



CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Storied Spaces of Contemporary Nordic Literature

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“Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice.” This sentence by Michel de Certeau (1988, 115) states the starting point of this volume, which traces the spatial tracks and trails of contemporary Nordic literature in order to map the imaginative geographies of the region. Moving from Danish to Swedish fiction, from Finnish to Norwegian literature, *Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality* invests both in describing the specific cartographies of recent Nordic fiction and in fabricating methodological and conceptual ways of studying its spatial practices.

The citation by de Certeau refers to his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, and especially its chapter titled “Spatial Stories.” Like de Certeau and several advocates of literary spatial studies, this book also underlines the importance of spatial features relating to settings, locations, orientations, or textual spatiality. Literature is as much spatial as it is temporal. In addition to the idea of literature as a spatial story, we wish to suggest another

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notion, namely *storied spaces*. Fiction does not merely narrate spatial stories nor offer poetic spatial dimensions, it also sets spatiality into motion by stratifying spaces and places in multiple layers of meanings: spaces become literally storied—and stored—in fiction. This volume argues that the storied spaces of contemporary Nordic literature are filled with complexities which also point to the interconnectedness of space.

To explain this argument we proceed by making a story of a space outside fiction. The travel story highlighting many aspects of spatiality begins on the highway leading toward the Finnish southwestern archipelago. The road marks the beginning of the Archipelago trail, a 250-kilometer circular route starting from the city of Turku, and leading to Baltic Sea sceneries. The route is a tourist attraction targeted to lure nature enthusiasts, cyclists, and motorists. Traveling along this road one cannot miss a roadside sign announcing in Swedish “Livet är lokalt,” that is “Life is local.” Whether traveling by car, cycling, or walking, one can stop at the billboard to ponder on its surprising presence in the middle of a sparsely populated rural area with houses and farms scattered here and there besides the flat cornfields or some groups of spruce. This spatial element made of wood and steel astonishes passers-by and causes a series of affects to arise in them, varying from anger to amusement. This is an example of the ways spaces become storied and how they carry many layers of meanings that point to the affective forces of spatiality, the ways in which spaces are perceived, as well as the means by which spaces enter into a dialogue with historical, cultural, economic, and ecological perspectives. The chapters of this volume deal with all these issues.

The billboard provokes the traveler to think about the ways a cultural artifact has entered natural surroundings as if it was an example of *nature-culture*, a term coined by Donna Haraway (e.g., 2008) to denote how things and creatures categorized either as “natural” or as “cultural” are indeed intertwined and mingled. The eyes of the traveler sharpen on the white letters announcing the “locality of life”; the text resembles handwritten text which is resting on the red background. Then the eyes move to the other side of the sign and focus on the yellow background with the letters ÅU, which make the traveler realize that the billboard is actually an advertisement for *Åbo Underrättelser* (Åbo News), the oldest Finnish newspaper still in print since its first issue dating back to January 3, 1824. This realization combines a historical layer to capitalist undertones; the logics and strategies of late modern capitalist consumer culture have entered the Finnish countryside through the backdoor with this billboard

that refers both to harmonious lifestyles and to a plea to subscribe to the newspaper and pay for more information about local life. Advertising a local Swedish-language newspaper in this setting is a sign of the logics of capitalist marketing strategies to profit from ever-increasing environmental awareness. After all, the tourists, who have traveled here to enjoy the unique natural environment of the archipelago, might be disturbed by the billboard, while the inhabitants of the area either subscribe to the newspaper or are at least aware of its existence. To summarize, this single spatial element, the billboard and its surrounding milieu, bring together the emblematic features of recent Nordic literature in terms of spatiality: the stratification of historical layers with contemporary issues, such as consumer capitalism and ecological thinking, the relationships between rurality and urbanity, nature and culture, and various cognitive and affective stances toward them.

Bertrand Westphal argues in his *Geocriticism* that the new space-time is characterized by chaos and describes postmodern space as “labyrinthine” (Westphal 2011, 2). He even argues that some of the salient features of how spatiality was perceived during the time before the Renaissance have returned. Namely, “the coherence of a world under the sign of nonexclusion and coexistence of all things” is reappearing (Westphal 2011, 2). Westphal’s observation can be linked to the billboard and its slogan, “Life is local.” As the billboard raises so many different and ambivalent affects, it also relates to Westphal’s idea of postmodern space being chaotic or labyrinthine. The slogan is based on an apprehension of the authenticity and “realness” of both the local and life, ideas which have been put under erasure in the postmodern condition. But instead of arguing that all our space-times are chaotic, Westphal’s apprehension needs to be nuanced and developed. For example, we are surrounded by various spatialities (both real and fictional) of which some are chaotic, some labyrinthine, some neither the former nor the latter. To be characterized as chaotic differs from being labyrinthine. And surely, the “protomodern” features of the contemporary must, despite similarities, be in a profound sense different from those of earlier times. This leaves us, then, with “the coexistence of all things.” Rather than stating that the spatiality of the postmodern is chaotic or labyrinthine, we argue that one has to start by asking “who or what is interconnected with what or with whom” (Morton 2010, 15). We might even need to track what is *not* interconnected to who or what. And “all things” means literarily all things: not only humans, but also non-humans, objects, animals, the living, and non-living. In order to describe

the new space-time of contemporary Nordic literature, we find Westphal's attribute of "the labyrinthine" too precise, and "chaotic" too fuzzy to be useful. *Polytopy*, "space understood in its plurality" (Westphal 2011, 43), meets the requirements of both coherence and heterogeneity needed to grasp both ancient and contemporary space-time better.

