

## *Spatial turn:* On the Concept of Space in Cultural Geography and Literary Theory

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The paper discusses the impact of the *spatial turn* (*topographical turn*, *topological turn*) in the field of (German) literary studies, indicated by such terms as 'literary cartography', 'mapping', 'literary topography', 'heterotopes of literature' etc. These terms have been adopted from other disciplines in which they operate in quite different terminological networks. The paper, therefore, follows the development of this approach back to its roots in earth sciences (especially geo-spheres) and summarises the changes of the notion of space from traditional geography to current socio-cultural anthropology. This includes looking at its metaphorical application to other spheres of knowledge. *Space* as a *literary* concept is confronted with the use of the term in its original context and the consequences of the 'spatial turn' in the current debate in literary theory in the German speaking countries. But instead of outlining the tradition of such approaches since the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Germany, the paper draws the attention to the approach of Jurij M. Lotman, who understands *text* as a culture-specific code for space, and symbolic space in literature as a result of culturally specific uses of signs. The comparison between the notions of space in cultural geography and literary theory also allows for a critical comment on some approaches which may be useful for 'literatourism' but do not suffice for the semiotic integration of topological relations into Lotman's concept of text, which allows literary texts to be read as media of cultural self-interpretation and symbolic models of spatial perception.

**Keywords:** concepts of space, spatial turn in cultural geography, literary theory and textual analysis, J. Lotman's approach

### 1. Introduction and overview

The popularly used metaphor of "text as space" raises questions in relation to narratology and scientific approaches to textual analysis. So it was that numerous *linguistic turns*, *iconic turns*, *cultural turns*, etc., were followed by a *spatial turn* – a term the impact of which can also be seen in the field of literature based on the increasing popularity of such vogue terms as 'literary cartography', 'mapping', 'literary topography', 'heterotopes of literature' etc. In literary theory the discussion about terminology so far appears still more attractive than the actual application of textual analysis of given literary texts. While representative concepts from other disciplines, which occur in completely different terminological frameworks, are being heedlessly adopted into literary theory, all kinds of eddies and undercurrents are already emerging. For instance, those terms which especially address the technical and cultural representation schemes of spatiality (e.g. topographical turn), and which are not to be confused with efforts that concentrate on describing literary spaces and spatial structures in aesthetic products (e.g. topological turn).

As is not surprising for our profession, such attempts naturally make for many forerunners in the field (running from Lessing through Karlfried v. Dürckheim and Ernst Cassirer to Otto Friedrich Bollnow, to name but a few). Contrary to such subject-centred, primarily

phenomenological approaches, Jurij M. Lotman regards the symbolic space of literature as a result of a culturally specific usage of signs. Lotman perceives an analogous relationship between the narrative text as an *abstract* model of reality and the respective “world view” of a given culture. He then carries over his semantic model of space into a pragmatic, i.e. cultural and historical context.

My contribution follows this discussion, pursuing it, however, beyond the disciplinary borders as far as its origins within the space-oriented earth sciences. It summarily recaps changes of the notion of space from traditional geography up to the contemporary cultural geography. Spatialisation of *social* circumstances (and their visualisation) and the (often metaphorical) transmission of this approach to other areas of knowledge (cf. Bourdieu's *des effets de lieu* as an example for a 'space trap') also appertain. Furthermore, the occupation of literary sciences with space is confronted with space concepts from earth sciences. Its 18<sup>th</sup> century roots, as well as the continuance in first phenomenological, and later semiotic approaches right up to the consequences of the so-called *spatial turn* in today's debate of literary theory shall be revealed.

In the attempt of creating a synthesis, possible points of contact between literary (respectively literary and textual theoretical) and culture geographical space concepts shall be probed. Additionally (in recourse to Foucault's “*histoire d'espace*”), the premises for a contemporary understanding of 'space' under the sign of a balance of tension of globalisation and regionalisation, of non-located medial networks and local assertion of identity shall be profiled in order to finally expose literary texts as media of cultural-specific codes and symbolisations of 'space'.

