

CHAPTER ONE:

THERE IS A UNIQUE ORDER TO THE ARTS. TIME, SPACE AND REALITY

More Technical Version

A traditional problem in aesthetics is to determine whether the arts can be placed into a unique order. To achieve this, a single criterion is sought for, or if not one then the least possible number of criteria, that allows us, always in the same way, to compare any art with any other, and always with equally revealing results. I believe that I have found such a criterion, sufficient by itself, to make all these comparisons. It is the proportionate role that time and space play to each other within our experience of a work of art. If we place the arts in a certain order, this proportion changes in a uniform way. The more that time plays a role in our experience of an art the less does space. Conversely, the more space plays a role in this experience, the less time does.

Using only time and space as measuring rods, and in accordance with this principle of inverse proportionality, the arts may be ranged before us along a noble spectrum, proceeding from the most temporal art to the most spatial art¹. The order of the arts on the spectrum, stated from the most temporal art to the most spatial is: music, poetry, animation, dance, theatre, literature, film, painting (and photography), sculpture, and architecture. This order only emerges when we confine ourselves to examining our experience of art. It disappears if what we are considering is either the process of creating a work of art or the physical causality that underlies our experience of an art. This book is therefore devoted to adducing evidence for how time and space function in our experience of each art, and to thereby justify the order we have stated for the spectrum.

In the "Critique of Pure Reason" Kant states that there is no way to imagine an object unless we picture it occupying space and picture it enduring through time. Though they are of fundamentally different natures, space and time must both be present for there to be an underlying basis, or reality, in which to perceive the existence of an object. Kant conceives that there is only one such reality which in this book we refer to as the "everyday reality". We enlarge upon this and state that a reality results *whenever* space and time are combined, and that this can occur in differing proportions, so that there is a plural number of realities. What distinguishes the everyday reality from the others is that time and space contribute in equal measure in our experience of it. The creation of a work of art must begin from within the everyday reality, but it has the power to loosen the equal embrace of time and space, allowing one or the other to play a greater role by suppressing to some degree the other. The spectrum of the arts, by considering only space and time, embraces not only the realities of the arts but the everyday reality as well. Thus through our daily lives and through our experience of art we have access to all of the realities along the spectrum.

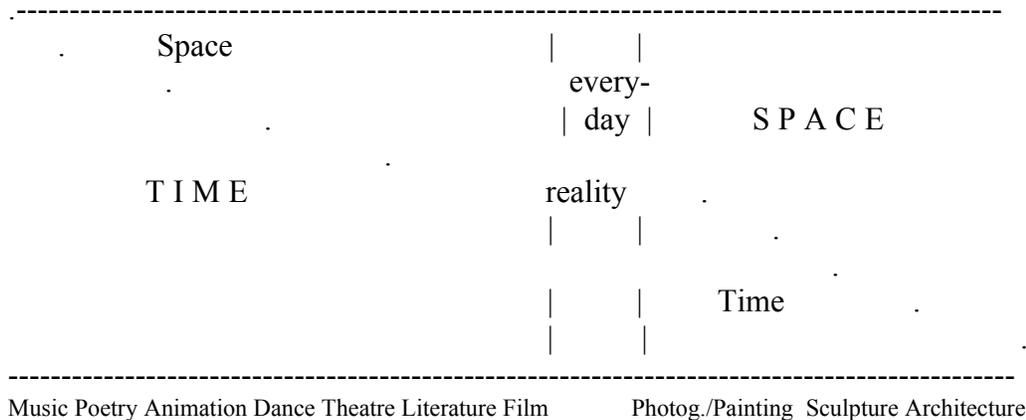
> WHY ENCUMBER ART WITH PHILOSOPHY

Since it is to the experience of art that we must turn for evidence of the working out of the spectrum, what we discover will help us understand how we react to art, validating some of our deepest emotional experiences. It will also help us understand why we react differently to different arts². Through just space and time, we obtain essential insights into the nature of each single art, as well as enabling us to make highly revealing contrasts between one art and another. Thus, for the

art lover, there are advantages to looking to philosophy. It enhances rather than diminishes the intensity of artistic experience³.

> A DIAGRAM OF THE SPECTRUM

To understand the spectrum properly we should consider how vitally different the natures of space and time are from each other. We postpone this briefly in order that we can offer as early as possible a diagram of the spectrum. We must simply bear in mind that the diagram it is limited by the fact that, though it attempts to represent a relation between time and space, it has to depict time spatially, and thus oversimplifies the complexity and richness of the relation between the two. The most temporal art, music, is at the left end of the diagram. This choice is arbitrary, although it is probably not a coincidence that I am a musician, I am left handed, and have always been more fascinated by time than by space.



A difference can be noted between the two end points. Music represents the real possibility of experiencing time without space⁴. The opposite case, an art in space alone in which time plays no role, is not possible, since art is something we experience and there is no experience without the time enduring in our own consciousness. The spectrum includes the everyday reality at its center, and thus not by way of an exception, but as part of a broader view of reality. In the everyday reality space and time are locked together in a dynamic equilibrium in which each limits the other as much as the other limits it. When one is put out of balance with the other, when the knot having tied them together is loosened, we have art.

Given that time is represented spatially in the diagram, there can be no meaning to the question of how much *room* an art takes on the spectrum, or how *close* one art is to another. More fundamentally, there is no unit of measurement of by *how much* time or space has increased or decreased in its role relative to the other as we move from one art to the next. Time is not quantifiable and thus cannot be measured in the same way that spaces. We address this shortly. Without a common measuring standard, we cannot determine whether there are any *gaps* along the spectrum, that perhaps will become filled in the future by newly created arts. Even the word *proportion*⁵ which we have been using freely so far is at best a vague term. The terms entering into a ratio must be expressible in the same unit of measurement. Time refuses to be measured in space. At best the term proportion is meant as a suggestive metaphor. The diagram tells us just one thing: that if we move from one art to the next, there has been an inverse change in the contributions of space and time.

