

ZHENSHUAI JIANG

Critical Spatiality in Genesis 1–11

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Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Space is an important dimension of human existence and perception of the world, yet the importance of space was to some extent ignored in traditional scholarship in the social sciences. Before the twentieth century, space was regarded as merely the stage for social relations, and discussion of space took place mainly in physics and philosophy. Prior to Immanuel Kant, the two disciplines considered similar concerns, such as the physical dimension of space and whether space is absolute or relative. After Kant, the study of space in physics and philosophy gradually moved in different directions, according to the interests of philosophers and physicists. Kant himself was more concerned with space in terms of geometry than mechanics. His work is often seen as the beginning of scholarship on space in religious and biblical studies.¹

Social space as a discipline did not attract the attention of scholars until the beginning of the twentieth century. Emile Durkheim was often cited by writers in this period as among the first to systematically discuss social dimensions of space.² Critical spatiality in sociology was established by the 1960s and continued to develop in the following decades. The influence of social dynamics on geography has brought the concept of space into the social sciences, leading to a reexamination of the social forms of space. As understood from a social-scientific perspective, space has come to constitute an important development in academia – no longer considered static and rigid, but rather dynamic and fluid. Since the 1960s, several scholars from different fields have paid close attention to critical spatiality: Henri Lefebvre, Yi-Fu Tuan, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, and Edward Soja.³

¹ M.K. GEORGE, “Space and History: Siting Critical Space for Biblical Studies,” in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (ed. J.L. Berquist and C.V. Camp; LHBOTS 481; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 15–31, here 21.

² E. DURKHEIM, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (trans. J.W. Swain; New York: Dover, 1915), 9, 37, 441–42.

³ H. LEFEBVRE, *The Production of Space* (trans. D. Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, French original 1974); LEFEBVRE, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life* (trans. S. Elden and G. Moore; Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers; New York: Continuum, 2004); Y.-F. TUAN, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); TUAN, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); G. BACHELARD, *The Poetics of Space* (trans. M. Jolas; Boston: Beacon, 1994); and E.W. SOJA,

Literary theory has also begun to pay increased attention to space in narrative. On the one hand, the narrative world in literature cannot be divorced from space; on the other hand, the spiritual world created in literature also contains a reflection of the real world and for this reason is not free from spatial concerns. Recognition of these issues has led to the formulation of a line of inquiry called “space narratology” or “spatial narrative.”⁴ Theoretically, it enables us to consider carefully not only the correlation of space and narratology in general, but also the interaction between them in specific texts.

Conceptions of space in the Bible have been of interest since the medieval period, when the focus was on the divinity of space and the religious meanings of geography. Medieval works discuss space in terms of the connection of God with space, that is, how God gives space its basic characteristics and the similarities between God and space.⁵ From the early modern period onward, space – more specifically, biblical geography – was studied more and more from a historical perspective.⁶ Since the late twentieth century, biblical scholars have

Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996). Heterotopias are discussed in M. FOUCAULT, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” *Diacritics* 16 (1986), 22–27.

⁴ J. FRANK, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” in *The Widening Gyre, Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 3–62, a revised version of “Spatial Form in Modern Literature: An Essay in Three Parts,” *Sewanee Review* 53 (1945), 221–40, 433–56, 643–53; D. HERMAN, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 263–85; R. ALTMAN, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 191–240, 291–314; K. DEMMERLEIN, *Narratologie des Raumes* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 13–47; M.M. BAKHTIN, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (ed. M. Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84–258; M. BAL, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 133–45; and G. ZORAN, “Towards the Theory of Space in Narrative,” *Poetics Today* 2 (1984), 309–35.