The resumptive comparison of culture geographical and literary theoretical conceptualisations of spatial relations also ensures the base for a critical reflection of numerous contemporary efforts, which occasionally may be suitable for “literatouristical illustration”, but do not always fulfil the theoretical demands, which they formulate themselves. In contrast, the recognitional potential of a cooperation between culture geographical and literary topographies seems hitherto to have been exhausted just as little as that of a semiotic integration of topological relations in (literary) texts as model shaping systems (in the sense of Jurij Lotman), which reference the world view of a respective culture as abstract (aesthetic) models of reality. Insofar as literary texts can be read as media of culture specific self-interpretation and as testimonies of altered (and changeable) perceptions of space, the interest in literary spaces also gains in relevance for a topical conceptualisation, for instance, of intercultural German studies.<sup>1</sup>

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## 2. Origins of the *spatial turn*

While on the hunt for the origins of the term *spatial turn*, I came across a book by Edward W. Soja with the title *Postmodern Geographies*, published in 1989 by Verso, in which the American geographer and social critic attempts to replace the paradigm of time with one of space. He argues that our current environment is not just a “Produkt von Geschichte, sondern vor allem auch der Konstruktion menschlicher Geographien, einer sozialen Konstruktion von Raum und der stetigen Umformung geographischer Landschaften [product of history, but rather – before all else – also a construction of human geography; a social construction of space and the continuous reshaping of geographic landscapes]” (Assmann, 2009, p. 14). Shortly thereafter, literary critic Fredric Jameson picks up the thread of these thoughts in a book called *Postmodernism* (Jameson 1991). He defines the “spatialization of the temporal” as a hallmark of the new paradigm: “A certain spatial turn has often seemed to offer one or more productive ways of distinguishing postmodernism from modernism proper” (Jameson, 1991, p. 154).

However, other scholars suspect that the actual origin of the concept goes to a lecture held by Michel Foucault in 1967 on “Des espaces autres.” Describing paradigm shift, Foucault takes the Copernican Revolution - from geocentric to heliocentric worldview – and Galilei's discovery of the infinity of the Universe as his example. He traces the history of the relationship between conceptions of space and the history of science. Even though today's accompanying changes in perceptions of space – for instance with catchwords like *hyperspace* (Jameson, 1986, p. 89) – are somewhat carelessly linked to the technologically networked world (cf. Döring & Thielmann, 2008, p. 30), the “Entstehung transnationaler Communities durch die neuen Kommunikationstechnologien [und] die Bedeutung des ubiquitären Internets für das Raumbewußtsein seiner User [emergence of transnational communities through new communication technologies and the meaning of the ubiquitous internet for the internet user's awareness of space]” (Böhme, 2009, p. 192) can barely be ignored.

Thus, some traditional questions of the aesthetic and fictional constructions of space are again brought to the attention of literary theory, though the focus has shifted (Döring, 2008, p. 596). The interest is now directed towards space as a 'cultural construct' and 'social product', which bridge this approach to a new perspective and purpose of cultural geography. Though the “ausdrücklich disziplinübergreifende *Verwendung* der Raumperspektive [expressive, area-specific, and comprehensive *application* of spatial perspective]” is readily emphasised (Bachmann-Medick, 2007, p. 291), the common theoretical background for a system of space-related terminology (in disciplines that only refer to each other ostensibly) has so far failed to materialise. That is why these cross-references often merely remain metaphors, misunderstandings, and unrecognised claims. This will continue to be the case as long as the development of single-minded, scientific concepts of space is not seriously affiliated and the long tradition of the spatial concept within the earth sciences is plainly ignored by literary theory (Genske, Hess-Lüttich, & Huch eds., 2007; Hess-Lüttich, Müller, & van Zoest eds., 1998).

Congruently ambiguous is the talk of 'space': a concept that has been defined through mathematics, geometry, phenomenology, sociology, cognitive science, psychology, perception theory, and cultural, literary and communication studies but nevertheless presents the *spatial turn* as a justification for the continued loose reference between these discourses: “'Space' is one of the most obvious of things which is mobilised as a term in a thousand different contexts, but whose potential meanings are all too rarely explicated or addressed” (Massey, 1999, p. 27).