As it is, the billboard—a plural spatial form in itself—is situated in the middle of a border zone, in between urban areas and the Finnish countryside. The placement of the billboard tells the story of *in-betweenness*, of being situated in between different spaces. Eric Prieto (2012) has argued that *entre-deux*, "in-between," is typical of postmodern literary spatiality, referring to the fact that late modern literature seems to move between spaces or situate itself at their borders. The chapters of this volume deal with works of literature, which also highlight this fact by sometimes covering embedded spaces. Such spaces are both highly public and deeply personal at the same time, such as city streets, or an island which is nevertheless connected to the mainland by means of bridges. Indeed, it could even be argued that the whole notion of "the Nordic," and thus the topic of this volume, Nordic literature, refers to a state of in-betweenness.

In a recent volume of *Nordic Literature* (2017), Steven P. Sondrup and Mark B. Sandberg deliver a highly instructive overview of how the expressions "Norden," "the North," and "the Nordic" have been used historically (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 1–18). Sondrup and Sandberg point out that first of all "the North" and "the Nordic" are geographical and cultural terms, referring both to a region situated in the high Northern latitudes and to the cultural imagination. While "Scandinavia" has been the term used mainly by people outside the area to designate it, "North" has been the term used within the region (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 7–8). "Norden," the North, is an area consisting of nations, languages, historical developments, and geographical and topographical features. The areas have been economically, socially, politically, linguistically, and culturally in long-lasting contact with each other. This has resulted in an underlying sense of unity, despite the fact that the outer and inner borders of the North have been in flux for centuries. Secondly, the North has been seen as the topographic and climatic opposite of the South, and also a certain cultural evaluation in terms of liminality has historically been attached to the region. When perceived from a Central European perspective, the North has been identified "as 'on the edge of Europe' and only partially implicated in broader European cultural norms" (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 9).¹ Today, the "Nordic"

designates language communities and cultural practices that might even occur outside the geographic region, but which at least partly go back to shared experiences of place. Sondrup and Sandberg conclude that the North and the Nordic stand for an imaginary construction, largely created outside the region, but they also stand for regional cooperation created, for example, by the statutes of the Nordic Council (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 10–11).

We argue that the distinct *mixture* of global and local spatial relations in a certain territory, and the *in-betweenness* of the region, is what constitutes Nordic literature. The focus on Nordic contemporary authors connects literary works to a certain geographical area and argues that authors approach the problematics of spatiality from a specific location on earth. This has naturally been the argument of national literatures, which have frequently made a connection between a district/territory, language, population, and culture. Here Doreen Massey's (see e.g., Massey 1992, 2005) views, according to which space is produced by simultaneous existence and mutual relations, offer a useful point of departure in order to discuss and define Nordic literature in a manner that goes beyond nationalisms but nevertheless is able to take into account its territorial specificity. "It is not that the interrelations between objects occur *in* space and time; it is these relationships themselves which *create/define* space and time," she writes (Massey 1992, 79). Thus, we maintain that the uniqueness of contemporary Nordic literature is the result of its special location in a complicated global network of relations that creates space and spatiality—the Nordic islands (Iceland, Faroe Islands, and Greenland) form a special case of spatiality inside the Nordic region, and therefore they are not included in our book. While Sondrup and Sandberg's *Nordic Literature* aims to cover all the literatures of the North, namely Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland as well as Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland, our volume includes works of literature from an area which we call *the continental North*.²

Literature, whether we focus on the text itself, the reader's response to it, or the relation between the text and the reader, is thoroughly bound up in a network of relations with space (Tally 2017, 1). Speaking generally, contemporary Nordic literature poses the question of "what does it mean to be Nordic?" It can also be rephrased as a question that refers to locality—to be or not to be local or global or something in-between them is a constant theme in recent Nordic literature. The argument of the billboard, "Life is local," seems at least questionable in connection to contemporary

Nordic literature, which asks “How local is living in the Nordic countries?” or “How does one lead a local life in a contemporary situation which is penetrated by global worries, such as climate change and economic and sexual inequality?” Whether the claim of the advertisement still holds true or not, it is an example of affective usage of spatial forms; the slogan appears as a (nostalgic) plea in favor of local communities, thus raising up affects of authenticity actualized by the harmony of the local.

