

## CHAPTER 9

### THE SPATIAL ARTS IN GENERAL

Having completed the temporal arts, we skip over the everyday reality in the middle of the spectrum (which was treated in chapter one) and enter the spatial arts. The absence of an art at the center of the spectrum, but the presence nonetheless of something else, explains why there is a more noticeable shift in time and space from the last temporal art to the first spatial art than between any one temporal art and the next. There is no art that is only *slightly* more spatial than film. The proportion of space to time has passed through the balance point and has shifted noticeably in favor of space, which is now more powerful than time. The flow of time *within* the work, which could be slowed in literature, now stops entirely. It is only *we* who continue to flow through time while experiencing the work, inheriting from literature the role of narrator. *We* explore *describe* for ourselves the spatial work of art.

Space began in a virtual state in music. It came to birth in poetry, but only existed fitfully through time. In animation it began to exist continuously through time. With dance it began to make demands on the way things changed in time. In theatre it becomes the resonator for the action which worked itself out in time. In literature, time was handled more and more spatially. It flowed multi-dimensionally. In the spatial arts, space holds on tightly to content, which does not change through time unless as a result of our own motion. In the temporal arts, if we remained in the same place, time had the power to bring in front of us different "here-s" in space. By the end of the spatial arts, if there is to be a new "here", *we* have to bring ourselves physically through space to the new locale.

In the temporal arts, making a record of the spatial content of the work was not sufficient to capture the gist of the work. It is sufficient to this purpose with the spatial arts. Even before literature and film, but certainly by them, scenery and settings began to be appreciated for their own spatial aesthetic outside of any change occurring to them. Now even the living forms in space seem to have gone to sleep. They move no more than props. An enchanter-artist has suspended time and put all in a trance. At the beginning of the temporal arts, music and poetry, in an ongoing, renewing act, create the time in which it prolongs itself further. At the beginning of the spatial arts, painting creates the space in which we then see the content of that space exist.

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By the middle of the temporal arts, the work of art begins to simply *fill* or occupy a time that it uses. There is an analogy in the spatial arts. As they begin painting creates the space in which we see it exist. By the middle of the spatial half of the spectrum, in sculpture, the work fills or occupies a space that is already there.

> DIVISION OF THE SPATIAL ARTS

I distinguish three ways in which a spatial work of art can use space. For each there is a corresponding position on the spectrum. The traditional tripartite division of the spatial arts into painting, sculpture and architecture somewhat overlaps these distinctions.

1. A work of spatial art can exist in a *privileged* space that is distinct from our everyday space, and into which we cannot enter, thus limiting us to only a partial view.
2. A work of spatial art can exist in a space that it shares in *common* with us.
3. A work of art can exist in a privileged space, distinct from the everyday space, but from which we are not excluded.

Paintings and photographs mostly fall into the first category, though with thick impasto and placing objects on the canvas a painting can enter partially into the second category. Sculpture in the round conforms to the second category. When a sculpture retreats into a background surface through the use of low-relief it reenters partially the first category. If on the other hand it is large enough for *us* to be surrounded by *it*, it partially enters the third category. Architecture can be experienced either from the inside or the outside. In the former case it falls within the third category, while in the latter case it returns to the second category.

Despite this lack of exact synchronization between the names of these three arts and the three ways the spatial arts can use space on the spectrum, I have used their familiar names as the titles for the three chapters following this one. When discussing each art, I will focus mostly on the usage of space that most predominates in it: for painting a privileged space that we cannot enter, for sculpture a shared space, and for architecture a space distinct from the everyday space but into which we can enter.

## > GENERALIZED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ARTS

### > IN RELATION TO TIME AND SPACE

Temporal works unroll in a fixed order through time and are performed. Spatial works have a fixed order in space, but we are free to choose the order in time in which we see it. Spatial works were performed once, by the creator in order to bring them into existence, but now, in the time we see the work, that performance is over. Time flows from within the work of temporal art, and only outside of the spatial art (in us).

At the beginning of the spectrum, activity in time is more important than setting in space. The relative importance of these two gradually shifts until, in the spatial arts, evidence of action can only be shown by the impression it has previously made upon space. In the temporal arts it seems more useful to say that time, and the changes it brings, is the reason for noting what we see in space. In the spatial arts it seems better to say that space, and the content of space, becomes the reason or motive for our spending time with the work.

The temporal work of art completes itself within time and are bounded by time. The spatial work completes its through space and is bounded by space. A spatial work does not last a certain length of time. The content of a temporal work is confined to a certain continuous duration but its spatial

content need not be contiguous. The content of the spatial work is confined to a certain contiguous space but does not require any particular contiguous amount of time to be viewed. Within the space of the spatial work, the work does not 'begin' or 'end' anywhere in particular within that space. The temporal work always begins and ends at a definite moment within the time of the work. The spatial work of art is never over. The experience of a temporal work of art has a clear beginning and ending in time. Our first moment with a spatial work does not have much of the character of a beginning. When we cease looking at it, it is not a final coda or ending.