### 3. The *spatial turn* in (Cultural) Geography

With the scope of physical geography broadened to include new tasks within social, cultural and anthropological geography as of the middle of the twentieth century, the willingness to complement scientific questions, i.e. 'scientific' according to measurable factors of the geo-sphere, with the *interpretation* of such factors, i.e. according to social groups and their valuations, has been gradually growing – along with the added readiness to locate the subject itself in both realms of academic endeavour: namely, the natural sciences and the humanities (cf. Bobek & Schmithüsen, 1949, p. 113).<sup>2</sup> With this step, human action springs into view: “Subjektive und sozial-kulturelle Bedeutungen werden materiellen Dingen auferlegt, ohne dass sie zu Bestandteilen der Materie werden. Räumliche Gegebenheiten können folglich lediglich als Medien der Orientierung alltäglichen Handelns verstanden werden [subjective and socio-cultural meanings impose upon material things, without becoming part of the material's content. Spatial conditions can thus be simply understood as media for navigating quotidian action]” (Werlen, 2004, p. 310). Against the background of such an approach of social geography, based on a theory of action, as it is being presented here, problems of space appear as problems of actions of social subjects. These actions – according to Anthony Giddens's (1986) book *The Constitution of Society* – can be analytically dismantled into categories of rationale, motive, and intention, without the subjects necessarily constituting these actions themselves. According to the meaning of physical and material constraints, the meaning of space is implied as a medium of social orientation and differentiation.

In conjunction with the technological and economical globalisation on one side and with the culturalisation of the social on the other, 'space' for the observation and description of social practice becomes equally relevant (*spatial turn*) to its inverse in “significative” practice in the production of signs for the understanding of the meaning of space (cf. Lippuner, 2005, p. 28). The problem with that is just how social, cultural or mental – in other words, immaterial or intangible – circumstances can be spatialised: especially when the meaning of the material conditions is not inherent but 'imposed'. In the physical object, materialised chains of action can symbolically 'indicate' social meaning, but not 'have' that meaning – they are not the social meaning itself. This dilemma has also been characterised as the “space trap”: the conclusive reductionism expresses itself in the necessary conclusion of locatable material conditions superimposed on the non-locatable subjective or rather socio-cultural components of actions.

Pierre Bourdieu feasibly suggested a possible way out of this dilemma with his differentiation between physical, social, and “acquired” space:

In einer hierarchisierten Gesellschaft gibt es keinen Raum, der nicht hierarchisiert wäre und nicht Hierarchien und soziale Abstände zum Ausdruck brächte. Dies allerdings in mehr oder weniger deformierter Weise und durch Naturalisierungseffekte maskiert, die mit der dauerhaften Einschreibung sozialer Wirklichkeiten in die natürliche Welt einhergehen. [in a hierarchical society there is no space that does not become hierarchised and also no space that does not embody hierarchies and social intervals/distances. Admittedly, this is masked in more or less deformed ways and through naturalizing effects that come along with perpetual enrolment of social realities in the natural world] (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 160)

The projection of the social on the physical (the so-called “acquired” space) leads to the objectivation of the social: in the end, the physical objectivated social space congeals into cognitive structure.

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<sup>2</sup> “Belebte und unlebte Natur und Geist sind also in der geographischen Substanz verschmolzen. Darin liegt die innere Einheit der Geographie begründet und die Tatsache, daß diese weder Natur- noch Geisteswissenschaft allein sein kann” (Bobek & Schmithüsen 1949, p. 113). A reconstruction of the transition of geographical spatial concepts since the 1920's here remains undone – cf. for this purpose e.g. Lippuner (2005).