> THE RECIPE FOR A REALITY: TIME AND SPACE

If we liken the creation of a reality to the combining of ingredients in a recipe, then each reality requires a different proportion of the two indispensable ingredients, time and space. Some arts require a proportion which favors time over space, others reverse this. Additional ingredients will be added, which lend the particular *empirical* savor that each art has, but space and time remain their silent, underlying props. Space and time are often taken for granted, that we easily overlook their impact in our experiences. When first asked to contrast one art from another, we are drawn to their outward traits. Music is an art that deals with abstract sounds, dance is an art in which we see human bodies in motion, painting is an art in which we see colored pigments applied to a surface, and so forth. Empirical traits, though, provide no consistent basis for comparisons among the arts. For this we need time and space.

> TIME, SPACE, AND CAUSALITY

In the attempt to join space and time, reality is created. With help from the philosophers Schopenhauer and Bergson, we now look more closely into their individual natures. By understanding their differences provides we find the a bases for detecting what in our experience eof art is an effect of time and what is an effect of space. The same two authors then help us understand the nature of the everyday reality. The quotes that follow are from "The World as Will and Idea", Book One, by Arthur Schopenhauer (Modern Library edition, "The Philosophy of Schopenhauer", edited by Irwin Edman), and "Time and Free Will", also known as "An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness", by Henri Bergson, NY, The Macmillan Co.

Schopenhauer says that "succession is the whole nature of time". "In time, each instant is, only in so far as it has effaced the preceding one, its generator, to be itself in turn as quickly effaced." Time is thus fleeting and as a result whatever is in the world must suffer change. Bergson sees time differently. The past is not effaced, it is automatically preserved into the present through memory. The future, especially for living bodies, is unpredictable, even radically unforeseeable. Art, in particular, invents the unforeseen. The intellect is designed to ignore what is new and different in the present and generalize what we are encounter to similar things in the past. This way we can react promptly and safely to the situations around us. The uniqueness of the present, impinging on an unknown future, becomes submerged by the growing weight of the past. The newness of the present impinging on the unknown future is suppressed. Intellectual time is not living time, it is space disguised to look like time. Real time we must live *through*, as when we wait for a cube of sugar to sweeten our coffee. To space belongs notions of quantity and measurability, where things can be set side by side. Time is not quantifiable. It is quality, and its *moments* interpenetrate⁶. Time leads inwards, space leads outwards⁷. "We can...conceive of succession without distinction, and think of it as a mutual penetration, an interconnection and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought. Such is the account of duration which would be given by a being who was ever the same and ever changing, and who had no idea of space. But, familiar with the latter idea and indeed beset by it, we introduce it unwittingly into our feeling of pure succession; we set our states of

consciousness side by side in such a way as to perceive them simultaneously, no longer in one another, but alongside one another; in a word, we project time into space, we express duration in terms of extensity, and succession thus takes the form a continuous line or a chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another." "Now, when we speak of an *order* of succession in duration, and of the reversibility⁸ of this order", it implies that we can set them "side by side", as if in space.

> THE EVERYDAY REALITY

Here we consider the way space and time interact in the everyday reality so as to better understand how interact in the artistic realities. It is in *matter* that Schopenhauer sees the coalescence of their interaction and mutual limiting. Matter, which "fills" time and space, is "nothing more than causation."⁹ "Its true being is its action." "Time and space, each for itself, can be mentally presented apart from matter, whereas matter cannot be so presented apart from time and space. The form which is inseparable from it presupposes space, and the action in which its very existence consists, always imports some change, in other words a determination in time." Space by itself is no more than the possibility of the reciprocal "determination of its parts by each other, which is called position." Space and time lend *opposing* traits to matter. Space is fixed. An object in space has a position, and while it can move, the positions, and space itself, are fixed and unchanging. If something is in the process of changing, it is changing through time. "...space and time are not only, each for itself, presupposed by matter, but a union of the two constitutes its essence." Matter and causality need never have arisen except that time and space have in fact been brought into relation with each other. "All the innumerable conceivable phenomena and conditions of things might be co-existent in boundless space without limiting each other, or might be successive in endless time without interfering with each other: thus a necessary relation of these phenomena to each other, and a law which should regulate them according to such a relation is by no means needful." "So long as each of these forms preserves for itself its condition and its course without any connection with the other, there can be no causation, and since causation constitutes the essential nature of matter, there can be no matter. If, as Schopenhauer says, space and time need not have entered into a relationship with each other, we may then legitimately ask: if they do form a relationship, is the only possibility of such a relationship that of being in exactly equal balance. It is by answering in the negative, that the basis is laid for the notion that each art lives in its own reality.

"Matter must take to itself at once the distinguishing qualities both of space and time, however much these may be opposed to each other, and must unite in itself what is impossible for each of these independently, that is, the fleeting course of time, with the rigid unchangeable perdurance of space." "If the world were in space alone, it would be rigid and immovable, without succession, without change, without action; but we know that with action, the idea of matter first appears. Again, if the world were in time alone, all would be fleeting, without persistence, without contiguity, hence without co-existence, and consequently without permanence; so that in this case also there would be no matter."

Neither space nor time can be derived from the other. Time brings change while space holds position. Time leads inwards to qualitative states of consciousness, while space leads outwards to measurable, quantitative entities. Since as role of one decreases it falls more and more under the control of the other, a state in which time and space are both fully manifested is impossible.

Material objects exist in the everyday reality. There are phenomena populating the artistic realities too, but they will differ in various ways from material objects because of the tilting in the balance of space and time.