In a temporal art, though it may manifest itself in space, there is no entity in space before us which *is* the 'work'. What we loosely term the work is that which unfolds before us, in time, and in space, during the time of the performance. As we behold a spatial work of art, the entity which is before us in space *is* all that there is to the work, and there is nothing missing that time could alone, without space, restore. The creation of a spatial work of art involves the construction of something material in space (this applies most loosely in painting), and its substance is left unchanged after creation. The creation of a temporal work of art does not of necessity require the construction of anything in space (this applies most loosely in animation and film). In the spatial arts the creation of the work is necessarily a physical act in space though it may be in response to inner thoughts and inspirations. In the temporal arts the creative act tends to be more internal, recorded externally where necessary in a notation system. A change to a temporal work of art, except for film, is primarily made without changing anything material. In the spatial arts the change to the work must be made directly to the material of the work. These changes are not made in what *will* become the work in time, but in that which is *already* the work of art.

The entirety of the temporal work is not present at all times, we have to endure through it and even then we never have all of it at once. The entire spatial work is always present at every moment in time (though we might be at a place from which we can only a part) without requiring that we endure through a certain duration of time. A temporal work of art leaves behind, between performances, a spatial residue in the form of a book, a score, scenery, etc.. A spatial work of art leaves itself behind in space. To experience the entire content of a temporal work of art we must experience it from beginning to end, we must endure through it. There are no shortcuts to parts of the work that are later in the work. With the spatial work of art, the eye can jump from any one place to another, without regarding the intervening space. If we are experiencing a temporal work of art and are distracted for a while, when we become attentive again the work has moved on in our absence. We can resume with a spatial work in the same place in space as we left off.

Spatial arts achieve freedom from time, temporal arts achieve freedom in time. A spatial art can manipulate time by manipulating space (the layout of a work of architecture). A temporal art can manipulate space by manipulating time (a change of locale at the end of a scene necessitated by the plot of a play for instance).

In space we can draw nearer or farther and see things previously unrecognized. In time we can only recede from the present where experience is replaced by reflection.

A poem cannot consist of just one word, a film of just one image, or a piece of music of just one note. In this sense a spatial work is but one thing. If a temporal work of art is stopped, though it ceases to exist as a temporal work of art, it may become the basis of a spatial work of art. This is

most clearly the case if one stops a film and a single image is frozen and remains. This is least the case if a piece of music is stopped, for the notes fall silent and nothing remains in space. If we could "start" a spatial work of art it can form the basis of a temporal work of art.

Form in space, when static, comments on space. Form in space, when evolving and changing, comments upon time. The salient thing about a transient temporal phenomenon is the way it changes to the next thing, i.e. the way it disappears. Relationships in a temporal work of art exist primarily through time. Relationships in a spatial work of art exist primarily in space. It is the properties that it has in space that require subsequent moments of our experience to take in. Bringing order out of a situation in which everything is already relating at the same time means attempting to limit that which can relate to an aesthetically manageable amount. Nothing is lost in time in a spatial work of art, it is always available. Any relation in the work ultimately can come to be seen and appreciated. Relations in the work of temporal art must be appreciated as they occur. If we could attend an indefinite number of performances of a temporal work, then any definable relation within the work can eventually be experienced.

In time the essence of two things can mingle; in space they can be separated.

#### > MORE SPECIFICALLY TIME

In the temporal arts, the work lends its flow of time to us, its outward time becomes our inward time. In the spatial arts time no longer flows inside the work, it is imported to the work from us. We "lend" to the outward work our "inner" time. This time flows "around", "into", "past" the work, but the work simply remains in space.

During its performance, the temporal work of art is always in the act of 'becoming'. The closest it gets to 'being' is when it ends, and all of it lies in our memory, but it also then that it vanishes entirely from real duration and migrates beyond our direct experience. The spatial work of art 'is' and does not 'become'. Within our experience of the work it is not known whether there was an order in which it was created.

In a temporal work its future content is unforeseeable. Its past content cannot be returned to within the performance. In a spatial work there is nothing that is unforeseeable if we choose to look at it now. A temporal work becomes more spatial if instead of undergoing development it merely repeats elements. As in a spatial work we can keep coming back again to the same part. The future becomes less different in quality than the past.

In the temporal work of art, what we experience in the current moment arises from what we experienced just before it. In the spatial work, what we have experienced prior to a given moment while looking at the work is not necessarily connected with what we discover and react to next. That which accounts for how the spatial work got to its present form is not a process we can witness through time. Whatever justification there is for the existence of something comes not through time but through formal (simultaneous) relations in space. The spatial artist cannot count on time to bring to completion something left incomplete in the creation phase, or bring to maturity something only partially formed. Whatever is eventually desired to be in the work must in some way be already in the work from the beginning. In a temporal work, a later time may be understood by

virtue of the earlier time. In the spatial work one part in space sheds light on other parts. A spatial work can go through an almost endless series of shapes in the process of its creation until the final, desired form is attained. However, these shapes are rarely in evidence in the final shape, or necessarily add anything to our understanding of the final shape.