If Bourdieu assigns (albeit metaphorically) the role of a mediator, who successively turns the social structures into thought patterns and predispositions, to the structures of "acquired" space, he himself falls into the trap of space as he abstracts them (i.e. the 'naturalised' social structures) from the subjects acting within those structures and thereby runs the risk of concluding from the localisation of social agents in the physical space to their positions within social space. This could, however, lead directly to a decoupling of social differences from social practices (for a critical review (cf. Lippuner, 2005, p. 167; Lossau & Lippuner, 2004, p. 202ff)).

This is only to be avoided by a systematic reflection on the sign system in which the social practice manifests itself: of texts and textures that inherit symbolic functions in social systems. The matter of the analysis would thus be the spaces, which are linguualised in the broadest sense, i.e. which are available as 'texts' (cf. Garz & Kraimer eds., 1994; Hard ed., 2002; Hess-Lüttich, 1998). In place of the vague term "acquired physical space," an exact differentiation of the semantic facets of the polysemous concept 'space' must come into being: something reminiscent of an Anglo-Saxon inspired cultural and anthropological geography, that distinguishes between *space* and *place* (as physically and socially construed or semiotically manifested space: cf. Knox & Marston, 2001) or in the sense of a space-structure research, which understands 'space' as a 'container', a system of site-relations of material objects; a category of perception, an element of action or as an artefact of societal construction processes (cf. Wardenga & Hönsch eds., 1995, p. 53).

In my opinion, it is only then that an understanding between the representatives of the scientific and the humanistic approach can be reached – with regard to their common purpose in the modernised cultural geography: seeing space as a material object with all its attendant physical and ecological constraints and as text, or, as the case may be, discourse, and finally, as a sign system.

#### 4 The *spatial turn* in Literary Theory and Textual Analysis

Around the same time – post World War II – as reflections on "landscape and space" are introduced in geography, they are also introduced in literary theory.<sup>3</sup> However, a comprehensive analysing arsenal in narratology or on a structural basis is as of yet to be established (cf. Fischer, 2008). At best, a figurative modelling of literary notions of space, in which a "Semantisierung sämtlicher deskriptiven Merkmale und Strukturen [semantification of all descriptive tokens and structures]" is assumed (Berghahn, 1989, p. 3), is suggested in a phenomenological tradition. According to it, space is rendered the result of an accomplishment of construction, which combines the spatial experience of the reader with the semantic space in the text: "In Texten bilden Räume als konkrete Erscheinungsformen den notwendigen Hintergrund, vor dem Figuren agieren, gleichsam bilden sie als abstrakte Beschreibungskategorien den Träger, der eine Anlagerung semantischer Mehrwerte erlaubt [In texts spaces as concrete manifestations form the necessary background, in front of which characters act, at the same time constituting – as abstract categories of description – the carrier that permits the accumulation of surplus value]" (Krah, 1999, p. 3).

Instead of continuing to pursue the phenomenological tradition from Lessing's *Laokoon* via Karlfried von Dürckheim's first comprehensive study on "lived space" [1896], Ernst Cassirer's differentiation of mythical, aesthetic and theoretical space [1931], Otto Friedrich Bollnow's confrontation of mathematical and experienced space in his classic *Mensch und Raum* [1956/1963], Robert Petsch's segmentation of space in its 'defined', 'fulfilled/enlivened'

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<sup>3</sup>The tradition of aesthetic reflection on space is naturally longer and can not be reprocessed here. For Lessing's early sign-theoretically motivated differentiations in *Laokoon* cf. exemplarily Hess-Lüttich (1984).

and 'absolute' dimensions in Alexander Ritter's momentous collected edition on Landscape and space in storytelling (*Landschaft und Raum in der Erzählkunst* [1975]) through to Gerhard Hoffmann's first attempt at a typology of literary space in *Space, Epic Situation, Narrated Reality* [1978], which according to Natascha Würzbach (2001, p. 106), is “heute noch relevante[s] Standardwerk zur narrativen Raumdarstellung [...] mit einer dominant phänomenologischen Ausrichtung [a standard reference on narrative space description even today [...] with a dominant phenomenological orientation]”, I shall rather mention a semiotic conceptualisation of literary space, which proves by far more open to interdisciplinary connectors than the aforementioned approaches: by means of Jurij M. Lotman's study of the symbolic space in literature as a result of culturally determined sign utilisations.

