flickering up into a clear flame: what was it?’ (169) (‘Wie war ihm doch? Was war das alles, was unter der Asche seiner Müdigkeit, ohne zur klaren Flamme zu werden, so dunkel und schmerzlich glomm?’ (285)). And the twilight (p.48) represents a ghostlike time between back then and now, where space is conjured like a spectre in a dream:

Occasionally during these thirteen years, when suffering from indigestion, he had dreamed of being at home again in the old, echoing house on the slanting street, and that his father was there again too, indignantly upbraiding him for his degenerate way of life; and he had always felt that this was entirely as it should be. And he could in no way distinguish his present impressions from one of these delusive and compelling fabrications of the dreaming mind during which one asks oneself whether this is fantasy or reality and is driven firmly to the latter conclusion, only to end by waking up after all… (169, adapted)
(Zuweilen in diesen dreizehn Jahren, wenn sein Magen verdorben gewesen war, hatte ihm geträumt, daß er wieder daheim sei in dem alten hallenden Haus an der schrägen Gasse, daß auch sein Vater wieder da sei und ihn hart anlasse wegen seiner entarteten Lebensführung, was er jedesmal sehr in der Ordnung gefunden hatte. Und diese Gegenwart nun unterschied sich durch nichts von einem dieser behörenden und unzerreißbaren Traumgespinste, in denen man sich fragen kann, ob dies Trug oder Wirklichkeit ist, und sich notgedrungen mit Überzeugung für das Letztere entscheidet, um dennoch am Ende zu erwachen… (284))
The next morning, the weather is painted in clear contrast to the half-light of dream, memory, and imagination of space-times gone by. Upon waking, Tonio saw that ‘his room was filled by broad daylight’ (170, adapted) (‘sah [...] sein Zimmer von hellem Tage erfüllt’ (286)). The night before, ‘Tonio Kröger stood for a while looking out of this window’ (170) (‘Tonio Kröger stand eine Weile vor diesem Fenster’), but now the narrator observes, ‘in some haste and confusion he recalled where he was, and got up to open the curtains’ (170–1, adapted) (‘Verwirrt und hastig besann er sich, wo er sei und machte sich auf, um die Vorhänge zu öffnen’ (285–6)). In the evening, he stares for a while out of the window, but the narrator does not tell us what he sees—perhaps it is too dark. In the light of day, his actions are hasty as he pulls back the curtains, and now the emphasis is placed on the view rather than the window itself: ‘The blue of the late-summer sky was already rather pale, and streaked with wisps of cloud torn by the wind; but the sun was shining over his native town’ (171, adapted) (‘Des Himmels schon ein wenig blasses Spätsommer-Blau war von dünnen, vom Wind zerrupften Wolkenfetzchen durchzogen; aber die Sonne schien über seiner Vaterstadt’ (286)). His sensory perception is enhanced, the spectres of the night are washed away, and he implicitly and symbolically faces the future. Changing daylight tells the time in the present, while also, in this instance, evoking ghost space-times and symbolically moving towards a ‘brighter’ future.

(p.49) The topographical and social familiarity that greeted Tonio the day before has also vanished with the night, suggesting—retrospectively—that it was also perhaps a dreamlike creation of his own. Where Kafka uses minute description to cast his temporal net far and wide, Mann thickens temporal experience through the additional symbolic readings of subjectively conjured spaces. In both works, the act of ‘going home’ is not about imposing some kind of stasis on familiar spaces. Instead, it enriches and expands and multiplies time, constructing a far-reaching web of subjective temporal experience.

Conclusion
The ways in which narrative depictions of space subtly further temporal momentum are manifold. In *The Magic Mountain*, space is objectified into artwork, which creates a particularly emphatic sense of stasis (more so than the spatial description of scene-setting which some literary critics have traditionally viewed as a kind of stasis). *Death in Venice* plays with another kind of spatialization by depicting spaces in a painterly fashion, through colour, geometry, stasis, and an almost mathematically geographical set of relations. *Tonio Kröger* and Kafka’s short story *Home-Coming* portray returns in space that illustrate—in very different ways—progressions in time. These texts build on nineteenth-century traditions that saw the increasing concomitance of literary depictions of time and space (as will be discussed further in Chapter 3 in the analysis of Theodor Storm), but they also form part of the modernist move towards ‘spatialization’, as the comparisons with contemporary works such as *Mrs Dalloway*, *Ulysses*, and *The Trial* illustrate. The works here provide glimpses into certain aspects of the intertwining of space and time, but in one sense this may seem reductive as an analytical approach. The point is, as Kant and Einstein and countless others have shown, that space and time are everywhere and always. By confining the analysis to particularly pronounced instances of space-time interrelationality in these few works, there is a risk of losing sight of the wider subtleties of the question.
My aim here is not to reduce the topic simply to the defensive stance (following on from Massey’s wording ‘For Space’) that spatial description helps temporalize narrative, or indeed in the words of Ohl that literature also illustrates temporalized spaces. Rather, there is a wider point at stake here: by exploring time in the light of literary descriptions that conjure senses of place, we may also come alive to subtler and more intricate aspects of human subjectivity as it is constructed in narrative. The viewing of Doctor Behrens’s paintings in The Magic Mountain is not simply about the description of art; the literary illustration of the Venice Lido is not simply a picture postcard view of a holiday location; Tonio’s return to his home town and Kafka’s narrator’s return to his family home disclose more than a sense of nostalgia. These moments create far more than senses of place or progressions in time; the descriptions of space further the intricate ripples of time in ways that open our eyes to unspoken tensions, unarticulated passions, longings, regrets, fears, hopes that otherwise remain hidden from view. This suggests that in real life beyond the fiction of literary depiction our senses of time actually indicate far more than the passing of minutes. Although, as Kant proposed, space may be seen as an external entity, while time remains internally felt, the concomitance of the two aspects of experience in literature indicates that using space as a measurement of time ironically shows that time cannot be measured at all. We may use objectified spaces as a way of grasping the ungraspable, but this symbiotically shows that space is also not just a matter of objects: the paintings in The Magic Mountain, the old, forgotten objects in Home-Coming, come alive through the infusion of significance created and held and modified over time.

The approach employed here seeks also to illustrate the ways in which particular words and sentences, with particular literary techniques, influence the sense of time passing even when the words do not appear to relate to temporality in any obvious way. This forms the most minute aspect of analysis in this book, and Chapter 2 will expand the focus to consider changing speeds over scenes in the light of social and theatrical performance.

Notes:


Thomas Mann, *Briefe*, i. 1889–1913, GkFA (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2002), p. 527.


Kant, xxxix. 24.

Space


(12) Frank, p. 225.

(13) Frank, p. 239.


(16) Massey, p. 18.


(18) Trosčianko, p. 122.

(19) Trosčianko, p. 123.

(20) Trosčianko, p. 123.

(21) Trosčianko, p. 127.

(22) Trosčianko, p. 128.

(23) Massey, p. 23.

(24) Massey, p. 23.


(26) Robillard and Jongeneel, p. ix.


(30) Genette, p. 40.
(31) Genette, p. 40.


(34) Massey, p. 122.


(36) Massey, p. 124.

(37) Massey, p. 125.


(40) Lefebvre, p. 57.


(42) Massey, p. 123.

(43) Husserl, p. 13.

(44) Husserl, p. 13.

(45) Husserl, p. 13.