⁵ An important representative dealing with place and space in the medieval period (600–1500 CE) is T. AQUINAS, *In libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio* (Turin: Marietti, 1965), book 4, lection 6. For discussion about Aquinas’s view about place and space, see P. DUHEM, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 153–59. For discussion of William Ockham’s research on place and space, see E. GRANT, “The Medieval Doctrine of Place: Some Fundamental Problems and Solutions,” in *Filosofia e scienze nella tarda scolastica: Studi sul XIV secolo in memoria di Anneliese Maier* (ed. A. Maierù and A. Paravicini-Bagliani; Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981), 57–79. N. ORESME, *Nicolaus Oresmes Kommentar zur Physik des Aristoteles. Kommentar mit Edition der Quaestiones zu Buch 3 und 4 der aristotelischen Physik sowie von vier Quaestiones zu Buch 5* (ed. S. Kirschner; Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997) also discussed place and space in his commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics*.

⁶ M.K. GEORGE, *Israel’s Tabernacle as Social Space* (AIL 2; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 95–97. We must also keep in mind that biblical geography was already discussed in the medieval period.

increasingly focused on the social dimension of space rather than merely discussing the physical dimension and symbolic meanings of space. To accomplish this goal, traditional methods such as form criticism and literary criticism have been influenced by other disciplines, such as modern geography, philosophy, and sociology. “Critical spatiality” was first defined for biblical scholarship by Jon L. Berquist in his essays “Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World”⁷ and “Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory.”⁸ Critical spatiality not only emphasizes the study of the nature of space but also concentrates on the spatial nature of social reality, highlighting both the ontology and experience of space or place, and is interested in how space acquires symbolic meaning. Lefebvre and Soja’s theory of the trialectic of space in particular has become very common among biblical scholars who engage with spatial criticism.⁹ According to Lefebvre, the trialectic of space involves “perceived space” (which he also terms “spatial practice”), “conceived space” (which he also terms “representations of space”), and “lived space” (which he also terms “representational space”).¹⁰ Soja, following Lefebvre, retermed these three kinds of space as “firstspace,” “secondspace,” and “thirdspace,” and his approach to space is more steeped in postmodern theory.¹¹

The present work adopts this trialectic of space and adapts it as “physical space,” “conceptual space,” and “symbolic space.”¹² Physical space refers to the objective aspect of space. It contains the form, size, position, or direction of a material. It can generally be concrete and observed. For example, the arrangement of the temple and the complex of the tabernacle belong to the physical aspect of space. This space is constructed on the basis of geometry and can be measured. Conceptual space concerns the ideas of space in the mind. It is usually deduced from other media. A map is a typical depiction of conceptual space. That is, we can infer how people living in the medieval period thought about space through analyzing their maps. While a text is not itself a space, we

⁷ J.L. BERQUIST, “Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World,” in *“Imagining” Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. D.M. Gunn and P.M. McNutt; JSOTSup 359; London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 14–29.

⁸ J.L. BERQUIST, “Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory,” in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (ed. J.L. Berquist and C.V. Camp; LHBOTS 481; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 1–12.

⁹ E.g., T.B. DOZEMAN, “Biblical Geography and Critical Spatial Studies,” in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (ed. J.L. Berquist and C.V. Camp; LHBOTS 481; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 87–108; GEORGE, *Israel’s Tabernacle* (see n. 6); and BERQUIST, “Critical Spatiality” (see n. 7).

¹⁰ LEFEBVRE, *Production* (see n. 3), 1–67.

¹¹ SOJA, *Thirdspace* (see n. 3), 53–70.

¹² See also GEORGE, *Israel’s Tabernacle* (see n. 6), 22.

still can infer what authors thought about space by analyzing their descriptions of space or place. Symbolic space is termed by Lefebvre “representational spaces” and by Soja “thirdspace.” Both focus on how the way people live in spaces and places gives them symbolic meanings. An objective place can be emotionally colored since people give it values and symbolic meanings. One and the same place can have different emotional affectivities for different individuals and groups, since different people can give different symbolic meanings to it. Discussion of symbolic space has two dimensions: one concerns the exact symbolic meaning of a certain space or place, and the other concerns how people give symbolic meanings to it. Critical spatiality is more concerned with the latter.