Lotman's model of space is primary language based (and has hence been marginally noticed by literary studies at best). However, it integrates semantic, pragmatic, *Lebenswelt*, as well as historico-cultural dimensions. Literary texts as “sekundär modellbildende Systeme [secondary model building systems]” (Lotman 1972: 22) generate spatiality (in contrast to Lessing) as a media and genre encroaching form (*Gestalt*). With that he surpasses the horizon of literary studies: for him aesthetic objects – regardless if texts (in a proper sense), pictures, printings or buildings – as parts of a semiotic system design models of possible worlds. Therein, space works as a sign system through which social reality can be constructed. For the relation of literary and physical space this implies that “Strukturen des Raumes eines Textes zum Modell der Struktur des Raumes der Welt werden [structures of the space of a text become the structure model of world space]” (Lotman 1972: 312).

With that the prospect of new approaches arises, for instance, on *geography of literature* that strives to link literature and cartography (cf. Genske, Hess-Lüttich, & Huch eds., 2007), the initial question being: “Wo spielt Literatur, und warum spielt sie dort? [Where does literature take place and why there?]” (Piatti, 2008, p. 20). According to Piatti, its premise reads: “Es gibt Berührungspunkte zwischen fiktionaler und realer Geographie. Literaturgeographie geht davon aus, [...] daß eine referentielle Beziehung zwischen der inner- und außerliterarischen Wirklichkeit besteht [There are meeting points between fictional and real geography. Literary geography assumes [...] that a referential relation between the inner- and extraliterary reality exists]” (ibid., p. 25).

This may well be seminal for some literary venues, as they are presently being proceeded with at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (or as in Franco Moretti's *Atlante del Romanzo Europeo 1800-1900*), that is for certain texts, not remotely for all, however. One may think, for instance, of Kafka's novel *The Castle*, which, at best, allows for a placing *ex negativo* (Stockhammer, 2005, p. 325). The irony here resides in the fact that a surveyor of all people attempts to extrapolate a working location, which deprives all topographic mapping and only emerges in the medium of language. Therefore, the (Zurich based) approach is hardly to be subsumed *strictu sensu* under the so-called *topographical turn* as it does not reflect the emblematic constitution of reality, which accompanies mapping. Thus, the critical question is not completely unjustified, as to which literary topography can be traced in texts – as far as they exhibit actual topographically locatable toponyms at all – if one is to sketch in the relevant place names (Döring, 2008, p. 589).

When Sigrid Weigel (2002) misinterprets the *topographical turn* as an impulse to focus on places not as narrative *topoi* but as concrete, geographically identifiable places, she downright misses its essence which involves the cultural representation of spatiality, be it in maps (Stockhammer ed., 2005) or in literary texts (Böhme ed., 2005). Now, if cartography and literature are involved in a connection to each other it becomes apparent “daß die Karte zur beglaubigten Imaginationsmatrix für Räume in Text- und Bildmedien wird, auf die sie sich

beziehen [und sich so eine] Dynamik der Konstitution von Räumen entwickelt [that the map becomes the certified imaginational matrix for spaces in text and picture media which they refer to and that a dynamic of spatial constitution is developed]” (Dünne, 2005, p. 74).

Therefore, the term *topography* is to be conceived, respectively differentiated, more precisely. It no longer merely involves place descriptions (for which there was an own terminological inventory as early as in ancient rhetoric) but also the art of 'mapping', i.e. the process of map manufacturing by means of graphic signs, on the one hand and the (metonymical) description of the product without reference to its representative, constructed character on the other hand (Miller, 1995, p. 3). As a consequence, according to the American literary critic Hillis Miller, the question emerges as to how topographical descriptions work in poems, novels or philosophical texts. Miller detects a relation between the execution of performative acts – e.g. by naming places, landscapes, rivers, lakes – and the demarcation of territories and thereby boundaries. It is language that creates the facts here: “The topography of a place is not something there already, waiting to be described, constatively. It is made, performatively, by word or other signs, for example, by a song or a poem” (ibid. p. 276).