In the temporal work, that which makes something beautiful is often its transience, its propulsion to its own demise. In the spatial work, our perception links together a group of elements and we discover the result is beautiful. It may take time for us to search out just which elements to join, but if we lose the perception we can also repeat the steps in this organization even if each time we need to begin from scratch.

During the temporal work we experience loss due to time. The spatial work defies death by freezing life in stasis. The temporal work accepts death, but each performance is a resurrection, a mixture of the old with the new.

With the spatial work we can spend an indefinite amount of time to come to any realization about what in the temporal work could have been the content of but one moment. The duration of our perception of a part in space does not seem to be a key ingredient in our perception of it, it is a duration that we extend or diminish to any extent.

#### > MORE SPECIFICALLY SPACE

Space stores what our time will unravel at its leisure. An indefinite amount of time can be taken during the creation phase to store up what will be revealed to the viewer once the work enters the perceiver's time.

Space is indifferent to order in time. Everything is potentially there. We become like the explorers of a new continent that nonetheless has been prior to our arrival. In contrast we might say that the temporal work explores itself through time. With the spatial work we often start by taking in the whole and then focus on parts. In the temporal work we must start with the part and gradually reach towards the whole through an act of synthesis.

Asking what size a work is only makes sense for a spatial work of art.

The temporal work can appear anywhere, and in places that need not be known by each other. The spatial work is in just one place and must be physically moved if it is to appear anywhere else. The latter becomes impractical with architecture, but then architecture becomes itself the 'place', things are brought to it.

In the temporal arts, the content of space most often changes without requiring effort on our part (it is done for us by the work as it unfolds). In the spatial arts, the content of space usually changes only if we apply effort on our part to move.

In the temporal work, the space contained by the work disappears when the time of the work is over. In the spatial work space does not go away as our experience with the work ends.

## > RELATING TO ORDER

In the temporal work of art the structure of the work is revealed to the experiencer via the order the work occurs in time. In the spatial work of art the structure is independent of the order in which it is perceived.

The order in time in which we experience a temporal work of art is fixed within the structure of the work of art. It is beyond our control. The order in which we perceive the content of a spatial work is under our control, the work can only suggest an order to us through its form. The effect of the work is made not to be dependent on the order in which we see it. If we change the order in which we experience the temporal work it loses meaning and comprehensibility. This only happens to a spatial work of art if we rearrange its distribution in space. In the temporal work time determines the succession of what is seen in space. In the spatial work, space does not primarily determine what we see in time.

With a spatial work we can repeat our view of any one part as often as we want. We will always find it in the same place. The temporal work must intentionally repeat something for it to be viewed twice in a performance. If the same thing is perceived by us at two different times during our experience of a spatial work, it might be because something is repeated identically in a different part of space or because we have returned to the same place.

With regard to time, everything in the spatial work of art can be prior to or subsequent to anything else. With a spatial work of art the eye will eventually come back over and over to the same portions of its space. The apparent free will with regard to where we might be looking next in a spatial work is balanced by the deterministic surety that same content will always be in the same place.

In a temporal work of art, all people who are experiencing the same performance experience each part for the same duration of time. The possibility of extending the duration of a part of a temporal work has little meaning. There is no correlation between the durations in which two people experience the same part of a spatial work.

The temporal order of experience we add to the spatial work of art does not remain with the work of art, it dissipates as we leave the work behind.

## > RELATING TO PERFORMANCE

If we watch a painter painting, or a sculptor sculpting, we witness a sort of performance by the creator that involves our experiencing changing form through time. The spatial work need be created only once, the temporal work must be recreated each time we would experience it. The performer of a temporal work can be a different person than the original creator, the person "performing" the spatial work is by definition the original creator. The spatial work exists in its proper form only after it is created and it continues to exist from that point on. The temporal work exists in its proper form only while being re-created and then ceases to exist until another performance begins. Once a spatial work exists in space it is redundant to recreate it in a different space. Once a work that exists in time is over it is essential that it be recreated at another time. The

performance (the creation) of a spatial work of art need not be continuous in time. The performance of a temporal work of art is continuous in time.

If a second person is not at the performance of a temporal work, the work is lost to that person. A spatial work of art is always there and thus it makes little difference when one or another sees it. The spatial work of art is indifferent as to whether it is viewed. The temporal work must unfold to at least one experiencer, even if just the performer. A temporal work of art without an experiencer is unnatural, at best a rehearsal without an audience. A spatial work of art without an experiencer is simply there, waiting impassively for an experiencer to come or not to come.

With a temporal work, people slowly gather from disparate points in space in anticipation of a specific starting time. There are preliminaries, then the main part of a rite or celebration embodied in the performance, then a subsiding, and a dissipating again of people into space. With a spatial work, people come, usually at different times, there are no preliminaries, no rite or celebration, and people leave singly. The exhibition "opening" artificially attempts to regain some of the feeling of a performance.