Spatiality in the Bible is very rich. Types of space include nature’s spaces, such as rivers or mountains, human geographical places, such as villages or cities, and even journeys through space, such as those undertaken by Abraham and Jacob in the patriarchal narratives. We can also discuss spatiality with respect to buildings, such as temples and the tabernacle. Another important subject is cosmic space, which is generally reflected in biblical creation accounts.

Biblical texts contain a variety of notions of space, such as cosmic space, mythical space, and architectural space. These types of space are frequently discussed in terms of physical space. In other words, scholars have long paid close attention to the physical characteristics of space. When discussing religious space, Roger Stump claims that physical space is “concerned less with religion per se than with its social, cultural, and environmental associations and effects.”¹³ Such discussion of space in the Bible started during the Renaissance and became increasingly influential after the Enlightenment, finally becoming mainstream at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Space in biblical narrative was also understood in terms of conceptual space. Conceptual spaces are spaces that are only reflected in texts, such that modern readers cannot experience them in daily life. Some places have not been found by archaeologists. Some space is entirely imaginary. The space in texts is constructed by words, which stem from their authors’ ideas. For example, the design of the tabernacle and the arrangement of the temple, whether or not they existed, clearly reflect the ideas of space in the minds of the authors who describe them. We can also learn about the perception of the cosmos according to creation accounts.

Space in the Bible can, moreover, be discussed in terms of social convention, focusing on how ancient people experienced and used space. Space can acquire symbolic meaning when people give meaning to it. In Lefebvre’s ter-

¹³ R.W. STUMP, “The Geography of Religion: Introduction,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 7 (1986), 1–3, here 1.

minology, this is “representational space.” In Soja’s terminology, this is “third-space.” Both representational space and thirdspace have to do with symbolic meanings of space. In contrast to the discussion of symbolic meanings in the medieval period, the notion of symbolic space aims to clarify how ancient people attributed meanings to space under certain cultural influences.

In the present work, the theory of critical spatiality will be applied to Gen 1–11 to discuss what concept(s) of space the Priestly and non-Priestly author(s) have and how they are influenced by social and cultural elements. I shall focus on Gen 1, 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. In contrast to the historical accounts, the forms of space found in these texts are more mythical. At first glance, it is hard to argue that there is any social dimension to space in them. For example, most studies on Gen 1 pay attention to cosmology or draw a comparison with the tabernacle narrative.¹⁴ In Gen 6–9, it is not easy to see that contemporaneous social and cultural elements influenced the construction of space in the flood narrative. More attention is paid to the connection of the flood narrative with other ancient Near Eastern flood myths.

As a methodology, I shall use spatial narrative theory to discuss how space is constructed in Gen 1–11. Spatial narrative is the literary treatment of spatial theory, which studies how and to what extent narrative strategy influences the idea of space present in literature. In other words, spatial theory analyzes how space is rhetorically constructed in texts, that is, how space in texts is constructed by narrative elements such as perspectives, characterization, and plot. Early representatives of spatial narrative theory include Mikhail Bakhtin, followed by Algirdas Julien Greimas, Joseph Frank, and Gabriel Zoran in the late

¹⁴ J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 (1976), 275–92; T.E. FRETHEIM, *Exodus* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 268–72; F.H. GORMAN, Jr., *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time, and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 39–60, esp. 42; P.J. KEARNEY, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40,” *ZAW* 89 (1977), 375–87; J.D. LEVENSON, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 84–86; M. BUBER, “People Today and the Jewish Bible: From a Lecture Series (November 1926),” in *Scripture and Translation* (ed. M. Buber and F. Rosenzweig; ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 4–26; F. ROSENZWEIG, “Scripture and Luther (July 1926),” in *Scripture and Translation* (ed. M. Buber and F. Rosenzweig; ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 47–69; U. CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 476; M. WEINFELD, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the *Sitz im Leben* of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; AOAT 212; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 501–12; E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 306–12; B. JANOWSKI, “Tempel und Schöpfung: Schöpfungstheologische Aspekte der priester-schriftlichen Heiligtumskonzeption,” in *Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung* (ed. I. Baldermann et al.; JBTh 5; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 37–69.