> THAT CAUSE AND EFFECT SUBSIDES IN THE ARTS

Outside of the everyday reality, as space or time progressively becomes freer of the other, things that *could* have arisen in one, were it *not* for limitations imposed on it by the other, *can* occur. In the everyday reality the here of space is locked with the now of time. Any change by an object in space must be accompanied by a change in time. Such changes must be continuousness, there can be no gaps in either space or time. This tight knot is loosened in the arts. The here can wander from the now: as in a play when suddenly we are in a new location, or in painting where nothing we can do in our now will affect the here of the painting. The now can wander from the here, as when we enter the mind of a character in a story reminiscing about the past, or in music, where there is no here at all. In the everyday reality two objects cannot be in the same place at the same time, but it is possible in a double exposure photograph.

In the everyday reality, once a process of cause and effect is begun, it proceeds at a fixed *rate* of time towards an inevitable conclusion. In art this rate can be varied. In a painting we can savor the approach of something without its arrival ever causing our pleasure to subside. In theatre or literature, intervening states en route to the conclusion can be omitted so that the conclusion is reached faster than it would be in the everyday world. We do not have to wait *through* the interim. In poetry and music what would have been intervening states can occur simultaneously.

> THE EXCLUSIVITY OF REALITY

The term reality usually means "the ways things *are*", that any other way would be *un-real*. If we are given various candidates for "reality-hood" we should eventually be able to prove that all but one are imposters or shams. The premise of the spectrum of the arts is founded however on the notion that there are plurality of realities. Is there a contradiction? We can retain the notion of exclusivity in spite of plural realities if we grant that while we are *in* any reality, it appears to us as if it is the *only* reality.

When we look at the painting of a village, we believe the reality in the painting extends indefinitely in all directions, a feeling not contradicted in any way by the space of the surrounding room in the museum. The *here* of space has taken up abode in the painting's space, not in the everyday space, this during the "artistic time" in which we commune deeply with the work. Immersed in the reality of Hamlet, the history of time is not filled with the events of our own life but with the succession of Danish monarchs. The burning issue about the future is who will rule Denmark next. Once in the artistic time of the play, the "artistic space" extends itself outwards infinitely in all directions. It is the work which defines what of time and space is available to us. Whatever way we may go we are in Denmark, and home would be a *long* way off. Our home may not even exist in the timeframe of the work. Getting home requires our exiting the artistic space and the artistic time which compose the artistic reality. If I'm looking at a beautiful landscape painting, I feel no danger that further down that bucolic stream, past where I can now see it, is a chemical factory spilling pollution into the water. There is a sense of completeness to the artistic reality. Here affects and by implication

extends to there. When listening to a great performance of a great symphony, we are held thrall to its world of sounds, and unless by an act of will we put ourselves back into the everyday reality, we cannot imagine a time when the sounds were not sounding. Now has taken up abode in the music's time and not in the everyday time. In these ways, artistic reality retains the exclusivity we expect of reality. Only as we exit one enter another that we briefly experience a pause in this exclusivity.

Nothing prevents the artist from intentionally trying to blur the boundaries between realities. One reality then has the potential of affecting our perception of the other. We ourselves can cause such blurring. Months after seeing a Japanese landscape painting I can suddenly marvel at how the form of a tree in my local park exhibits the spirit of that painting. It is no longer art imitating nature, it is nature imitating art. Long after seeing a group sculpture by Giacometti, I pause in the street and see in the people passing by the same mixture of aesthetic coordination, yet unawareness of each other, as I noticed in the sculpture. Boundaries between realities also blur when art itself become self-reflective, commenting on its own creation and blurring the creation and experience phase¹⁰.

> THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE EVERYDAY REALITY AND AN ARTISTIC >> REALITY

If we are sometimes in an artistic reality and sometimes in the everyday reality, there must times and places where a transition occurs. As I first approach a painting in a museum room, the space inside its frame is a continuation of the space of the room surrounding it. If it is an effective work of art, the space within the frame will come to set itself apart from the everyday space, and become the space of a different, artistic, reality. Once immersed in the artistic reality we loose sight of the portal that let us in from the everyday reality. Our ego is quieted so that we cease to feel a past that could have been outside the current reality. When returning to the everyday reality, I will not feel that any disruption to its time flow. The same may be said with regard to the space.

The aroma of the previous reality sometimes lingers into the new reality, as when we wake from a vivid dream and its mood colors our newly awakening consciousness. Sometimes a work of art will take its initial momentum from the content of the everyday reality, then gradually steering in a new direction. Exiting the artistic reality of a great work of art can be confusing: "I knew where I was, when I was in the *realer* space of the work, but where am I now?" Or, "I knew *when* it was when I was in the realer time of the work of art, but now when is it?" The same transition can entail a sense of loss or pain.: "Sweet sounds, oh beautiful music, do not cease! Reject me not into the world again" (from "On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven" by Edna St. Vincent Milay). Applause, because it suddenly makes us aware again of the audience sitting around us in the everyday space of the theatre, is in part a ritual allowing for closure in time of the artistic reality.

The intersection between the everyday and artistic reality can also be overlooked altogether. I am driving along a road past houses and stores. At some point I pass over a short, inconspicuous bridge. If I had happened to stop right there, and gotten out of the car, I might have noticed that underneath the bridge was an inviting stream, flowing at right angles off the road into a beautiful woods, never to cross the road again. At that brief moment two realities crossed, and we had a choice of which way to go. Even if we are aware of the choice, the force of custom often urges us onward past the bridge to save the stream "for another day". Yet it would have taken only a simple turning to the side to be able to enter a different reality, and who knows how long we would have

chosen to remain in it. Art intersects with us in many places and at many times, noticeable by us if we pause long enough.