Though the spatial work of art is unchanging, though its creator is no longer doing a performance to create the work, we are nonetheless continuing to evolve in our time as we see it. This creates via us a faint echo of performance in the temporal arts. Each time we are with the work is like another performance. We make the aesthetic decisions about what to see when. At one time or another the entire content of the temporal work passes through the present tense of the experiencer. The structure of the spatial work of art does not guarantee that its entire content will be seen regardless of how long we remain with at the work.

Unless we have happened to witness the process, we do not know how a spatial work of art came to exist. There is often little about the work to suggest in what order it was created. The completion of the spatial work seals over the order in which it was built or created. The time of creation becomes severed from the time of the experience of the work. A performance of a spatial work would be an unwanted encumbrance if it were required as a prerequisite to the each experience of the work. Its point is that the effort is over. There is no score needed to preserve it, it itself is the score.

## > NOTATION

The "notation" of a temporal work of art is essentially a spatial representation of its qualities in time. There are severe limitations in accuracy due to the difference between space and time. A notation system for a dance for instance would require either a redrawing of the spatial alignment and position of the dancer at each significant moment in time, or would need to indicate directions of motion and rates of motion between such moments. A series of photographs would fulfill the former requirement, while a film of dance would fulfill both the former and the latter. Words bypass the issue of having to represent external arrangements in space by either being transformed directly into sounds or by arousing internal images which then can be externalized by us at will. It is however their spatial appearance only that functions as the notation. This the same spatial appearance comprises the full extent of words' appearance within spatial works of art. In the latter there is no longer any qualities of time about the work that require a notation that is in space other

than the presence of the work itself. This was already was partly the case with film, because the material film-strip could be manipulated in proxy for the temporal appearance of the film. In some sense a sketch for a painting may be thought of as a notation for the final work, but the sketch itself is capable of being appreciated as a spatial work of art. Only when we arrive at the end of the spectrum at architecture is there is a partial reappearance of notation. To coordinate the many separate temporal acts involved in constructing a building, it its helpful to have an abstract diagram drawn to scale. The usefulness of this blueprint often requires that it not be made to look too aesthetic. The workers assembling the building are analogous to the performers of a temporal art following a score, only it is one long performance never to be repeated.

## > WHAT CHANGES AND WHAT REMAINS THE SAME

In our experience of any art there is a mixture of elements that remain the same and elements that are in the midst of change. In music for example a long note is held in one voice while a series of shorter notes occur in another voice. In poetry, objects we usually think of as static in appearance seem to change in front of our eyes as an image mutates in response to each new word. Little remains the same over a long period of time. By theatre and literature a growing number of elements (such as scenery and props) remain fixed for longer and longer periods of time. At any given time, the everyday environment contains a mixture of things that are changing their appearance and things that do not. As we enter the right side the emphasis shifts towards fixed shapes. Even objects that we are used to seeing change their appearance through time, no longer seem to be doing so.

## > SPACE, IN GENERAL AND IN THE SPATIAL ARTS

### > THREE DIMENSIONALITY. PERSPECTIVE

Though the reality we inhabit is said to be three-dimensional, our perception of it hovers between two and three dimensions. Our sense of heights is not reliably in accord with our sense of horizontal distance. For many of us our ability to imagine how objects behave in three dimensions is not well developed. It is difficult to imagine what something will look like after it is rotated in some fashion. Looking at the front of an object, we cannot see the side facing away from us. If we are looking directly at the top we cannot see the bottom. Our view is limited by perspective. If anything the third dimension represents the impossibility of seeing the entirety of an object. This significantly affects how we perceive a sculpture. An object that appears to be a cube from the front may have a curved back. If a cube were invisible we would see none of it, but if it is visible we see only part of it. If we stand near one end of something that other end as distant. If something is symmetric in all regards, then without referencing other objects, there is no way of knowing at which end we are, at least if there is only space and not time (in which to remember that we have moved from one end to the other). We are masters over two dimensions but are trapped within the third dimension, our perspective of which is two-dimensional though enhanced by our stereoscopic sense of an object rounding back, or "occupying" space.



In literature and film, narration in part represents a choice "from which side" to see something. Narration continues in the spatial arts in the fact that we will always be viewing a work from one perspective or another. This choice is made *for* us in painting but by us in sculpture and architecture: we become the narrator of an event that is already there before us in time.

### > THE VISUAL IDENTITY OF AN OBJECT

A bird has a different view of a house than we do. A roof is a convenient place for a nest. Our view of the house is keyed to our spatial relation to it and how we are apt to use it. Unlike a spider we rarely move from the ceiling to a floor. Its main interest is in the traffic flow of insects in the air. Its view of the room is different than ours. So would that of a mouse or a termite for whom the house can seem a subterranean labyrinth. Termites are architects using the substance of the house to hollow out new interior spaces. Even the view of the house-builder or carpenter is different than ours. They initially see space as something empty; something to be divided, not as something already divided. A plumber or electrician sees mostly certain subsystems of a house. For the plumber, the network of pipes is a complete entity. S'he is like a person who intimately knows the subway routes under a city but is rarely on the surface. We place most of the content of our house near the floor. If insects had furnishings where would they place them in the house? Certainly not on floor where there is greater risk of contact with the uninvited and much larger bipedal species. From an airplane our house is but an unwitting tessera in a much larger design.