1960s.¹⁵ Rarely has biblical studies discussed space from a narrative perspective.¹⁶ I shall use spatial narrative theory to argue that the perspectives, characterization, motion verbs, prepositions, metaphors, and juxtapositions play a significant role in constructing space in narrative texts and influence the social dimension of space.

More specifically, this work tries to make a connection between social space and narrative space, asking various questions about the social dimension of space in Priestly and non-Priestly texts in Gen 1, 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. How does narrative space reflect the social dimension of space? Why is narrative space essential for constructing space in these texts? What are the connections between social space and narrative space? For instance, where is God when he creates the world in Gen 1? Does Gen 1 reflect anthropocentrism in terms of human space? What is space and spatial relation in Gen 1? Is it appropriate to say in the flood narrative that the world is destroyed and recreated, at least on the level of physical space?

The first two chapters introduce and give historical context for the study of space. Studies of space have focused mainly on the relationship between absolute space and relative space. In other words, is space relative or absolute? Is absolute space necessary? This is a significant problem that philosophers and physicists from Plato and Aristotle to Isaac Newton tried to resolve. Kant is discussed in the most depth since, after him, discussion of space is increasingly concerned with the social dimension of space. I shall then provide a survey of the field of critical spatiality over the last decades, when it became somewhat conventional to claim that space and spatiality are social and cultural constructions. According to this view, space is quasimaterial and sometimes it even can be understood as a social product. The main representatives of this position are Doreen Massey, David Harvey, Manuel Castells, and Lefebvre, who were anticipated by Durkheim and Georg Simmel.¹⁷

Chapters 3–6 discuss the formation, development, and basic characteristics of Priestly texts, especially Gen 1 and 6–9. Chapter 3 summarizes key features

¹⁵ BAKHTIN, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope” (see n. 4); FRANK, “Spatial Form” (see n. 4); ZORAN, “Towards the Theory of Space” (see n. 4); and A.J. GREIMAS, *Maupassant, The Semiotics of Text* (trans. P. Perron; Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1988), 22–23, 76–100.

¹⁶ E.g., J.F.A. SAWYER, “Spaciousness: An Important Feature of Language about Salvation in the Old Testament,” in *ASTI* 6 (1968), 20–34 and L.I.J. STADELMANN, *The Hebrew Conception of the World: A Philological and Literary Study* (AnBib 39; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), 1–36.

¹⁷ M. CASTELLS, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010), 440–47; D. HARVEY, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 201–328; LEFEBVRE, *Production* (see n. 3), 1–67, esp. 26–46; LEFEBVRE, *Rhythmanalysis* (see n. 3), 85–100; DURKHEIM, *Elementary Forms* (see n. 2), 9, 37, 441–42; and D. MASSEY, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 61–104, 147–95.

of space in Priestly texts in order to understand space in the Priestly primeval history. It begins with a discussion of the structure of Priestly texts and then surveys some key concepts in the Priestly texts about three points: the primeval history, Noah's covenant, Abraham's blessing, and the tabernacle. Order and structure, universalism, the development of monotheism, and positive salvation theology will be shown to be significant characteristics of Priestly texts.

The discussion aims to clarify when Priestly texts were composed. Two methods are usually used for dating: text and social locus. In the present discussion, I assume that the Priestly texts date to the late exilic period and the beginning of the Persian Empire (539–331 BCE) in terms of the characteristics of social space they present. I shall therefore briefly review social space in the Babylonian exile in order to understand how the social locus influences the idea of space in Priestly texts.

After discussing the date and social locus of Priestly texts, I shall summarize several important characteristics of Priestly narrative space. Although there are many discussions of space in the Priestly texts, most of them are more concerned with the cosmic view reflected in narratives and well-structured space described in texts. For present purposes, we can acquire more information about spatial ideas and social dimensions of space through the discussion of narrative space. For example: Where exactly are God and humanity located in Priestly thinking? What is the Priestly religious and aesthetic attitude toward particular landscapes? How are the ideas of space reflected in the narrative? According to the structure of the Priestly texts, I shall concentrate on God's space, humanity's space, and nature's space.

