DISSESSATION ABSTRACT

In/Expressible Space: Pre-Textual, Textual, and Post-Textual Concepts of Space in Theory of Arts and Media

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This study is conceived as an interdisciplinary discussion of different concepts of space in the fields of geometry, physics, philosophy (phenomenology, ontology), textology, and the cultural analysis of different arts (primarily architecture, film, and theater). The starting presumption is that it is possible to draw an analogy between a general theory of space and a general theory of text and textuality, that is, between geometrical structures of space and narrative structures of text/textuality. Establishing this analogy, the study introduces and develops pre-textual, textual and post-textual concepts of space in the theory of arts and media.

Textual concepts of space are discursive, signifying, counter-signifying, contextual concepts of space, where discursive aspects of space are linguistic and semiological. Post-textual concepts of space are post-discursive, post-signifying, post-contextual concepts of space, that is, kinds of non-discursive aspects that cannot be reduced to linguistic and semiological models. Finally, pre-textual concepts of space are pre-discursive, pre-signifying, pre-contextual concepts of space that appear in the theory of arts and media, before the concept of text — text as a form of production of meaning — that is, before the concept of textuality. Pre-discursive concepts of space in this context are narrative concepts conceived in the classical sense of this term. Also, pre-textual concepts of space could be conceived as concepts that exist before mere text, that is, as uninterpretable (unsayable), non-discursive concepts of space that could not be written, uttered, expressed, or represented by poetry, image, theatrical event, or architectural work. Thus, pre-textual, textual, and post-textual concepts of space are not conceived as concepts that exist only in diachronic relations, but in synchronic relations, too.

The study is based on two main hypotheses. The first hypothesis, located in the context of ontology and hermeneutics, is that pre-textual concepts of space are ‘structural conditions’ of becoming of textual/post-textual concepts of space. The second hypothesis, located in the context of culture and phenomenology, is that post-textual concepts of space dislocate the discursive function of the human subject in the field of the affective body (of subject, society, and culture).

Developing these hypotheses through a methodology (inspired by Mieke Bal’s Travelling Concepts in the Humanities) that conceives concepts as flexible variables, the study aims to develop different concepts of space as discursive functions of cultures. The study also develops several of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concepts — primary lines of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization — observing them through different disciplines (geometry, physics, narratology, cultural analysis, and arts), and through these lines establishes the comparative analysis between these disciplines, offers new readings of different diagrams as specific spatial orders of society and culture, and introduces the aforementioned concepts of space in the theory of arts and media.

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