> SETTING THE NEW REALITY APART FROM THE OLD

The work of art takes its inception within the everyday reality. A sizable proportion of a work of art's energy and structure is designed to hold the experiencer's attention and to maintain the separateness of its reality and prevent it from being swallowed again into the everyday reality¹¹. The walls around a painting in a gallery are of neutral color and without features that would distract our attention. In contrast, the painting often has something that will attract our interest. A sculpture is often surrounded by empty air, which has no form of its own that will compete with the sculpture.

In general the environment in which a work is experienced is controlled so as to subdue competing sensory claims and "noise" from the everyday environment. An unrehearsed conversation between friends usually includes a good deal of pauses, interruptions and distractions. A theatre conversation can be free of dissipating silences and hesitations. The theatre building, like the concert hall and the museum¹², is designed to buffer external noises. All but the stage is darkened, to quiet the audience and decrease its awareness of itself, and to focus its attention on stage. The result is a finely tuned environment able to amplify subtle suggestions and influences. In this manner the subtle can effectively compete with the blatant. A more underlying reason for the exclusion of the everyday reality is that our attention to the latter is often a matter of survival. To absorb our complete attention, the artistic environment must take steps to be safe. This, in turn, is what requires excluding as much as possible of the everyday reality from which dangers can arise.

The everyday reality has at its command endless space and endless time. Data from many unrelated events bombard us at all times. To sustain itself against these odds, the work must impose limits upon itself. Through focus and concentration a work of art holds our attention. The work must contain enough variety that it does not become monotonous, yet not be so unbounded that it cannot effectively work out as completely as needed the themes that it raises. Art, to sustain focus, must be finite in size and duration.

Distance can be a factor in establishing an artistic reality. If we look at the painting from too far away it remains a portion of the everyday reality. As we approach, it stops being a part of something else and becomes a world unto itself. If we approach too closely, the reality depicted in a painting vanishes into flecks of pigment or brushstrokes (items belonging to the everyday reality). The artistic reality is dispelled because we become too aware of the everyday devices that create its illusion. The Flemish miniaturists enjoyed the challenge of retaining the illusion no matter how close the eye of the viewer came. The reality of a non-representational painting is less sensitive to distance. Van Gogh encourages us to be aware of represented forms *and* pigment without the latter reality supplanting the former. If we approach a statue too closely, the believable human semblance is belied by its assertion of the non-human materiality or its wood, stone or bronze. The illusion that the actor is the character depicts disappears if we can see the makeup and contrivances taken to project the artistic persona. We lose an artistic reality whenever we become too aware of how it is put together or how it is being made to be art. Music, which is an aural art, remains music even if

heard in the distance outside the concert hall. It is more a function of the when of the music than the where. It is only dispelled by other sounds.

> EMPHASIZING AND DEEMPHASIZING CERTAIN SENSES

Working hand in hand with the reduction of distractions from the everyday environment is that art often limits the number of senses by which it transmits its information to the experiencer. It is like knowing at what bandwidth {? Frequency??} information is being broadcast, so that we can focus our attention to just the right one or ones. The externally arriving sensory data from painting is just visual. Rather than this being an impoverishment of the senses versus the everyday reality, it actually creates the possibility of sensations from other senses to arise through our imagination that are directly in response to the visual content of the work, and which else would have been "drowned out" in the everyday environment. This guarantees that the imagined sensations are consistent with the visual input of the work. As a result, all the aroused senses are aesthetically consistent. It is the absence, for example, of sounds from or nearby the painting, that assures us that, if we hear sounds in our imagination, they will be in artistic accord with the sights. Sensations of sound, odor, touch, heat and cold, can all arise in response to the visual sensations of the painting, and will add rather than distract, as they would in the everyday reality, from the artistic reality being formed in our experience of the work.

When we hear a poem being read aloud, the primary sensory experience is aural, but the meanings of the words evoke visual images in our imagination, which then become part of the rich sensuous makeup of the poem. This is the reverse of the situation in painting. Seeing is a distraction in music. If music evokes images in the imagination, they will be more aesthetically in accord with the sounds than are the images seen by are eyes of the musicians playing.

> WHICH SENSES PERTAIN TO WHICH ARTS

We call a sense "primary" (p) if it originates externally from within the work of art, and "imaginary" (i) if it is stimulated in our imagination by the primary sensations of the work¹³. Primary sensations would be noted by scientific instruments. By the kinesthetic sense, I mean what it feels like to contract our muscles and move parts of our body.

	sight	touch	hearing	odor	taste	kinesthetic
Music			p			i
Poetry	i	i	p	i	i	i
Animation	p					i
Dance	p	i				i
Theatre	p	i	p	i	i	i
Literature	i	i	p	i	i	i
Film	p	i	p*	i	i	i
Painting	p	i	i	i	i	i
Sculpture	p	p	i	i		i
Architecture	p	p	p	p		p

In the arts that rely on printed words (poetry, theatre and literature), I consider the visual appearance of the words incidental to the sounds of those words. The asterisk next to hearing in film indicates that there is a fundamental question to resolve as to whether the role of sound in film is on an equal footing with sight. This is dealt with in the chapter on film. The arts at the beginning of both the temporal and spatial sides of the spectrum use only one primary sense. The art that supplies us with the greatest number primary senses is architecture, which seeks to stand in place of our everyday environment.

> A DEFINITION OF REALITY

We said a little above that the sensations coming directly from the work of art (its "primary" sensations) embody a change in the proportion in which the senses normally occur in the everyday reality. We add to this the fact, to be established in chapter two, that certain senses inwardly to time or outwardly to space. The position of an art on the spectrum is therefore influenced by which senses are primary in it and which are imaginary¹⁴.