However, literature, especially popular fiction, also utilizes this nostalgic need for harmonious localities. Scandinavian crime fiction written in the twenty-first century, often referred to as Nordic Noir, has even been said to carry “neo-romantic tendencies.” Certainly, at least some recent Swedish crime fiction focuses on nature and cultural heritage and places murders and crimes in rural local communities depicted as idyllic regions (Bergman 2011, 41). According to Kerstin Bergman (2014, 103), almost all traces of globalization are absent from these depictions. Andrew Nestingen (2008, 17) has also noticed the “melodramatic” drive in Nordic Noir. However, Nestingen connects this melodrama to political and national discourse by taking up Henning Mankell’s famous character Kurt Wallander and his repeated question “What is happening in Sweden?” Writing about the locations of Nordic Noir, K.T. Hansen and A. M. Waade (2017b, 110–11) argue that the romanticization of the local setting in Scandinavian crime fiction may be an idyllic response to the confidence that such a place may once have existed, but at the same time the rhetorics of such production of place may also refer to local self-references and identity.

Hansen and Waade, moreover, acknowledge that present-day Nordic Noir constantly negotiates with real places, and shows a “straightforward and somewhat unproblematic relationship between fictional and actual places as locations,” meaning the places where the Nordic Noir TV-productions take place (Hansen and Waade 2017a, 10). They have noticed that despite postmodern concerns about the blurring of the boundary between fictional and alleged real worlds, which postmodernist literature tackles, real places do not pose any real epistemological questions concerning the ontological status of place and location in Nordic Noir.

The discussions over literature’s relation to postmodernism and reality do not take place only within Nordic Noir but have also been addressed in the wider context of contemporary Nordic literature. In the introduction to *Millennium: Nye retninger i nordisk litteratur* (2013; “Millennium: New Directions in Nordic Literature”) Mads Bunch suggests that one common feature in contemporary literature of the Nordic countries is that

it strives to come to terms with the postmodernism of the 1980s and 1990s. This has resulted in a strong current of realism turning toward the surrounding world, and focusing on the interaction between individuals and their environment and with other people in specific historical contexts. The rapid development of political and economic globalization, new communication media, and the gradual dismantling of the welfare state, which was replaced by a more individualized society focused on competition, have also given rise to a growing interest in the private and biographical, namely autofiction (as in Karl Ove Knausgård's work), and other forms of self-representation in Nordic literature. Even here Bunch finds a growing interest in the real and reality due to the new media like the internet, reality TV, Facebook, and so on, which manipulate reality in various ways (Bunch 2013, 16–18). Bunch concludes that the developments in contemporary Nordic literature show affinities with global literary tendencies, and note that many more features than those he has taken up may be found.

The chapters of this volume concentrate on fiction from the 1990s to the present, and they discuss prose fiction and poetry as well as children's picture books. Scandinavian crime fiction or other popular genres, such as chick-lit or speculative fiction, are not discussed in this volume. True, all of them are extremely spatial literary genres—but such volumes as *Locating Nordic Noir* (2017) have already looked at the genre in terms of spatiality and situated Scandinavian crime fiction within its national and transnational connections. *Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality* aims at widening the understanding of Nordic literature by introducing new authorships outside the internationally canonized authors dating back to past centuries, such as Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Selma Lagerlöf, Ludvig Holberg, and Karen Blixen. Because we wish to present new authors and works of literature, our volume does not include chapters on recent internationally appraised authors, such as Knausgård and his *Min kamp* series (*My Struggle*), or winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature, like Tomas Tranströmer. We have lately noticed an enhanced interest in Nordic literature. The authors and works discussed in this volume are all widely read in their home countries and many of these works have been translated into other Nordic languages, although not in all cases into English. Moreover, we consider that our book develops the perspectives put forward in earlier publications by scrutinizing literature that has not yet been thoroughly analyzed and by putting forth various aspects of spatial theory into use in the analyses. Our emphasis on late modernity and its impact on Nordic literature offers a perspective which has not yet been studied as widely as it is in our volume.

The chapters focus on works by Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish authors who elaborate themes and motifs that depict the cracks in the Nordic welfare state and the alleged homogenized social nature of this particular geographical area. Social criticism is a prevailing theme in Nordic literatures, but what makes this volume special is that this criticism against the welfare state and different power hierarchies is expressed in spatial terms. The chapters cover various narrative worlds and spaces from urban surroundings to parks and forests, from streets to personal homes, from textual spaces to spatial thematics—all of these spatial features are studied in relation to the problematics of late modernity. The chapters show that in late modern Nordic literature life appears both as local and as connected to global imaginative geographies.

Seen from outside, the “North” is mainly connected to phenomena such as Nordic Noir, Scandinavian-style design, or a politics consisting of social equality, welfare state economics, and international peacekeeping (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 11). In this volume we show how taking a closer look at the spatialities in contemporary Nordic literature provokes a much more complex picture of the constructions of the North.³ At the same time, this collection opens up new and important perspectives on spatialities and new storied spaces in all their multi-layered characters.