### > REPETITION OF IDENTICAL OR SIMILAR FORMS IN SPACE

Space has the ability to separate things and therefore weaken their connection. If, however, it is identical forms that occur in different location, it is the ability of space to divide that is weakened. I take a walk starting at my house and going for several blocks. The entire time I pass house after house each of which looks exactly like my own. At the end of the walk I find one more house identical to mine. I know that I have been changing position in space the entire time, but there nothing about the position at which I end that identifies it as a different part of space than the one at which I began.

Certain materials in space can cause sound to echo. Certain content in space can cause the effect of a spatial form to intensify. I am walking along the beach. I notice the shape of the momentary boundary line between water and sand and that a similar shape exists in the outline of a cliff that descends to the beach from above. It in turn is similar to the shape of a line of clouds in the sky. For me, because of where I am in space, they all echo each other. I see dark, wet patches of sand that look like small islands of water in a sea of sand. I notice a little further away rocks whose shape and darkness echo the watery patches on the sand. It is as if elements, ordinarily distinct and different in appearance, are *trying* to be the same. Their appearance together in space allows them to be mirrors of each other.

### > SPACE RELATIVE TO TIME: ARTISTIC SPACE CAN EXCERPT OR SUM UP >> TIME

A spatial work can "capture" the most fleeting instant in the temporal history of an object. A photograph can excerpt from an action what goes on during a thousandth of a second. A painter or

a sculptor can choose to do the same thing. The photographer can also leave the shutter open during a prolonged period of time recording an action in process. The painter or sculptor can "sum up", perhaps through a single posture or significant gesture, what has occurred over many minutes, hours, days or years.

## > TIME RELATIVE TO SPACE: THE EFFECT OF TIME ON EXPLORING A NEW >> SPACE

I've come to a large city to which I am a stranger. I have no map. I need to get from point A to point B. Through much trial and error I get to point B, but then have only the vaguest sense of where B stands relative to A in space. Though it took me a long time to get there, I may have taken many unnecessary turns, so it could be that B is actually quite close to A. After several days I have become quite adept at getting from A to B. I don't always have to take the same route to get there. I have a sense of A and B both being points in a larger space that they share along with many other points. I know if I head about a mile east and then about a mile north I will get to B, but I can as well begin by going one mile north and then one mile east. I have come to understand their mutual positions. If asked originally how I got from A to B, I might reply, I proceeded down a very wide street for about five minutes, looked for a giant clock, and then went down a street to the right for about ten minutes. Now it is less a series of events in time that leads me from A to B, and more just spatial considerations. Both points are frozen in space. Though I am moving, their positions remain fixed against the background of the overall space of the city. My knowledge of the city has shifted from temporal to spatial.

## > RELATIONS IN SPACE

The relationship between two things due to space represents a unifying aspect between the two that would act to undo the fact that the relating parts have been separated by space. The relationship being spatial, it can only endure as long as space keeps them apart. The relation is lost if they are superimposed. Where there is no space, as in music, two things in relation can be 'superimposed' (occur simultaneously in time) and exist *both* as a duality and as a unity.

Defining the aesthetic of a spatial relation is stating in what ways our experience of the content of one part of space is affected by our experience of what is in another part of space. The quality of a relation in space between two objects will vary if any of the following are varied: the shape of either, the color of either, the size of either, their mutual distance, their relative positions, their positions relative to the total field of vision.

Even a single shape already enters a relationship. The rest of space by subtraction of that shape itself becomes a shape. A zero dimensional point divides a one dimensional line into two sub-lines which then form a relationships with each other through that point. A one dimensional line changes a two dimensional plane into two sub planes, which form a relationship with each other through the line. It is a boundary line that acts to exclude things from one side from being on the other side.

The content that the artist places in the space between two parts of a work effects how we perceive the relation between those two parts. This effect can be purely spatial or involve human-meaning, for instance the wall that intervenes between Pyramus and Thisbe. We can liken a painting to a city. The choice of route that we take to get from point A to point B changes what we see in between, which in turn affects the mood with which we will greet B when we arrive there. The effect of the route connecting two places in space forming a relationship with each other is most dramatic in dance where the route eclipses in importance the end points, or to put it in another way, where the route becomes the relationship. Our awareness of a place in space is diminished when the content of that place itself begins to move through space. In this sense, a spatial work of art may represent motion that has already taken place. We are often no longer aware of the nature or the cause of the motion. When we come across the historical markers in New Jersey commemorating the fact that "George Washington slept here" we may or may not be aware that the occasion for his motion through the state was the retreat of the colonial army from New York City to Pennsylvania. The relationship between the markers is heavily influenced by the terrain in between them, but though the terrain may still be the same, its influence on the path was only relevant in the past.