We receive impressions of the world through various sense organs. Each functions independently of the others, at least up to the point when their data become merged in consciousness. This merger occurs subsequently to the excitation of the organs. Until then, there is nothing about the data from any one sense that implies the need of its becoming coordinated with another. It is only if we have experienced the result of this coordination, that we know that connection indeed occurs. Once they are connected then, if at one and the same time, we feel a sudden chill, hear a rustling sound in the leaves, and see the motion of branches, we join those sensations together in an awareness of the single experience of a sudden wind. Before the senses merge, nothing about chilliness, for example, implies the sound of the wind or the sight of the moving branches

> DO THE SENSES FORM A COMPLETE SET. MISSING, OR NEW, SENSES

Given initially only that there are different senses, and that in the future we intend for them to become correlated, is there any a priori way of deciding how this coordination should occur? Is there more than one way to effect this coordination? If so, are we obliged always use all the senses, or can we use just some of them? To answer this last question we can examine whether all our senses, taken together, form a logically complete set. In what way could they not be complete?

In order to conceive what a new sense could be like, one that we do not already possess, it is useful to remove, from those we do have, any one at random, then see if there is anything about the remaining ones that implies the need for the one we have removed, or what its nature would be like. If the senses were more alike, there would be a common variable among them, just as on our spectrum, and we could see at a glance if some value of this variable is missing. We could then speculate as to whether, some day, a new sense might evolve to fill the gap we discovered. However, there is no such variable, there is no way for defining what a logically *complete* set of senses would be. In spite of this we have grown up assuming that our senses are complete, that any limitation in one is made up for by one or more of the others. If we cannot see a certain object, for instance, we often can hear it, smell it or touch it. Reality always appears to us under an attitude of *completeness*. If there are *holes*, they are by definition invisible because not of the nature of what we are aware of. If there is something lacking, we can only speculate abstractly about it. We know

from science, for instance, that eye does not respond to electromagnetic radiation above or below certain frequencies. We would never have detected that limitation from just seeing or from data from the other senses, nor can picture what ultraviolet or infrared would *look like*. We see what we see, we do not see what we do not see. We perceive what is, we cannot perceive what is not.

No sense implies another. If we had been born with just one sense, the others being granted to us later, there would have been nothing in what we perceived originally, via that one sense, that would have suggested to us that any other sense need exist. Even less would there be any indication that, if there *were* to be other senses, in what ways they might relate to one another, or that we could coordinate them at all. This is due to the fact that each sense is radically different than each other in how it appears to us in consciousness. There is nothing within what it sounds like to hear things, to suggest what it would look like to see things. It is only because we do see as well as hear, that when we hear something, we can attach it to the visual image of an object producing the sound

If, then, we have no way of telling whether our senses form, a priori, a complete set, and if accept that there is nothing predestined about their being together, we may speculate as to what would happen if they were put together in different ways, some participating more than our norm, and some less. The joining, if and when it occurs, can occur in many ways and in many different proportions. Considering the distinction we have made between primary and imagined sense impressions, the different proportions in coordinating the senses has a role in creating the different artistic realities. That some senses lead inwards and others lead outwards (to be discussed in chapter two), different mixtures of the senses produce different proportions of time to space and therefore directly influence the placement of an art on the spectrum.

> CREATING A REALITY BY TYING TOGETHER THE DIFFERENT SENSES

We forge a reality when we tie the senses together. The nature of reality depends on the way they are tied together. Reality is *not*, a priori, destined to be a given or single way, for instance the way it is in the everyday world. The everyday reality was forged when through repeated experiences we noted what sensations from one sense always occurred at the same time as what sensations from other senses. The "motive" for noticing these coincidences are the needs of survival, avoiding pain and obtaining pleasure. Thus the forging of the everyday reality probably did not occur when we were born, but started to occur as we learned to tune together our different sensations in response to our immediate needs in time.

> OBJECTS IN THE EVERYDAY REALITY

A chief characteristic of the everyday reality is that when the senses are coordinated together, what we end up with is not equal to the sum or amalgam of the parts, but through the intervention of the understanding becomes something altogether different: an object. In place of the multiplicity of sensations we are faced with the singleness of reality. The object, as an entity, different than what any one sense provides, and to which any sense can attach itself according to certain principles. While no sense alone provides anything tangible onto which to attach sensation from another sense, the object does. In reality, we see the act of unification of vastly different modalities of sounds, sights, touches, etc., under an entity sufficiently abstract to tolerate all their contributions, the object.

We receive impulses of light, sound and odor, but end up with a "tree". The tree did not reside in the sensations from any one sense, even sight. The object is a vessel whose solvent is capable of receiving data from all the senses. That which intervenes between the arrival in our brain of the separate impressions of the senses, and the occurrence of our awareness of an object, is the reality-forging act. Lights, sounds, and smells, are all transcended, as sensations, at the moment we perceive the object. The object mediates the profound differences between the innate forms of the different senses. Ordinarily we are not aware of how different the perception of an object is from the impressions of the senses. We think that the senses directly provide us with the object. However, in doing so, we are starting with the effect, the object, and positing it back into its causes, the senses. We think of the senses as being *ready* to be coordinated, exhibiting a magnetic attraction for each other, but only because the object is already in front of us. We say that "we see an object" even that "we see reality"; though the sense of sight is not alone responsible for our perceiving the object. We act as if the object existed all along, prior to the sensations, and it is from the *object* that we become aware of the senses. It is the tree, a *real* object, that we think appears brown and green, whose leaves we hear rustling in the wind, whose fragrance we perceive with our nose. It is the object that seems thus with regard to the senses. We ignore that we begin actually with the green the resulting and the aroma, and then relate them back into the past where we have already formed the object. We are unconscious of how our understanding chose to take the scissors of perception, and from among the wealth of shapes and colors filling our visual field, cut out just a certain boundary line, and then claim that what lies within it belongs together, but not what lies outside it.

