

KATHRIN WINKLER / KIM SEIFERT / HEINRICH DETERING

## Literary Studies and the Spatial Turn

The discussions of ›space‹ in literary and cultural studies in recent years revolve around terms such as the ›spatial‹, ›topological‹, or ›topographical turn‹, whose scope and associations appear to be largely unclear – partly due to differences in how they are used, partly due to differences in the relevant theoretical premises, among which the relationship between geospaces and cultural constructs is particularly relevant to literary studies. This article begins by seeking to clarify the concepts genealogically and systematically.

The term ›spatial turn‹ was introduced by the human geographer Edward W. Soja, who used it in the mid-nineties to call for greater attention to be given to the category of space, which he believed had been neglected. For too long, he argued, research had dealt exclusively with time, without taking its link with spatiality into account. Many scholarly disciplines have responded to this impetus, literary studies among them. As this article seeks to show, geographical space is excluded from the treatment of space in research on space in literary studies, which takes place under the rubric of the ›topographical turn‹, coined by Sigrid Weigel. The reason for this exclusion is a focus on forms of spatial representation which are examined, in terms of culture and a given medium, as descriptions of spatial configurations. The concept of the text, thus extended to include extra-literary space, fails to take geographical space into consideration; the object of attention is instead the constitution of space by means of cultural practices. This article aims to challenge this element of exclusion in the consideration of spatiality in the topographical turn, and thus responds to the emerging voices of criticism in cultural and literary studies that are dissatisfied with the lack of explicit engagement in their own disciplines with geographical space and the beginnings of the spatial turn in human geography.

This article draws on Edward W. Soja's concept of a thirdspace in arguing for real and imagined spaces to be brought together. In his concept of space, Soja turns to ideas of the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre, in whose model of space the

separation of physical from mental space is set aside. On this basis, Soja identifies the perspectives of physical space alone (Soja's firstspace) and mental space alone (Soja's secondspace) as illusory truncations, for in neither case is the other and necessarily complementary aspect included. For Soja, space must be understood as simultaneously real and imagined (Soja's thirdspace), for it always represents a link between physical, geographical spaces and mental, cultural constructions of space. Soja, a human geographer, is perfectly explicit about the fact that his concept of thirdspace is addressed not only at geography and other disciplines that are concerned by definition with geographical space, but at all disciplines that engage with spatiality as part of the spatial turn.

It is precisely in this bringing together of real and imagined spaces that his model of space could be picked up in literary studies; examples of how this bringing together can be made a reality in literary studies can be found in Bertrand Westphal's *géocritique* and Barbara Piatti's *Literaturkartographie*. Westphal's approach uses literary texts as a source of information for describing the imaginary dimension of geographical spaces. In contrast to existing studies of literary space in the topographical turn, rather than individual constructs of space being examined, several texts with their representations of a specific environmental space are compared here in order to reach conclusions about the latter as a thirdspace. With her cartographical transposition of representations of fictional space, Barbara Piatti creates a spatial perspective for literary history when she makes the ›inscription‹ of geospace visible by recording literary spaces in geographical maps. In this explicit connection of perspectives of first- and secondspace, both lines of research extend the ideas of Soja and provide examples of how geographical space could be drawn into research in literary studies.

Beyond the proposed understanding of the terms ›spatial‹ and ›topographical turn‹, this article thus calls more fundamentally for research on space in literary studies to become open to approaches from human geography, examples of which are presented here with reference to adaptations of Soja's thirdspace model.

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