Sometimes the relationship between two locales is influenced by what we cannot see in between them in space. I look out one window of a house and see woods. I look out the window on the opposite side of the room and see an open field. The difference would be felt less by me if I could see how one connected to the other outside the house. In a painting this information is usually available to me although the painter could leave the intervening portion of the canvas blank.

Another way we can sense a spatial relationship is to internalize it through touch. If I imagine each of my hands touching one of the two objects in a spatial relation, the quality of that joint sensation is tantamount to a relation between them.

Relations that we take for granted in the everyday reality strike us differently in an artistic space. Outside the everyday reality, the identity of an object is no longer bound up in a nexus of cause and effect with other objects. It is no longer physical necessity that determines what is connected to what in space. There is the presence together with the possibility of an aesthetic choice. What we have come to accept as necessary and presented to us by fiat, can now be a source of pleasure and surprise. We look at a figure in a painting and stop to delight in the fact that an arm is in fact connected to a torso and the *way* it is connected.

The composition of a work of spatial art is built up out of a complex of relations. My sense of what composition entails is based on this analogy. In the constructing of an intricate mechanical timepiece, the first component to be put into place (it may be a gear, an escapement, a spring, etc.) can be of any size whatsoever and can be put into any position. Based on that choice, there is somewhat more limited choice on the size and placement of the second component to be put into place. By the time the last piece is set in place, it must honed to precise measurements to ensure that the entire mechanism works together. It will only fit in one place. This is only an analogy since the finished work of art is already present before us (and the timepiece was entirely planned in advance), but its composition can be thought of as a series of spatial negotiations that took place through time. In both cases, and in any living organism, the health and proper functioning of the whole depends on the proper placement and functioning of each part.

## > TIME IN THE SPATIAL ARTS IN GENERAL

The exact duration during which we look at a part of a spatial work of art is not a key determinant in the quality of our perception of that part. Duration does not directly enter into our awareness of that part.

When first confronted with the spatial work of art, we may wait to see if anything will change about it. After a while we accept that whatever it is and has to reveal, it is doing so at every moment. We can become bored or we can open up a dimension in our own time in which our awareness of it deepens. It becomes a deep pool which draws our time ever inward into its space. We no longer want it to change but count on the fact that it will not change thus allowing the deepening to continue and in a way so that there is no demand upon us to rush. We can "take our time". If we leave this deepening awareness, it is not an issue, we can start over again. The work allows us to change without it itself changing. If we consider the creation of the work as a performance in time by the artist, then we now undergo a reverse performance, taking out of the work what was previously put into it. When we are through and walk away, it is we and not the work (as in the temporal arts between performances) that goes out of existence.

In the temporal arts nearest the middle of the spectrum, the present tense in time has lost some of its absoluteness. A historical time has been added to the artistic time. The artistic time gives us access to the historical. With the spatial arts, the artistic time (as that in which action is being taken that reveals to us what we experience) goes into an historical time, leaving us without access to the latter. The work's own time has been pushed back into a past that lies beyond the visible threshold of the work. Time is locked in that past, frozen behind the impassive surface of the work.

In the spatial arts, time has lost its ability to change the content of space from within the work. Changes can only result through the efforts of the observer and they are limited to changes due to perspective. Only during the work's creation phase does the work change from within itself. Our experience of the work, which is what is left of the artistic time, no longer has a beginning or an end within the work's own time. The artistic time of the work does not endure, it does not flow. If we try to enter in it we would enter a suspended time, a time charmed into stillness, which, when translated back into the flow of everyday time, seems like eternal existence. If we represent the work's continuity through the everyday time as an indefinitely long horizontal line, then the artistic time brought by the observer can be thought of as a curved line that approaches the straight line at some point, becomes coextensive with it for a finite duration of time, and then separates.

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## > A "STRANGE ATTRACTOR"

Though the order in which we view a spatial work is ultimately under our control, to a certain extent the creator tries to control certain aspects of this order. This ordering however tends to be effective only over very brief amounts of time. One method is to build into the structure suggestions for paths the eye can follow. Through this means the eye can ultimately be made to favor certain parts of the work over others, as the eye traces and retraces over certain salient structural lines. To borrow a term from chaos theory, a well-structured spatial work of art contains a strange attractor. The eye is most often in the process of directing itself at some part of the strange attractor, leaving other areas of the work relatively uninvestigated.

