

TURF WARS: THE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF SPATIAL LITERARY STUDIES AND OF LITERARY GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract: *In the aftermath of the Spatial Turn, a variety of spatial theories and their corresponding practices emerged, ranging from geocriticism, literary cartography and literary geography to geophilosophy, geohistory and geopoetics. As such, a multiplicity of critical and applied interconnections became possible, and thence spatial theories became engaged with literature, poetry, narrative theories, geography, history, cartography, sociology, philosophy and architecture, giving birth to a wide variety of fields and subfields in their own right. Given the sometimes tangential, yet opposite character of such practices, their proponents sometimes tend to become over-possessive and to egocentrically trace boundaries, thus limiting most of the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchange which may prove instrumentally beneficial for the growing body of research within spatial humanities at the moment. Marking borders could prove to be either useful, as a means of theoretical clarification, or alienating, therefore creating adversity and territorial seclusion. The endless so-called turf wars between Robert Tally Jr. and Sheila Hones as the main practitioners of spatial literary studies and literary geography, respectively, as well as their apparently similar field affiliations and methodologies, have generated a great deal of confusion with regard to the validity and the substance of both theoretical endeavours. This article is but a humble attempt to identify and explain the misconstruals and misinterpretations which have led to the current border-tracing, with a focus on affiliations, borderlines and methodologies.*

Keywords: *spatial turn, spatial literary studies, literary geography, turf wars, boundaries*