

- Paper title

The Skin - Sex/Gender and Space

- Abstract (500 words)

This discussion is a comparison between the thinking system of sex/gender and theory of space on the basis of the human skin.

The basis of the comparison are the decomposition of the dual-sexes system into a multidimensional system based on the theory of Anne Fausto-Sterling and a more differentiated theory about space. This theory dissolves the absolutistic and relativistic views on space by exploring crossover scenarios and takes recent social studies into account.

The skin is the focus between sex/gender systems and theories of space because of two reasons: history and the current discussion on skin.

The sight on the skin changed rapidly through the last hundred years. Until the end of the 18th century, the skin had been seen as fragile, unordered and freely osmotic. Afterwards, it has been seen as a two-dimensional border. According to modern medical research, the „current“ skin is three-dimensional and it is a contact space which is at the same time in the state of creation and decomposition. The parameters of „outside“ and „inside“ have ceased to be discussable.

The skin is one of the intermediary instances in the question of sex/gender-systems. On the one hand, the skin is an essential part of the body, and bodies always have a sex. But is it necessary to classify „sex“ within a dualistic system?

Most researchers in the natural sciences do not question the current dualistic division at all. Anne Fausto-Sterling is one of the few biologists which challenge this system. On the other hand, the sociological human sexually connotated body becomes manifested by means of the skin. The behavior of a human with their particular role is engraved in their skin.

The skin is interface and also interventional instance between the space of the body, the social space and a higher-ordered „space-view“ („Raumvorstellung“). The skins is affected by the fact that the human body has no relevance within an absolutistic conception of space but a central meaning within a relativistic conception of space. Additionally, sociological components are becoming more relevant. By means of social acts of human bodyspaces, social places develop. The way I move in space and accordingly realise this space manifests on the skin. The way I think the skin is the way I recognise the space.

Neither the science of physics nor philosophy nor sociology are able to find a comprehensive conception of space. Only an interdisciplinary approach can provide distinctiveness.

Why should the question of sexes be solved in a dualistic way, even if central categories as body or space are not answerable by dualistic models?

Even the achievement of the celebrated duality between sex and gender has shown to be inappropriate for a non-hierarchical classification.

It is therefore necessary to work in an interdisciplinary way in the question of sexes and to not allow the cultural sciences to define the ascription of sexes alone.

Biology and the other natural sciences are therefore demanded to research.

- Biography (150 words)

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2006 Article „The Skin as Gendered Category“ in [prologue] nr.2

2005 Performance at [prologue] new feminism / new europe. Cornerhouse, Manchester / United Kingdom

since 1998 media-artist, installations, videos,.. sometimes alone sometimes together with Johannes M. Zmöltnig or others. <http://umlaeute.mur.at/projects>

2004 Diploma “.body.space.gender.SKINS“

1997-2004 Study of Architecture

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- Institutional affiliation or group

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- Area of discussion

Bodies, cultures and scientific metaphors