NORDIC LITERATURE AND/AFTER THE SPATIAL TURN

Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality explores how the dynamic relationships between spatiality and literature are expressed in contemporary Nordic literature. The volume elaborates on the ways spaces become stories. As important as it is to scrutinize what kinds of spaces and forms of spatiality Nordic authors create in their works of literature, it is equally important to study what kinds of social, cultural, geographical, and economic relations they provide, in which ways and what surroundings they are interconnected, or how they imagine their position in relation to the surrounding world. What is more, they also imagine a North-to-come in terms of space, since the analyzed fiction does not merely depict the spaces of our real world but they also imagine the spaces and tell the stories of fictional locations.

Some recent publications approach literary spatiality in a similar manner as we do in this volume. One example of this is the above-mentioned *Nordic Literature: A Comparative History*, vol. I: *Spatial Nodes* (2017). Being a literary history in three parts, it examines the region’s shared

processes of literary production and communication, and argues for the power of “region” as an explanatory space. The first volume of *Nordic Literature* offers a historical overview of spatiality within Nordic literatures. In their introduction, Dan Ringgaard and Thomas A. DuBois take Doreen Massey’s views on place as condensations of space as their point of departure in their discussion of the characteristics of a global, “post-national concept of place.” Being the opposite of a stable home, place is a space transected by global flows rather than a shared history and shared memories. Thus, it needs to be defined horizontally, rather than vertically (Ringgaard and DuBois 2017, 25). After this, Ringgaard and DuBois turn to the basic premise of the volume, that of the *node*, stating that

[T]he nodal principle employed throughout this volume of literary history meshes well with this horizontal and global concept of place. Place itself becomes a node, a thickening of space created by what ever passes through it, but also, one must imagine, by a power of the place to attract people, money, goods, and so forth. (Ringgaard and DuBois 2017, 26)

Despite some similarities, our book differs from *Spatial Nodes* on specific points. First, our focus is on recent literature, and on the effects of late modernity on contemporary literature, while *Spatial Nodes* puts more emphasis on a historical perspective. Second, *Spatial Nodes* combines the concept of “place” with the term “node,” defined as “important clusters in the practice of spatial representation, imaginative figural tropes of heightened significance, or resonant temporal turning points” (Sondrup and Sandberg 2017, 5). For Massey, space and place are inseparable, and created in mutual interaction (Massey 2005, 184, 194). Thus, we do not find the term “node” necessary for analysis of the spatial dimension of (contemporary) Nordic literature. Also, we maintain that the current theories of space and spatiality used in this volume are as such both complex and useful.

The aim of *Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality* is to perceive the North as a special thickening of space and to regard “the region as something that not only grows from its own past, but also constantly recycles the surrounding world” (Ringgaard and DuBois 2017, 26). We expand the aspects offered in *Spatial Nodes* in many ways. Our volume includes authors, works, and spaces that are not analyzed in that volume, and we develop and enrich many of the approaches on spatiality

offered in it. Our book also covers a wider-ranging spectrum of spatial theories than *Spatial Nodes*, centering around the concept of “node.” And finally, some of our chapters broaden the definition of the interconnectedness that creates space and spatiality. In *For Space* (2005) Massey defines space as the “sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity,” of “co-existing heterogeneity” inherently connected to social and political issues; space, geography, and identity, are co-constitutive (Massey 2005, 10). Despite the emphasis on humans and social issues, her views open up various possible other interrelations (Massey 2005, 15, 195).

Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality is strongly connected to the so-called spatial turn of cultural and literary studies. Some 50 years ago Michel Foucault gave a lecture (published as “Of Other Spaces”), in which he said, “[t]he 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 near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (Foucault 1986, 22). The “epoch of space” Foucault describes in this chapter is connected to the emergence of postmodernism, understood both as an aesthetic movement and sensibility in art, literature, and architecture, and as a historical period—a new way of understanding human existence and the surrounding world. As Robert T. Tally, Jr. (2017, 2; 2013, 11–17) has observed, postmodern philosophers and geographers, such as Henri Lefebvre, Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Fredric Jameson, David Harvey, and Edward Soja, among others, contrasted the late twentieth century to the nineteenth and early twentieth century and named the postmodern era a “reassertion of space.” Globalization, postcolonialism, and more advanced information technologies pushed space and spatiality to the foreground, whereas earlier critical theory was obsessed with matters of time and left space and geography in the background.

This era of increasing interest in space has been named “the spatial turn.” Spatiality has also become a major concern in the fields of literary and cultural studies, with growing numbers of publications devoted to literary geographies, *geoaesthetics* and *geopoetics*. It has given birth to new ways of describing and understanding space, including a growing awareness of space and its complexity, and the problems attached to it: the globe has become crowded and threatened (Tygstrup 2015, 303). Although no exact date can be given to the beginning of the spatial turn, it is strongly linked to various notions and theories of the postmodern. Today, some 30–40 years after the beginning of the spatial turn, we are

living in the midst of an era in which some concerns and innovations of postmodern thinking have lost their novelty but are nonetheless continuing and developing into new dimensions and developments in the realm of critical theory.

