

Giordano Bruno and the Geometry of Language

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Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity



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Giordano Bruno and the Geometry of Language brings to the fore a sixteenth-century philosopher's role in early modern Europe as a bridge between science and literature, or more specifically, between the spatial paradigm of geometry and that of language. Arielle Saiber examines how, to invite what Bruno believed to be an infinite universe-its qualities and vicissitudes-into the world of language, Bruno forged a system of 'figurative' vocabularies: number, form, space, and word. This verbal and symbolic system in which geometric figures are seen to underlie rhetorical figures, is what Saiber calls 'geometric rhetoric.'

Through analysis of Bruno's writings, Saiber shows how Bruno's writing necessitates a crafting of space, and is, in essence, a lexicon of spatial concepts. This study constitutes an original contribution both to scholarship on Bruno and to the fields of early modern scientific and literary studies. It also addresses the broader question of what role geometry has in the formation of any language and literature of any place and time.

Contents

Introduction; Axioms: Part I: theories of geometric space and form in literature pre-Bruno; Part II: theories of geometric space and form in literature post-Bruno; Foci: Brunophilia, Brunophobia; Bruno and geometry; Bruno and language; Lines: The Candle Bearer; Lists: brachylogia and systrophe; Diversion: hyperbaton; Angles: The Heroic Frenzies; Contradiction: oxymoron and syneciosis; Intersection: chiasmus and syllepsis; Reflection: epanodos and traductio; Curves: The Ash Wednesday Supper; Hyperbola-hyperbole; Ellipse-ellipsis; Circle-circumlocution; The point; Bibliography; Index.

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