### > ORDER IN TIME DURING CREATION PHASE

Space can store, in simultaneously available form, the results of a process that endured through varying amounts of time. Once thus stored, the order of the process is lost. Once locked into space, the order in which a spatial work was created is undeterminable. It could have been any of innumerable possibilities even though the end result would remain the same. Here is an analogy. I begin a crossword puzzle. I put in the first word, then another. After I have entered the first few words I look at what I've done so far. The order in which I put in the words is still vividly in my mind. When I am about half way through the puzzle I am not likely to remember which word I put in first, or to remember any part of the sequence in which I added more words. As I put in the last word, as the last vacant space closes up, the presence of all the words at once seals over my awareness of order in time up until then. Only when some of the space remained empty could I be aware of what is now happening and what will happen next. I look at the finished puzzle, and it is as if the empty space had never been there before. If I look at the finished puzzle for some clue as to where I began, no word stands out any differently from any other word. All the words are equally present. If I try to give them an order I can, but it will represent my present temporal reaction to their arrangement. I might choose to read them from top down, or left to right.

In a connect-the-dots puzzle, the order of our actions in time does have an impact on the final form. One need only remove the numbers next to the dots and the result is that we have lost access to the intended form of the completed puzzle. Thus order in time is here very important, though curiously not the starting point within the order. The same form will emerge regardless of where we start connecting the dots as long as we then follow the correct order.

A photographer takes pictures of a person walking at intervals of several seconds. The results are all mounted on a wall and in the same order and direction that the person was walking. When we arrive to view the photos we have no way of knowing how the photographer made the photos. It strikes as like that it would have been taken over a period of just several seconds, but for all we know, the photographer might have intricately posed the subject for each photo, each on a different day. They need not have been taken in the same order as they are now mounted in space.

We can imagine assembling a jigsaw puzzle on a flat surface whose dimensions equal that of the assembled puzzle. We work at it until all the pieces are interlocked and in their final position. In this finished no piece can move around relative to another. When I place the first piece I can put it anywhere within the frame of the supporting surface. It can be moved around on that surface without any limitation to its motion. As I find pieces that interlock, small islands of assembled pieces are floating in the space of the finished work. I can still move any clump of pieces around

but there are other clumps in the way that restrict somewhat how I can move them. Freedom in space decreases in inverse relationship to my time spent assembling. The order of filling the space of the design was least determined at the outset. I could have started with any piece. As the process continued what I might do next becomes more and more determined until, at the end of the assembly process there is no choice but one as to where the last piece can put. As it goes into place, the time and the process of the creation of the work disappears along with the possibility of any further motion by the parts which would change the image in the future. Time and motion are frozen out by content in space. Looking at it I have no way of knowing when I assembled or how long it took. That there was a creator, who acted in time to create the work, is now just a conjecture. A myth of its genesis can be created, which may or may not be historically accurate.

If someone identified to us that a certain part of the painting was the first to be painted, and we were to look at this first stroke and then at the rest of the painting, we would be hard pressed to note any difference in terms of spatial significance of that part versus other parts.

If the artist's intent was from the beginning of the creation process was to leave a record, within the work of art, of the order in which s/he created it, steps could be taken. Perhaps a special paint could be used by a painter so that the paint gradually faded to invisibility over a period of an hour or two. However in the process of letting us know the temporal order we would ultimately be faced with the absence of the painting. Moreover we would have to told that brightness and darkness were being used for the specific purpose of implying an order in time, for otherwise it would be treated purely as differences in color intensity.

What would it be like if we watched a painter during the creation period?. The first brush stroke is full of significance and energy. Empty space is suddenly replaced by the presence of color and form. After a little while a composition begins to emerge and our awareness of its spatial structure dims the visibility of the energy and significance that the latest strokes have by virtue of their newness. At the beginning the interest is mostly temporal. Each new part makes its presence felt. There is a vivid sense of order through time. Spatial relationships form between areas already painted that stand out now in a way that will be lost when other areas become filled in. As each new part is added, a new series of relations develop. Nearer the beginning of the process there is a greater sense of uncertainty as to what area will be painted next and what it will look like. After a while a growing inertia takes over. What is new seems less consequential compared to what is already there and no longer changing. It seems also becomes less unforeseeable. Throughout the process the democracy of space gradually overtakes the hierarchy of time. At each stage space stores or sums up everything that time has done so far. Only what is not there yet, what is still unforeseen, remains temporal.

At least from an intellectual point of view, understanding the nature of the creative process can lead to accurate if limited surmises about the order of creation. When we come to architecture, we can factor in gravity and realize that the builder did not start with the top floor and work h'er way downwards. Sometimes the order of experience can be the reverse of the order of creation. If there is a series of boxes, one fitting inside the next, then during the creation a larger box must be circumscribe around a smaller one. To get to the smallest box during the experience phase the opposite order is necessitated.

## > RETURNING; RESONANCE

Sometimes when we reactivate a memory from the past we actually alter its original content. This is less likely to happen with a spatial work because we can return to the same place in the composition any number of times. With a temporal work, if we listen a recording of a performance we have already witnessed, often a part sounds completely different than what we thought it would be like based on our memory of the earlier performance. In the spatial work by returning again and again to the same forms, details or aspects we missed the previous time make a greater impact. We can make an analogy with the notion of resonance with sound. The spatial work amplifies its effects through the resonance of return to space through time. The growing depth of awareness this effect of resonance creates is similar to what happens when an astronomer takes a long-exposure photograph through a telescope. As the film continues to absorb light, a particular light source that was invisible to the naked eye becomes visible.