Chapter 4 introduces physical space in Gen 1 and 6–9, discussing how physical space forms part of the narrative. Physical space is the foundation of conceptual space and symbolic space. Physical space generally refers to geographical space and architectural space. It can be constructed through expository prose introducing a certain place or a location. It can also be constructed more conceptually in a space-oriented narrative.

In terms of spatial narrative, physical space is constructed mainly through position words, prepositions, and motion verbs. When introducing form and position, the narrative perspective also plays an important role. Accordingly, this chapter discusses God's space, humanity's space, and nature's space in terms of prepositions, motion verbs, and narrative perspectives.

Genesis 1 tells how God creates the cosmos and the world where humans and animals live; the Priestly authors show a strong interest in nature's space. Prepositions, motion verbs, and narrative perspectives are significant in constructing nature's space. More importantly, Priestly authors are more concerned with spatial relations than with specific spatial locations. In comparison with Gen 1, the flood narrative has a more detailed description of God's space and humanity's space. God's space is divided into the space before the flood, the space during the flood, and the space after the flood. There are also some

typical spaces such as Noah's ark in the flood narrative. Noah's ark can be understood simultaneously as physical space, conceptual space, and symbolic space.

Chapter 5 discusses conceptual space in Gen 1 and 6–9. We cannot experience physical space directly in a text, but we can come to know the conceptual space of its authors. For example, although we cannot experience the cosmos and the world that the Priestly authors describe in Gen 1, we know how the authors think about the cosmos. We cannot experience the flood that is described in the Priestly flood narrative, but we know the idea of a fluid boundary between natural and supernatural space. The space described in Gen 1 is, in principle, conceptual. Special attention will be paid to its order and structure.

In the present discussion, I shall first present the difference between the vertical view of the cosmos in Gen 1 and the vertical view of neighboring cultures. Then I will analyze how this order and structure is reflected in the narrative. As narrative strategies, the emphasis on spatial relations rather than place and the lack of words for the cardinal directions both play a significant role in constructing conceptual space. I shall also discuss how universalism as an important Priestly view influences the idea of space in Gen 1.

Another important conceptual space reflected in Gen 1 and Gen 6–9 is mythical space. Although it is agreed that Gen 6–9 is influenced by other ancient Near Eastern flood myths, the flood narrative is a part of the biblical historiographical narrative, and Gen 6–9 should thus be discussed in this context.¹⁸ The present discussion focuses on the way in which mythical space and nonmythical space are framed in the narrative. The aim is to see how Gen 1 keeps the mythical characteristic of space and at the same time actualizes mythical space in order to take it as the beginning of Israelite historical narrative.

Generally speaking, the conceptual space in Gen 6 corresponds to that in Gen 1. Genesis 6–9 recreates the space created in Gen 1. For example, Gen 6, like Gen 1, shows the traditional vertical view of the cosmos. Genesis 6–9 also presents mythical space as well as nonmythical space. The present discussion pays attention to how Priestly authors make space mythical and at the same time nonmythical, and it discusses how the two concepts of space are juxtaposed rhetorically in the same text.

Chapter 6 discusses what cultural and social factors might have influenced the construction of symbolic space in Gen 1 and 6–9. Symbolic space is not as abstract as conceptual space. Symbolic space is the space where people live and which they experience. Humans can live in a variety of spaces and use them, because humans can freely give symbolic meanings to space. Symbolic space can be constructed through conceptual symbolic meanings. It can also be

¹⁸ For this particular historical view of the Hebrew Bible, see K. SCHMID, "The Canon and the Cult: The Emergence of Book Religion in Ancient Israel and the Gradual Sublimation of the Temple Cult in Biblical Society," *JBL* 131 (2012), 289–305.

constructed through concrete material things. I discuss Gen 1 as an example of how space in Gen 1 is constructed symbolically by conceptual symbolic meanings, while I discuss the Priestly flood narrative as an example of how space is constructed symbolically through a visible phenomenon: the rainbow. The meanings of these symbols in appropriation of the authoritative space are emphasized in modern spatial theory, especially Soja's discussion of thirdspace. He pays close attention to the function of race, class, and gender. An important feature of symbolic space is struggle, appropriation, or adaption of the authoritative space. Accordingly, in the present discussion I shall analyze whether Priestly authors offer symbolic meanings in Gen 1 and Gen 6–9 while challenging other symbolic meanings in the culture.