Although this book insists on putting space and spatiality to the fore, it also suggests that “the spatial turn” is connected to other “turns” in critical theory, such as “the material turn” and “the affective turn,” which date back to the mid-1990s. Notions of (new) materialisms no longer push materiality to the margins; instead of privileging immaterial things, such as language, consciousness, subjectivity, agency, mind, and soul, (new) materialisms focus on thinking about immaterial and material features side-by-side or even foregrounding materiality rather than idealities. Materiality is widely understood as the material artifacts and natural materials that populate our environments, and as socioeconomic structures producing and reproducing our everyday lives (see Coole and Frost 2010, 1–5). The material turn also means stepping away from human-centered thinking; spaces are important and meaningful in themselves without the presence of a human subject. Spaces, of course, are meaningful for human subjects but they are also significant for non-human beings, such as animals. We also argue that spaces are always-already affective and emotional, since “affect marks a body’s *belonging* to a world of encounters,” as Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (2010, 2) have written. Bodies, whether human or non-human entities, are affected by their situatedness in space and vice versa. This reciprocal interaction between spaces and bodies gives birth to a sense of space. Many studies on literary spatiality concentrate on human perspectives, but our volume opens up an understanding of the interconnectedness of spatiality to include non-humans.

The theoretical, aesthetic, technological, economic, social, and political developments that have been seen as the reasons for the spatial turn continue to transform the world with both speed and intensity. Therefore, some scholars already argue for a time “after the spatial turn,” and for a “planetary turn.” Critical of theories of globalization that perceive the *globe* in terms of a financial-technocratic system, a turn toward the *planet* as world-ecology is suggested (Elias and Moraru 2015, xvi). In this re-orientation, the planet as a living organism and a shared ecology becomes the conceptual and political dimension in which twenty-first-century writers picture themselves and their work. Moreover, an emphasis on ethical questions and responsibility comes to the fore (Elias and Moraru 2015, xii). Consequently, also the position of humans in space has changed—

humans are no longer in the center, and they exist on the same level as all other living and non-living things they are interconnected to, as part of a shared ecology, and with an ethical responsibility for the planet and all its elements. Various strivings to map spatialities in their wider connections, for example, with ecological issues, are increasingly actualized in recent literature. This also means that contemporary literature is problematizing the place of human beings in the world.

In the chapters of this book the contributors discuss literature using several notions of space. These notions and theoreticians can be linked to the spatial turn, but many of them also have connections to the material and affective turns. Most theories and notions of spatiality are proposed by non-literary scholars, but the chapters adapt them to adjust to the ways of literary world-making and literary geographies. Despite the recent rapid development of spatial studies, certain central theoretical approaches and scholars have maintained their position of importance in the field. That is also obvious when one approaches the chapters in our collection.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS VOLUME

As already mentioned, in the chapters of *Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality* space does not act as a background or a setting for story lines developed in time frames. Instead, the main focus of the chapters lies on spatialities. The volume is divided into four sections according to the main theme of the chapters. The titles of the four parts begin with questions, since we see spatiality as an ongoing conceptual and theoretical process without final solutions or answers.

Rephrasing Franco Moretti (2000, 55), we argue that spatiality is not an object; it is a problem or an open question. Part I of the volume asks “Whose Place Is This Anyway? On the Social Uses of Space and Power.” This section concentrates on the interconnectedness between spaces and different formations of social power, which take place both in private and public spaces. The main focus lies on characters who belong to such social groups which do not possess power over spaces they inhabit. The chapters ask the following questions: Who has command over the depicted spaces? How is it possible to use—or abuse—these spaces? Is it possible to dream new kinds of socially shared spaces? What about dystopic spaces? How do such spaces, which are planned to be socially safe or progressive, function in contemporary literature? The chapters also manifest the layered structure of spatial formations by mapping the routes and paths the characters move along.

Elisabeth Friis in Chap. 2 proposes a geocritical reading of a rather inconspicuous place in Copenhagen in Denmark, *Amager Common*, which nonetheless stands out by virtue of its strikingly insistent appearance in Danish literature over the past three years. Following Bertrand Westphal, Friis regards *Amager Common* as a place whose specificity engenders particular movements within the literature that interacts with it. Westphal's eclectic and interdisciplinary geocriticism forms the theoretical basis of Friis's chapter, and Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophy of spatial formations is combined with the political-theoretical discussion of both the historical and present importance of *The Commons* during the era of (late) capitalist modernity. Friis shows how this special environment provides the stuff of dreams for other communities and other ways of being in the world than the one that is offered to us by late capitalism.