While only the *topographical turn* focuses on the representation forms of space, the *topological turn* moves the description of spatial structures, relations, positional concerns to the fore. Road maps, for instance, are no representation of a transport network in the topographical sense, but provide information on topological positional respects (cf. Günzel, 2008, p. 226). The algebraification of geometry now allows for an abstraction of the graphic representation for the calculation of spatial relations. Ernst Cassirer already detected this process in the case of Leibniz (Cassirer, 2006, p. 489):

“Die Widersprüche, die sich aus Newtons Begriff des absoluten Raumes und der absoluten Zeit ergeben hatten, werden von Leibniz dadurch beseitigt, daß er beide statt zu Dingen, vielmehr zu Ordnungen macht. Raum und Zeit sind keine Substanzen, sondern vielmehr 'reale Relationen'; sie haben ihre wahrhafte Objektivität in der 'Wahrheit von Beziehungen', nicht in irgendeiner absoluten Wirklichkeit [The contradictions which emerged from Newton's notion of the absolute space and the absolute time are eradicated by Leibniz in that he constitutes the two rather as systems than as things. Time and space are not merely substances but rather 'real relations'. They have their veracious objectivity in the 'truth of relations' not in any absolute truth].”

Here, the circle to Lotman, who *au fond* designed the first literary topology, is closed. He was interested in how literary (cultural) applications of spatial models were implemented for non-spatial contents: “Die Sprache der räumlichen Relationen ist eines der grundlegenden Mittel zur Deutung der Wirklichkeit [The language of spatial relations is one of the fundamental means for interpreting reality]” (Lotman, 1972, p. 313). It contains the expressions for which “räumlich konkrete Sachverhalte über semiotische Operationen als Träger für nicht-räumliche Sachverhalte fungieren [spatial concrete circumstances act as carriers for non-spatial circumstances via semiotic operations]” (Krah 1999, p. 4). It is from Lotman's literary topology that the Passau based literary scholar Hans Krah derives his classification scheme of a semiotics of space and differentiates the geographical, topological, perceptive, narrative and conceptional aspect in respect of its semantification and functionalisation. The metaphorical implementation of signs for spaces thereby serves to depict non-spatial circumstances by means of rhetorical strategies (cf. ibid. p. 4).

The different characteristics of the *spatial turn* or its consequences in literary theory have therefore led to entirely different perspectives: (i) the *phenomenological* perspective traces the modalities of spatial relation, which are manifested in subjective attitudes of narrator and characters, and deduces space as product of human perception, which allows for conclusions concerning respective effective social standards and cultural values; (ii) the *cartographical* perspective proceeds from nameable relations of reference between inner- and outer-literary reality and in that misjudges the constructional character of space in literature;

(iii) the *topographical* perspective perceives literary space as imaginary geography, which – similar to cultural geography – refers to the constitutive character of social practice and therefore detects the meaning of spatial relations for the distribution of knowledge, power, prejudices, etc.; (iv) the *topological* perspective, on the other hand, bridges to the semiotic (and even rhetoric) tradition by exposing the structure of 'quasi-spatial relations' and their meaning for literature and culture. In other words, by exposing space as a sign system filled with meaning upon which social reality is constituted.

In light of a globalised world, in which cultures are merged, borders changed or abolished, communication paths interlinked, traffic routes condensed, literary theory faces the challenge of having to deal with concepts of space, which have been developed outside its own tradition, if it strives to interpret spatial aspects of its subject matter appropriately. Current cultural geographical concepts of space, for one, invite to redefine, for instance, the relationships of power, identity, territoriality in the analysis of colonial and postcolonial literature. However, one must be acquainted with the relevant conceptions in order to evade interdisciplinary misunderstandings.