Because symbolic meanings are influenced by society and culture directly, I shall first discuss the cultural milieu in which Gen 1 was written. Then we can understand why the Priestly authors described a well-ordered and well-structured cosmos. Spatial reality also influences the symbolic meanings of space. Landscapes, squares, and even public festivals are social spaces that influence and to some extent determine the symbolic meanings of space in Gen 1. It is reasonable to argue that symbolic space is constructed on the basis of physical space and conceptual space. For example, the emphasis on spatial relations influences symbolic meanings. How do the Priestly authors challenge the traditional meanings of space? How does the space in Gen 1 later become the authoritative space? I address this by comparing Gen 2 with some creation texts in Psalms.

The symbolic meanings of space are very rich in the Priestly flood narrative. It is noteworthy that a symbol is mentioned explicitly: the rainbow, a symbol of the covenant between God and humanity. I shall therefore discuss how the "bow" in Gen 9:13–17 moves from natural phenomenon to sign and how this sign acquires its symbolic meaning. The aura of the bow makes the concept of covenant spatial. Symbolic meaning is derived not just from signs but also from practices. A sign generally acquires its symbolic meaning through human practices. A certain space or place normally acquires symbolic meaning through human practices in it. For example, religious rituals play an essential role in giving symbolic meanings to ritual places. In the Priestly flood narrative, the bow becomes a sign through the act of God establishing a covenant with humans. Then Mount Ararat, as a unique, historical, and imagined place through retelling becomes a public, symbolic, and eternal place. As in Gen 1, the Priestly authors of the flood narrative challenged, appropriated, and adapted the traditional space. Different ideas of space are also juxtaposed in Gen 6–9 because the flood narrative is a juxtaposition of Priestly texts and non-Priestly texts. I shall compare space in Priestly and non-Priestly texts in order to see how the Priestly covenant space appropriates the traditional idea of sanctuaries and cult places.

In Chapters 7–10, I shall take Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9 as examples to describe how physical space, conceptual space, and symbolic space are constructed rhetorically in the non-Priestly texts. Chapter 7 provides a brief review of the structure, the important concepts, and the possible compositional dates of Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. Compared to the Priestly texts, the non-Priestly material in Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9 is made up of relatively independent narrative units. I shall also discuss the characteristics of narrative space in the non-Priestly texts. While the concepts at issue are difficult to summarize in the non-Priestly texts as a whole, the spaces and spatial settings in Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9 can be described, as can those in the Priestly texts, from the perspective of God’s space, humanity’s space, and nature’s space.

Chapter 8 introduces the way in which physical space is constructed rhetorically in Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. The garden in Gen 2–3 is the fundamental space. It is established as the center of the world. The garden contains a variety of spatial elements. The space associated with God is reflected mainly in God’s actions. God creates the world, plants the garden, and walks in the garden. The space associated with humanity is reflected in the actions of the first man and Eve. There are two types of nature’s space in the Eden narrative: the space of the world and the spatial settings in the garden in Eden. In the Eden narrative, Gen 2:10–14 describes four rivers with both locative and nonlocative elements, which makes the passage unique. In the non-Priestly flood narrative of Gen 6–9, God and Noah are the two main actors. The space associated with God and humanity can be described according to the actions of God and Noah, respectively. The ark is, as in the Priestly version, the most well-defined space in the non-Priestly flood narrative. As nature’s space, the most significant space in the non-Priestly flood narrative is the earth. Genesis 11:1–9 contains different kinds of spaces and places, which are essential narrative elements. The verbs of motion, narrative perspectives, and prepositions rhetorically construct God’s space, humanity’s space, and nature’s space.