Chapter 3 by Cristine Sarrimo studies a Swedish novel *Still* (2008) by Hassan Loo Sattarvandi, which portrays a Million Housing programme area called Hagalund located North of the city center of the Swedish capital Stockholm. The novel is mostly narrated in the present tense, which shows that spatiality is always connected to the experiences of time; in Sattarvandi's novel loss of memory, history as well as the future shape spatial formations. In order to map the novel's dystopian space, Sarrimo analyzes Sattarvandi's construction of Hagalund using a Westphalian theoretical framework, Eric Prieto's study on the postmodern poetics of place, and Fredric Jameson's concept of *cognitive mapping*. Space is viewed as an accumulation of different historical strata which necessitates a multi-focal approach. Sarrimo shows how the sensorial perceptions of place in Sattarvandi's novel consist of the auditive, olfactory, and tactile, and not just the visual. Literature and other art forms can thus contribute to diversifying our understanding of sensorial perceptions of space.

One of the most common narrative patterns in children's literature begins with the protagonist leaving home for an adventure and ends with homecoming. Home is a familiar, secure, and private space in contrast to the often more open public or semi-public spaces in which various adventures take place. In Chap. 4, Kristina Hermansson explores the written and visual constructions of characters and social relationships in relation to space in a selection of contemporary picture books published in Sweden and Finland between 2006 and 2014. What characterizes the interplay between space and social relations in these works? How is the basic home-away-home pattern negotiated and renegotiated? In her analysis, Hermansson primarily applies Doreen Massey's theories of space and place, especially her concept of *throwntogetherness*.

Part II locates emotions and feelings by asking “Where Do You Feel?” The subtitle of this section, “Spaces, Emotions, and Technology” refers to the impact of technology on human emotions and experiences of space and spatiality during the era of late modern capitalism. The emotions and “realities” of human beings are constructed in relation to their physical and material surroundings, their immediate milieus, which have in profound ways been transformed by economic and technological changes. Literature offers a particular form of knowledge about the new manifestations of subjectivity and spatiality effectuated by technological developments; these developments also mold our perceptions of spatial existence in the world, and our interconnectedness to other people and the world as a whole. The novels and poems studied in the chapters of this section open new views on how Nordic authors reflect upon late modern developments. Above all, they pose the questions of how emotions and space are linked, what is the impact of the changes that have taken place on people living in the Nordic countries. The chapters also show the role of new technologies in the dismantling of the Nordic welfare states and the myth of social equality.

The smartphone, arguably the most important of various technological devices restructuring not only the experience of space and time in late modernity but also emotions, is the focus of Chap. 5 by Christian Refsum. By taking Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *dispositif* as his point of departure, Refsum relates smartphones to the processes of subjectification and desubjectification which take place in the interaction (or conflict) between “living beings” and various apparatuses. All the three novels analyzed, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian, deal with the relationship between geographical and mental distance in modern relationships and in all of them the mobile phone plays an important role in negotiating distance. Refsum argues that in a Nordic culture with a high degree of sexual equality, several female writers describe a situation of longing and waiting that has deep roots in the Western male discourses of love. In addition, the works discuss how the temporality of love and longing changes as the conditions of communication and negotiations on space change.

In Chap. 6 “Never Give Up Hopelessness!?” Anna Helle analyzes contemporary Finnish experimental poetry that examines twenty-first-century issues, such as finance capitalism, social problems, and unsatisfactory subject positions. Moreover, the poems express, describe, and arouse different kinds of emotions, closely related to how it feels to live in today’s Finland. Helle suggests that the poems convey a kind of “politics

of emotion,” by which she means the ways in which things are made political through emotions; in other words Helle studies various technologies of the self in Finnish experimental poetry. Spatiality in this chapter does refer not only to late modern Finland as a space and cultural area but also to Finnish literature (poetry, to be more precise) as a public space in which emotional and potentially political topics are experienced and dealt with. Helle finds affinities between Finnish experimental poetry and American postmodern poetry and for example, New Sentence. Applying the insights of Fredric Jameson on the characteristic features of postmodern culture, and Raymond Williams’s concept of *the structure of feeling*, Helle argues that innovative and experimental ways of using (found) language and found material (e.g. bank notes) open up a playful space where language is used for both poetic and political purposes.

Part III poses the question of “Which Language Do You Use?” with the subtitle “Spaces of Language and Text.” This section deals with the interconnections between text, language, and space. The chapters of this section focus on the specific material dimensions of the spatiality of a text, that is textual spatiality on the one hand, and on the ways in which language shapes our understanding of spatialities on the other. Traditionally, monolingualism has been assigned to characterize, or even unite, certain geographical territories and their inhabitants; this might still hold true, but the chapters also take up questions of multilingualism as a mode of building postmodern literary spatialities. The section elaborates on genre-specific forms of spatiality either by concentrating on a particular genre or by comparing different genres. In this way, the material nature of literary spatialities is foregrounded in the chapters of this section.