If we had considered the shapes and colors as just shapes and colors, on aesthetic grounds or on formal spatial grounds, we might have formed an entirely different entity, one that may have included parts of the tree but also parts of sky and whatever else abuts the tree.

> UNTYING AND RETYING THE SENSES TOGETHER

If we try to resolve the tree back into the separate sensations out of which it is formed, it is hard to loose the notion that the object was somehow already there prior to identifying the contributions of the different senses. If we could however loose what is but a notion, the sensations would fall apart from each other. They would no longer be tied together by the act of reality making; moreover once it is possible to untie them, we can consider other ways of tying them in the first place, ways that include the artistic realities.

The particular manner in which the senses are tied together is tantamount to the act of forging a reality. Under ordinary circumstances the making of a reality, specifically the everyday reality, occurs unconsciously. Art begins with a conscious act of untying the senses, and then retying them in a different manner. Once the senses are untied, everyday objects are dissolved. They will be replaced eventually by other types of entities: objects that have fallen out of the net of cause and effect. First, however, we are left with the raw data of the senses. Our eyes "see" only light, shadow, color, and shapes that are not yet objects. We can at this stage appreciate these sensations for themselves, disconnected from objects, and disconnected from the other senses. In effect we can take a single sense further than we do ordinarily, savoring it for its own virtues, allowing it to arouse expectations regarding the other senses that will not be contradicted were these other senses

already present. If we then combine it with other senses, we can take steps within the reality we are creating for the other senses to live up to the implications in the original sense. In the meanwhile the artist relishes the differences that exist between sights, sounds, touches, and can hold onto each without feeling the compulsion just yet to combine them. The artist in effect undoes the habits of a lifetime. The impetus to this de-constructive-constructive act on the artist's part may be nothing more serious than momentarily being engrossed in the output of one sense: the colors of a sunset, for instance, or the sounds of a stream. In the heightened state of awareness that results, no lack is felt from the absence of the other senses. A reality can then be created in accord with the completeness already in this experience.

When the senses are un-tethered from each other new realities may gather and form. The artist initially proceeds in the opposite direction of the norm: separating what had been assumed to be single, re-attaining the innocence of newborn sensation.

> TYPES OF MEANING ENCOUNTERED IN ART

In our analysis of the arts we will be searching for the roles that space and time play in our experience. To do this we will need to separate out the contributions of other things that appear in with these experiences. In particular, whenever we perceive a "meaning" in art it often does not have to do with space or time in their pure modalities. It is also not always obvious when we are perceiving meanings. They can come up unawares. To help identify these manifestations, I find it useful to distinguish four types of meaning. These are not hard and fast categories. There is overlap.

> OBJECT-MEANING

The only things entering the eye are random patches of colors and shades of light and dark. If, on the basis of this raw sense data alone we then say that we are "seeing a tree", we are adding a certain type of meaning to the sensations, not found in the sensations themselves. Something has intervened from outside the sensations themselves to transform them into an object. In seeing a tree we are applying a meaning, object-meaning, to sensation¹⁵. In terms of aesthetic reasons, there may be little to explain why just certain patches of light and not others were joined to form the object. If we remain too aware of objects, we will be dissuaded from seeing the purely spatial characteristics of the visual field. Once hypostasized, the object will persist in our mind independently of the comings and goings of sensations. In a way the fact of this persistence is itself the object. Color may change, the angle of view may change, but the object persists. In creating an object, we transcend the limitations of time and space. A tree does not change its identity if today it is swaying in the wind, or if in October its leaves change color. It will be the *same* tree in winter when its branches are barren or covered in white. The object tree does not change its identity if we see a tree in a different location. We are moving away from space and time both when we posit an object in place of our sensations. By being indifferent to the accidents of here and now, our perception of the object tree is largely insensitive to what makes this tree different than other trees. The unique is what art seeks.

> VERBAL-MEANING

When reading, the moment we become aware of the meaning of a word, its visual appearance no longer matters. We are rarely conscious at all of the shapes of the words and letters, because the transition from sensation to verbal-meaning occurs so quickly¹⁶. The same is true of meaning and sound. We entertain awareness of the language sounds long enough for us to key into the meaning it sometimes unwillingly carries on its back. As with object-meaning, we believe that we directly *see* or *hear* a word and not an array of sizes and shapes, or phonemes and sounds. The meaning, though, is just that which is not the temporary effect of visual form in space or sound in time. It remains when the sensations evoking it go away. It is independent of time and space. Thus, as with object-meaning, verbal-meaning takes us away from the role space and time play in our experience.

> UTILITY-MEANING

Looking at a fork at a dinner table, we already imagine how our hand will form around its handle and what motions we will use to eat with it. We see its use in its appearance, we know what it *does*. This is different than object-meaning (or verbal-meaning). It is utility-meaning.

> HUMAN-MEANING

There is one more type of meaning worth considering. When the mathematician draws a set of parallel lines, each line is simultaneously conforming to the single unifying concept of parallelism. Neither has a will of its own. Neither has been *motivated* to come into this relation with the other. If we see two humans in a similar alignment, we often impute to a motive or emotional meaning to its occurrence. Mutual approach can suggest friendship, or some other positive form of attraction. With different gestures or facial expressions, we will see the motions as adversarial, pre-combative. Two people facing away from each other can suggest ignorance, neglect, dislike or repulsion.