## 5 Intersections between concepts of space: Cultural Geography vs. Textual Analysis as *loci* of enunciation

In the balance of tension between globalisation and regionalisation, virtual dissolution of boundaries and sub-cultural distinction and exclusion, homogenisation of lifestyles and individualisation of social practices new scopes arise for literature as “Medium kultureller Selbstausslegung [a medium of cultural self-interpretation]”: “Die Übertragung sozialwissenschaftlicher und soziokultureller Modelle auf den Raum in der Literatur heißt davon auszugehen, daß der Raum in Romanen ebenso mit seinen sozialen Codierungen funktioniert wie der physische Raum der Realität [the transference of socio-cultural models on space in literature implies that space in novels with its social codifications functions in the same way as physical space does in reality]” (Krug, 2004, p. 13). Even if the transdisciplinary notion of “culture as text”, which is strongly based on Clifford Geertz, seems somewhat stressed by now, it still inspires interdisciplinary cooperation as in the construction of notions of space in geography and in the “imaginative geography” of literary fiction or in the mediation of cultural world views by “secondary model shaping systems” of aesthetic sign complexes in the sense of Lotman, whose notion of the literary text as “Form der kulturellen Selbstwahrnehmung und Selbstthematisierung [a form of cultural self-perception and self-thematisation]” (Nünning & Sommer, 2004, p. 20) proves to still be relevant today (cf. Bachmann-Medick, 2004, p. 151). So, the *spatial turn* in social geography allows to conceptualise questions of social coding, of position and identity, of territorialisation and border crossing, in the medium of literature and to render them fertile for textual analysis (cf. Würzbach, 2001, pp. 107f).

While literary theory was able to tie on established philosophical, symbol-theoretical respectively semiotic traditions (as for instance established by Ernst Cassirer), the extension of *physical geography* by the field of *cultural geography* required a radical “new thinking” and the sign-theoretically critical reflection of cartographic practise. Only by the “culturalisation of spaces” the symbolic meaning and the linguistic-communicative *production* of spaces are moved into focus. Conversely, however, there's a warning against a “spacification of culture”, when it risks changing “Produkte sozialer und kultureller Gegebenheiten in scheinbar natürliche 'geographische Gegebenheiten' [...]: sie also zu verdinglichen und letztlich zu naturalisieren [products of social and cultural realities into seemingly natural 'geographic realities', *id est* objectifying and, in effect, naturalising them]” (Lossau, 2009, p. 32).

The projection of fictionalised spaces on geographically real spaces (à la Piatti 2008) may be suitable for a “literatouristical illustration” (and have a practical value for hikes 'on the tracks' of literary authors and/or their oeuvre). However, it confirms the declaimed concern on parts of the culture geographical side that a thus understood *spatial turn* could well lead back to a long since bettered notion of 'geo-space'. The critical reflection of a seemingly 'objective' depiction of the 'geo-space' in mapping practice corresponds in contrast to a literary *topography*, which similar to cultural geography systematically accommodates the social and cultural implications, which have entered into the cartographic modelling, i.e. conceives of literature “als mediale Praxis, [die] in bestimmter Weise an der Konstitution kultureller Räume überhaupt [mitwirkt] [as a medial practise which contributes to the constitution of cultural spaces in a specific way]” (cf. Dünne 2005, p. 73).

With even more consistency, the *topological approach* in the tradition of the Tartuan school follows the programme of interpreting, 'beyond' traditional borders of disciplines, as it were, geo-scientific mapping and literary fiction as models of reality of the respective cultures with their inherent significative *relations*. In the light of the ever increasing complexity of a multidimensionally linked-up world, the Lotman impulses gain an unexpected renewed topicality for the dialogue between natural and cultural sciences, as, in all respect to the obvious structural, modal, functional difference qualities between geo-scientific and literary perception of the 'real world', it remains equally undisputed that “alles, was im Text nicht ausdrücklich als verschieden von der wirklichen Welt erwähnt oder beschrieben wird, muß als übereinstimmend mit den Gesetzen und Bedingungen der wirklichen Welt verstanden werden [everything not explicitly mentioned or described as different from the real world, must be understood as concordant with the laws and conditions of the real world]” (Eco, 1994, p. 112).

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