Part III opens with Chap. 7 by Hadle Oftedal Andersen on the Norwegian author Øyvind Rimbereid’s poetry and the tradition of topographic verse. Andersen analyzes Rimbereid’s two long poems, *Solaris korrigert* (2004; “Solaris Corrected”) and *Jimmen* (2008), by linking them to the tradition of topographic verse predating romanticism, to shed light on the specific ways in which the concept of space is unveiled in the poems. He argues that if we are to understand how space is perceived in early literature, we must bear in mind that it is written before phenomenology and before the romantic or Kantian understanding of the sublime. Since topographic verse is older than romanticism, it has no concept of a hypersensitive poetic subjectivity, and hence no interest in describing the reception of sensory data of chosen surroundings, or the emotional response to these either. By pouring present day-Stavanger into the old

tradition of topographic verse, in ways which make the presence of the latter clear, Rimbereid makes us see how a specific position in time and space affects us, and how we in turn affect the ways this space is understood.

Chapter 8 investigates the phenomenon of textual spatiality—the conceptual, material-medial, and typographical dimension—in selected works of Swedish author Elisabeth Rynell and her blank-space technique. Antje Wischmann studies the positioning of material text, blank spaces, and the space of response, and how these spatial entities relate to each other, and finally, asks how meaning is generated by these relational processes. While the textual spatiality of poetry differs from that of prose, Rynell’s hybrid prose-poetical work is an instructive exception, she argues. Using the concepts *Schriftraum*, *text-as-building*, and the *transactive space of reader response* from narratology and reader-response criticism, Wischmann shows how Rynell’s treatment of embodied text and layout, and her systematic switching between points of view, stimulate readers’ awareness of both composition and metanarrative. Following the specific features of textual spatiality and its spatiotemporal boundaries, Wischmann scrutinizes the texts’ “typographical landscape.”

In Chap. 9, Julia Tidigs explores the questions of multilingualism, translation, and spatiality in Finland-Swedish author Monika Fagerholm’s novel *The American Girl* (2004/2009), a novel consisting of borrowed and translated phrases, or recycled language. At a glance, it may seem that questions of language and translation are absent in spatially oriented literary studies. In literary multilingualism studies, however, the functions of multilingualism in the literary construction of different geographic spaces (and their inhabitants) have been investigated. These studies have shown that just as conceptions of space are historically situated, the manner in which language has been conceptualized in spatial terms as well as in relation to geographical places has altered historically. Using the perspectives offered by Bertrand Westphal, Jan Blommaert, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, Tidigs contrasts the rather stationary conception of linguistic and emotional bindings with a conception of language that puts the focus on movement and the temporal instability of spatio-linguistic constellations. Tidigs argues that in its insistence on mobility and translation, Fagerholm’s novel is distinctly late modern. The transatlantic language of the novel is on the move between people and spaces, not locked in a relationship to any certain space or to the body of any particular speaker.

Part IV asks “Is This a Possible Space?” and focuses on the intensive forces of literature to imagine and create new spaces, even future spaces. In the chapters of this section the potentialities of space are studied in connection

with literary genres and modes, which situate themselves in future times or which include a future-oriented dimension in their narration; in this way utopian and dystopian spatialities come to the fore. All the works of literature, both prose and poetry, of this section also stress the interconnectedness of time and space by underlining that spatial formations are always taking shape at a specific point in time and thus acquire features characteristic of their time. The chapters discuss both urban spaces and *naturecultural* spaces; here also the relationships between humans, non-humans (such as artifacts and animals), and spaces as affective encounters are studied. The chapters of this section ask whether it is possible for literature to imagine new spatial encounters that might lead to another kind of future in the realm of our everyday lives. Imagining new geographies is at the same time highly critical of the present situation.

Lieven Ameel in Chap. 10 studies Finnish author Mikko Rimminen, and proposes a new reading of his early prose from the perspective of the texts' apocalyptic undercurrents. The focus is on how the relationship between the fictional city and its referential counterpart, Helsinki, is foregrounded in the novel as well as undermined in a way that destabilizes the ontological status of the storyworlds in question. Using Brian McHale's *flickering effect* and Bertrand Westphal's *heterotopic interference* as his key concepts, and Gilles Deleuze's *fold* as a heuristic concept to describe how the ontological instability of postmodern storyworlds is shaped, Ameel explores the literary space and storyworld of the novel. An examination of Rimminen's prose texts confirms the notion proposed by Brian McHale that postmodern literature displays a conspicuous ontological instability: what at first appears to be a recognizable storyworld in the texts, with a firm referential relationship to actual Helsinki, the capital of Finland, turns out to be increasingly undermined by intimations of ontological disturbances.