Human-meaning arises naturally in art, especially if human figures are present, as they are in dance, theory, film or painting. When dancers approach each other, it is difficult to see what's happening purely in terms of abstract relations in space and time. We often feel some emotional relation between the two, and may even go so far as to spontaneously conjecture a story to explain their approach. To the extent that we anthropomorphize inanimate objects, they too will be endowed with a "human-meaning". As with the other three types of meaning, when considering meaning we can be led away from the purely temporal or spatial content of our experience.

> PLAN OF THE REST OF THE BOOK

In the diagram of the spectrum earlier in this chapter, music appears on the left and architecture on the right. This was an arbitrary choice, but we honor it throughout the book. Arts to the left of the middle of the spectrum are called "temporal arts", those to the right, "spatial arts". "Rightwards" refers to motion towards more spatial arts, "leftwards" to motion towards more temporal arts. The remainder of the book follows the spectrum from "left" to "right", devoting a chapter to each art. The chapter on music includes remarks about the temporal arts in general and artistic time in particular. A chapter devoted to the spatial arts in general and artistic space in particular appears between the chapters on film and painting. It includes a summary of the basic differences between

temporal and spatial arts. Throughout we use the single word spectrum when referring to the ordering of the arts on the basis of the gradually changing inverse proportionality of time and space.

> OTHER PROCEDURES I MIGHT HAVE FOLLOWED

How an artist creates a work bears similarities to how a mother bears a child. The child develops most of the characteristics of its form during the period of gestation, but once born into the world becomes a separate individual and pursues its own life. What the creator receives back from this new individual is different than what s/he put into it to create it. The activities that go into the making of a work of art take place in the everyday reality and must obey the laws of cause and effect. After its creation, though, in our experience of it, the work exists in its own reality. The study of the creative process is an endlessly fascinating field. It is unfortunate that it lies outside the present inquiry. So does the psychological and biographical study of creator as a person. Understanding an artist's thoughts and psychology are informative, but diverts from the central aesthetic experience of the finished work. We also touch only peripherally the profound subject of emotion in art.

In focusing on the role of space and time, I have chosen to avoid other rewarding bases on which to contrast if not order the arts. There is the historical approach that considers how an art first arose and then developed. There is a logical approach that conjectures how an art *might* have arisen via a series of plausible and reproducible steps, regardless of whether it was the actual sequence followed historically. We conjecture that dance originated in exaggerated motions made in stressful situations such as fighting, hunting, killing, pursuing, fleeing, mating, etc.. We do not know if this is fact historically, but that does not invalidate the intrinsic insight in the theory. Sometimes we mix the historical with conjectural. Such is the theory that painting originated on the walls of caves as a magical attempt to control the behavior of animals by capturing their souls in an image, leaving it powerless and frozen in time. We can also consider what role or needs an art fulfills in a society. This is like the historical approach, but freed from having to be cast back into the past. Another basis for kinship between two arts is based on the prevalence of practitioners who are equally capable in both. On this basis, sculpture and painting would appear closely related, while painting and music aren't. This method would seem to yield results that follow closely the arrangement of the arts on the spectrum.

We remain with the role of space and time in our experience of art because it is the only approach that offers the possibility of producing an unequivocal order to the arts. It also has led me to discoveries about the individual arts that I feel would have else remained hidden from me.

> COINING TWO NEW CONTRACTIONS

Throughout, I use *s'he* to stand for she-or-he. The apostrophe suggests, as is customary, the merging of two different words, but in an atypical way since both words still exist in their complete form within the contraction. *H'er* is similarly used to represent both him-or-her and his-or-her.

> FINAL THOUGHT

Art provokes explanations without itself being any of these. Great art is never exhausted by explanations, regardless of their number, profundity; even if the explanations themselves become works of art. I hope this work will shed light on some of the inner dynamics of the workings of the arts. These arts however, as great experiences, always will remain aloof to the philosophers' or, in my case, musicians' attempts to explain them. On now to music.

Notes

¹ The "direction" of the spectrum is arbitrary, and is itself a notion having to do with space but not time. One could just as easily speak of the spectrum as "beginning" with the most spatial art, and "ending" with the most temporal.

² It is tempting to wonder whether certain people instinctively respond more to the nature of time than space, or the other way around, and whether this predilection is reflected in the forms of art to which they are most attracted.

³ We have a right to ask if there isn't a real risk that, by attempting to explain something about art, we are led away from the very experience that moved us to seek an explanation in the first place. Bernard Berenson in "Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts", (Pantheon Books, Inc.) cautions that certain explanations about art turns it into "not an object to be enjoyed, loved, and consumed, an enrichment for ever, but an occasion offered to professional thinkers for delighting in their own acumen, their own subtlety and dialectical skill". Whatever is written about art should "make us hunger and thirst for the work...(and) think of it and not the (writer)." The philosopher may find it pleasing to impose an order among the arts, but for those of us who react most strongly to artistic experiences, even the contention that there is a fixed order to the arts seems patently un-artistic in its spirit: art should deal with what is boundless and uncontainable. It is my hope that my methodology leaves the spirit of art free, even enhances it. My aim is to allow the reader to connect the things that I say with what they themselves have garnered from their own past experiences with art, and to relive these experiences with new insight.

⁴ The justification for why space plays no essential role in music is left to chapter two..

⁵ A partial analogy for our use of the term *proportion* is in the principle of conservation of mass and energy from physics. Though mass and energy are of different natures, the total of the two in a bounded system remains constant. If the amount of one increases, the amount of the other must decrease. Mass and energy are fundamental different as are space and time, but unlike space and time, mass and energy can be measured, quantifiably, one in terms of the other.