Chapter 9 discusses the concepts of space in Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. All three of these texts present a view of the cosmos. In Gen 2–3, the creation account appears mainly in Gen 2:4b–7 and reflects both horizontal and vertical views of the cosmos. Conceptual space is portrayed mainly with respect to the garden in Eden. The function of the garden is described from the perspective of two sets of relationships: the relationship between the garden in Eden and the earthly world, on the one hand, and the relationships among God, humanity, and the garden in Eden, on the other. On the whole, the garden in Eden is described intentionally by the non-Priestly narrator as an “other” space. On a thematic level, there is also an important type of conceptual space in the Eden narrative: the distance between God and humanity. The distance between God and humanity is reflected in the use of the verbs “command,” “call,” and “say.” Genesis 2–4 also involves spatial continuity. The structure of the cosmos is an important type of conceptual space in the non-Priestly flood narrative of Gen

6–9 as well. The non-Priestly narrator pays close attention to the earth. The scale of the earth is an important aspect of conceptual space, and the earth remains the spatial focus throughout the non-Priestly flood narrative. Regarding the Babel narrative of Gen 11:1–9, the conceptual space is reflected mainly in three tensions: the tension between God’s space and humanity’s space; the tension between locative place and universal space; and the tensions among the city, the tower, and the whole earth.

Chapter 10 discusses symbolic space in Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9. The garden is the most important symbolic space in Gen 2–3. That the garden may symbolize a place near Jerusalem is suggested mainly by the descriptions of rivers in Gen 2:10–14. At the same time, the narrative in Gen 2:10–14 juxtaposes the geographical and nongeographical dimensions of the rivers. The garden in Eden is on the whole nonlocative. The function of the cherubim relates to the garden more specifically with the Jerusalem Temple and sets the garden apart as a sacred space. The event of rebuilding the temple around 515 BCE might have influenced the symbolism of the garden in Eden. The non-Priestly flood narrative of Gen 6–9 contains three important types of symbolic space. The correspondence between spatial settings in God’s speech in Gen 7:1–5 and spatial settings in Gen 7:12, 17, 22, and 23 symbolizes God’s absolute authority over the earth. Then, in Gen 8:6–13b, the ark, through Noah’s actions, symbolizes the center of the world, evident in the connection of the ark (תבת) and its cover (מכסה) with their descriptions in Exod 2 and certain tabernacle narratives (Exod 26:14; 36:19; 39:34; 40:19). After the flood, the primary symbolic space is the altar. God’s monologue beside the altar gives symbolic meaning to the altar. The description of the altar in Gen 8:20–22 indicates an anti-iconic concept. At the same time, the absence of the mountain, which is usually connected with the altar, suggests that the non-Priestly narrator of Gen 6–9 appropriates the traditional symbolic meaning of the altar. The discussion of symbolic space in Gen 11:1–9 limits itself to the city and the tower, which are used to show the power of humanity in having the same language. On the one hand, the rhetoric of the Babel narrative challenges the traditional symbolic meanings of the city in Gen 1–11. On the other hand, the function of the tower seems mainly to reflect the power of humanity. The tower itself is not the narrative focus, and its symbolic meaning is traditionally overemphasized. On a thematic level, the Babel narrative also reinterprets the relationship between the multiplying of people and the multiplying of language.

Finally, Chapter 11 elaborates on how space is described differently in Priestly texts (Gen 1, 6–9) and non-Priestly texts (Gen 2–3, 6–9, and 11:1–9) of Gen 1–11. Specific texts are compared: Gen 1 and Gen 2–3, the Priestly version and non-Priestly version of Gen 6–9 (this chapter also discusses what characterizes space in the final text of Gen 6–9), Gen 1 and the non-Priestly flood narrative, the Priestly flood narrative and Gen 11:1–9, Gen 2–3 and the Priestly flood narrative, and Gen 1 and Gen 11:1–9. These comparisons will be