Chapter 11 by Kaisa Kurikka focuses on the ways the forest is depicted in three contemporary Finland-Swedish novels by Kaj Korkea-Aho, Johanna Holmström, and Henrika Ringbom. All the Nordic countries share the notion of the forest as an important part of defining their cultural identities; the forest is a significant space for being alone in nature. Kurikka, however, approaches the forest as a potential space where human and non-human beings, namely a wolf and a fictional monster, face each other in affective encounters. The three novels studied in this chapter all bring an "other-worldly" element to the Finnish forest, thus making it a space for *the uncanny*. The uncanny forests of the novels also enable various transformations or becomings in which the contours of human and non-human beings blur into one another; the forest itself becomes deterritorialized while offering material

creatures chances of transformation. By drawing on the geophilosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Kurikka pays attention to the ways literature fabulates new kinds of forests.

The Finland-Swedish author Monika Fagerholm has above all been seen as a portrayer of girlhood, gender, language, and agency. In Chap. 12 by Hanna Lahdenperä, Fagerholm is, however, studied as a writer of spatiality who frequently layers real geographical spaces and their fictional counterparts in intricate ways. Using the perspectives offered by Eric Prieto, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Bertrand Westphal, Lahdenperä offers a careful examination of space as a mental construct and a form of knowledge in Fagerholm's prose. Lahdenperä shows how Fagerholm's characters go further than merely being in or inhabiting a place; they take possession of a place and use it for their own purposes. The novels, she argues, create mental spatialities through naming and renaming, spatialities that combine the characteristics of both space and place, as well as defy the constraints of physical and geographical spaces and places.

In the last chapter (Chap. 13) of the book, Kristina Malmio studies a collection of poetry by Finland-Swedish author Ralf Andtbacka, a volume characterized by spatial excess on every level. *Wunderkammer* (2008) takes place in flea markets, where objects from various parts of the world gather, in similar ways as catalogues and lists of words, objects, and phenomena pile up in the poems. Taking her points of departure from art history, post-modern spatiality, and ecological thought, Malmio shows how the cabinet of curiosities and the Chinese box structure—two traditional, limited forms of spatiality prevalent in Andtbacka's collection—not only construct a postmodern space, but also envisage a global imaginative geography. By drawing parallels between Andtbacka's portrayal of spatiality, and *the mesh*—a concept put forward by Timothy Morton (2010)—she claims that *Wunderkammer* portrays the interconnectedness of all humans and non-humans throughout the globe and, finally, approaches the planetary turn.

The chapters of *Contemporary Nordic Literature and Spatiality* constitute a rich collection of conceptual and methodological approaches to the storied spaces of the continental North. Contemporary literature of the region appears to take stances toward many themes and problematics on a global, or rather a planetary scale. The stories, whether novels, poems, or picturebooks, of the locality of life in the Nordic countries, however, maintain an atmosphere of specificity born from the locations and depicted spaces of the storyworlds and poetic contexts.

NOTES

1. Postcolonial theories and the ways in which postcolonial theories have problematized national literary history writing have inspired studies in which earlier national perspectives and methodological nationalism have been put under scrutiny. Nevertheless, postcolonial theories have also been used to question the peripherality of the North. See, for example, *Rethinking National Literatures and the Literary Canon in Scandinavia* (eds. Ann-Sofie Lönngrén, Heidi Grönstrand, Dag Heede, and Anne Heith, 2015), which studies the role of literature in the construction of national identities and literary canons in the various Nordic literatures. “Nordic” includes literatures from Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Sami people, and the Faroe Islands, and the timespan varies from old to contemporary with an overall emphasis on historical perspectives. Thus, the spatialities of late modernity and the interaction between literature, society, and late modernity are not the main focus. See also Oxfeldt 2012.
2. While *Nordic Literature* focuses on the area surrounding the Baltic Sea, *Centring on the Peripheries: Studies in Scandinavian, Scottish, Gaelic and Greenlandic Literature* (ed. Bjarne Thorup Thomsen, 2007) offers another view on the topic. Focusing on the North Sea, it studies how Scandinavian and Scottish literatures deal with islands, borderlands, and landscapes of the North and Baltic Seas. By focusing on community, history, and identity, and using mainly postcolonial and postnational theories, it aims to deconstruct a center-periphery dichotomy prevalent in the Nordic region. The study covers a large geographical area, and therefore, the analyses of Nordic literature become somewhat scattered. Also, the ways in which the chapters apprehend space go back to an earlier phase in spatial studies.
3. *New Dimensions of Diversity in Nordic Culture and Society* (eds. Jenny Björklund and Ursula Lindqvist, 2016) takes its departure in the concept *diversity* which is broadened from ethnicity and nation to encompass various other social and cultural categories as gender, sexuality, class, age, religion, and so on. The aim of the book is to grasp the new realities of the Nordic region, the novel forms of diversity they give rise to, and to bring together scholars interested in diversity, but separated by disciplinary borders. The volume offers intersectional readings of various forms of culture, including literature, new media, film, and popular culture. It includes some articles on contemporary Nordic literature, but focuses on other issues than those in this book.

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