⁶ Bergson says that it requires close attention to our inner states to realize the difference between *ideal* time (space disguised as time) and *real* time. "It is true that we count successive moments of duration, and that, because of its relation with number, time at first seems to us to be a measurable magnitude, just like space. But there is here an important distinction to be made. I say, e.g., that a minute has just elapsed, and I mean by this that a pendulum, beating the seconds, has completed sixty oscillations. If I picture these sixty oscillations to myself all at once by a single mental perception, I exclude by hypothesis the idea of a succession. I do not think of sixty strokes which succeed one another, but of sixty points on a fixed line, each one of which symbolizes, so to speak, an oscillation of the pendulum. If, on the other hand, I wish to picture these sixty oscillations in succession, but without altering the way they are produced in space, I shall be compelled to think of each oscillation to the exclusion of the recollection of the preceding one, for space has preserved no trace of it; but by doing so I shall condemn myself to remain for ever in the present; I shall give up the attempt to think a succession or a duration. Now if, finally, I retain the recollection of the preceding oscillation together with the image of the present oscillation, one of two things will happen. Either I shall set the two images side by side, and we then fall back on our first hypothesis, or I shall perceive one *in* (italics mine) the other, each permeating the other and organizing themselves like the notes of a tune, so as to form what we shall call a continuous or qualitative multiplicity with no resemblance to number. I shall thus get the image of pure duration; but I shall have entirely got rid of the idea of a homogeneous medium or a measurable quantity." He goes on to say: "when the regular oscillations of the pendulum make us sleepy, is it the last sound heard, the last movement perceived, which produces this effect? No, undoubtedly not, for why then should not the first have done the same? Is it the recollection of the preceding sounds or movements, set in juxtaposition to the last one? But this same recollection, if it is later on set in juxtaposition to a single sound or movement, will remain without effect. Hence we must admit that the sounds combined with one

another and acted, not by their quantity as quantity, but by the quality which their quantity exhibited, i.e. by the rhythmic organization of the whole."

⁷ Kant refers to time as the internal sense and space as the external sense. "...there are two pure forms of sensible intuition, serving as principles of a priori knowledge, namely, space and time." "By means of outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all without exception in space. In space their shape, magnitude, and relation to one another are determined or determinable. Inner sense, by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state, yields indeed no intuition of the soul itself as an object; but there is nevertheless a determine form [namely, time] in which alone the intuition of inner states is possible, and everything which belongs to inner determinations is therefore represented in relations of time. Time cannot be outwardly intuited, any more than space can be intuited as something in us." Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, First Part, Transcendental Aesthetic, Section Two, Time, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Palgrave Macmillan electronic edition.

⁸ It is as if granules of sugar sought each other out in the coffee cup and formed themselves back into a cube.

⁹ "The law of causation receives its meaning and necessity only from this, that the essence of change does not consist simply in the mere variation of things, but rather in the fact that at the *same part of space* there is now *one thing* and then *another*, and at *one* and the same point of time there is *here* one thing and *there* another: only this reciprocal limitation of space and time by each other gives meaning, and at the same time necessity, to a law, according to which change must take place." "The regulative function of causality is confined entirely to the determination of what must occupy *this time and this space*." "...co-existence, which could neither be in time alone, for time has no contiguity, nor in space alone, for space has no before, after, or now, is first established through matter." "Co-existence of many things constitutes, in fact, the essence of (the everyday) reality." (Schopenhauer, "World as Will and Idea")

¹⁰ Such are the poems that are about making poems, films about making films, paintings, such as Velasquez's, of the artist's studio. Among the poems are Wordsworth's "Nuns Fret not at Their Convent's Narrow Room" and "Scorn Not the Sonnet", Dylan Thomas's "Especially When the October Wind" and Walt Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking". Among the films are Francois Truffaut's "Day for Night", Federico Fellini's: "Eight And A Half", and moments from Ingmar Bergman's: "Persona".

¹¹ It is similar to what the bacteriologist does in a petri dish when concentrating the conditions that suitable to the growth of a particular bacterium, eliminating at the same time conditions that would attenuate its growth. The result is that the bacteria can grow more quickly than in the everyday environment. Another analogy would be the modern naval aircraft carrier. It is a formidable offensive weapon and may have scores of airplanes. The fact of its importance however requires that it be properly defended. The very size required to launch and store its planes makes it vulnerable. A significant portion of its equipment, including some of its planes, must be devoted to the protecting it. It must be accompanied by other ships whose roles are specifically to be attendant to the carrier's maintenance and defensive needs.

¹² Museums fail from within rather from without when an exhibition is so popular that the principal sensory stimuli originates from other people in the room with us, whose voices drown out the imagined sounds suggested of works' visual content.

¹³ A good example of the difference between a primary and an ideated sensation is in the kinesthetic sense. I have lain in bed in the morning, not quite awake, and imagine myself rising out of bed. A minute later I notice that I am still in bed and had only imagined getting out of bed and am displeased at the real effort I must now make to get up out of bed.

¹⁴ Even within the everyday reality the proportions of the senses may have changed historically. Marshall McLuhan, in the "Gutenberg Galaxy" speaks about how a more aurally based reality was replaced by a more sight based reality during the era of classical physics. Thus what is today an artistic reality may contain the memory of what was an everyday reality. Arts, or at least some of them, may live in realities that were previously abandoned by the everyday reality.

¹⁵ The eye never truly *sees* an object. To be conscious of an object means that we have already gone beyond the realm of sight and into the realm of meaning. Consciousness projects this object back out into space so that we think that we *see* a 'tree'. We appreciate the difference between sensation and perception when we close our eyes and enter a world of colors and intensities of light that no longer correlate with the outside world. Painters have trained themselves to see sensation with their eyes open. This enables them to deconstruct an object back into its separate patches of color and light, so as to reassemble them on the canvas, and thereby allow us to recreate the object out of the sensations.

¹⁶ Although it is in this figurative blink of an eye that Chinese calligraphy, and painting in general, take root.

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