

Amalia Salvestrini
Phenomenological perspectives between space and architecture

Author: *Matteo Vegetti (ed. by), Fabrizia Bandi (ed. by)*
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The anthology edited by Matteo Vegetti and Fabrizia Bandi offers an important opportunity in the Italian context of philosophy and architecture studies to explore such a fruitful theme as spatiality. The theme is also fruitful because it allows a comparison, we might say a heuristic comparison, between the arts, precisely because of the theoretical foundation of phenomenology. The texts collected here are based on the idea that space is always that of a *possible experience*, then not measurable objective space, nor the solipsistic space of a single subject, but rather open space in an intersubjective sense, since it is constituted and constitutable by those who experience it. The relationship between philosophy and architecture, which in fact has very ancient roots, is therefore redefined by phenomenological themes that draw possible bridges for an open dialogue with other fields, arts, and knowledge: for example, with music, psychology, and new media – in short, with every aspect that implies the sometimes synaesthetic interweaving of the senses involved in the spatial experience, redefining notions such as “reality”, one’s own body, and architectural design, which today are being re-discussed in the confrontation with the virtual. Architecture thus becomes a privileged field for a multi-sensorial experience of space, a stratified experience that can be developed through phenomenological investigation, bearing in mind the implications not only on the perceptual plane but also on the level of emotion, imagination, memory, and judgements.

The common thread that guides the reader – who, as stated in the *Foreword*, may be a professor, a student, or professional architect – is therefore phenomenology, which allows the reader to delve into and develop the four fundamental nexuses in which the *Sections* of the volume are articulated. These nexuses connect the spatial experience (1) with one’s *own body*, as the extension and pre-reflective centre of every spatial perception, amplified by the multisensory interweaving; (2) with the *lived space*, where perception is sometimes related to emotion in the constitution of a space that is neither subjective nor objective: the *atmosphere* thus circumscribes a lived space, in tune with a landscape or an architecture. The anthology goes on to explore the connections (3) with *psychology*, which analyses spatial experience by tracing fields of forces in which fullness and emptiness stand out, relations between objects that determine the rules

of perception, and surfaces that indicate *affordances*; (4) culminating in a reflection on the spatiality constituted within the perimeter of a peculiar form of spatial experience, namely *virtual space*.

The volume is thus presented as a significant anthology divided into four *Sections*, preceded by a general *Introduction*, with further *Introductions* for each *Section* that contextualise and explain the texts. The original writings are in French, English, and German, and most of them have been specially translated. They are accompanied by explanatory notes and up-to-date bibliographical references, which will certainly be useful to readers who wish to delve more deeply into the many lines of enquiry that the texts reveal. As mentioned, the volume is open to dialogue with multiple disciplines. The multisensory experience of space, for example, leads to further insights that could be explored for the different senses and their interaction. I will mention here only one emblematic case, which also appears in some of the anthology's texts: the experience of sonic spatiality, which can be carried out in an imaginative and environmental sense (Piana 2013). This would open up a new chapter and further dialogue with architecture precisely on the terrain of space, configured both as a tuned space, a lived space, a space crossed by lines of tension and force, and as an imaginative integration between the senses, in a potentially infinite constitution of the whole.

Bibliography

PIANA G. (2013) – *Barlumi per una filosofia della musica*. Lulu.