## > THE EXPERIENCE OF TIMELESSNESS

The fact that time does not flow within the spatial work and only continues to flow within us, creates an opportunity for us to be drawn outside our self and into the timelessness of the work. The flow of time within us "slows down" until, at a limiting point, it reaches the flow in the work, which is at zero. Our own temporal evolution quiets down. The present moment in our contemplation may not even contain the memory of our having done the same minutes or moments ago. The temporal arts also offer a way to reach towards timelessness, but it is through the magnification of the present moment, which subjectively enlarges through an increasing sensitivity and awareness of what is occurring in the work: somewhat like being on Einstein's light beam.

## > IF WE TRY TO ADD TIME FROM WITHIN A SPATIAL WORK OF ART

What if each time our gaze returned to the same spot in a spatial work of art the content at that place had changed? For instance, the content that had been in another location in the work had moved to where we are looking now. If we were looking at a building, and the next time we looked at its top, it appeared differently than before, would we believe it? How could this be? We can start with a more modest example. If we make a repair to our house, it might change the appearance of the house somewhat, but the house clearly remains the house we have lived in for years. It is still consistent with the bulk of our previous experiences spent in it. What if we were constantly making changes to our house, sometimes a small alteration like changing the color of the paint in a room, sometimes a major alteration such as moving a wall? The house would become an evolving entity. Change in our experience of the house would no longer result only from our movement through the house but would also be happening by the house itself. After the process had continued for a while, we might hesitate at a door and wonder whether a wall had been moved so that instead of entering the living room we might be entering the dining room.

What if we originally designed our house with a view to its changing shape through time? It could be an elaborate version of the Japanese home with its sliding partitions, or it could be like a giant cube containing sub-cubes which could rearrange themselves along various axes just as does a "Rubik's Cube". We might design the quintessential horror house room whose walls close in on us

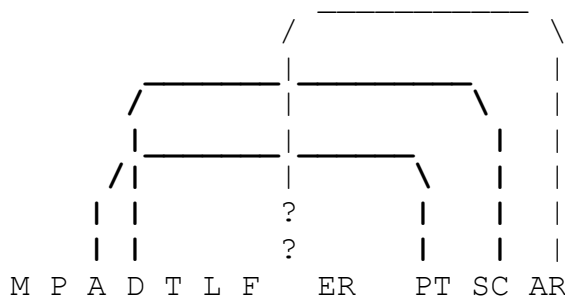
or whose ceiling lowers. Such a house would probably not be very practical, and architecture if anything tends to be practical. There is, however, no technological barrier to overcome. The mechanical apparati driving the changes might be cumbersome but doable in the light of present science.

Would a temporally "fluid" house, such as we have been describing, resemble any of the temporal arts? It would involve the changing of form we see in dance but we see the dancers from the outside and we experience architecture from the inside. We might simulate the experience using three-dimensional animation, but this could only simulate the visual impressions of being in a house. If we needed, for example, to change our elevation it would require stairs or some other "architectural" device.

What about sculpture? How can we make its form fluid in time without our having to move? A modest example of this is the mobile. The mobile, though, usually rearranges itself passively as a result of forces external to it. Using micro-technology we could get parts of it to articulate relative to each other. The sources of the forces would perhaps be hidden, but would still in a sense be external. The will to alter form however still arises from the creator of the work and not from the work itself. Could the will to alter form arise from within the sculpture? Yes, if we substitute a dancer for the sculpture. The dancer changes form at will, subject to the limitations of the human body.

How could a painting change through time? Once the pigments have dried, someone would have to repaint the work. We would have to wait for the results of the repainting before looking at the work again. By then, though, it might feel more as if we were looking at a different, though perhaps similar, painting. Animation, however, regularly gives us a two dimensional image, such as a painting, that exists in a space into which we cannot enter, but which changes through time.

In summary, we find that temporalizing a work of painting leads towards poetry and animation, while in the case of sculpture it leads towards dance. When a similar attempt is made to inject time into a work of architecture, it results in an experience outside of any art we already know. If, however, we look at the spectrum and draw lines connecting painting with animation and sculpture with dance, and then do some extrapolation, it suggests that if such an art existed it might lie closer to the everyday reality than film and as a result resemble the everyday reality more than any temporal art does now.





## > TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF SPATIAL FORM

The effects of time are still present in the spatial arts. Though many of these effects are caused by the work's distribution in space and how that in turn requires movement on the part of the viewer, even without our motion the creative eye can still see traces of time in fixed forms in space.

## > SPACE ABSORBS AND STORES THE CONSEQUENCES OF TIME

The space in a spatial work is not keyed to any particular time of the observer. Things that normally occur at different times can be stored in the same space. All that is happening in space during all the moments of time during a certain process can leave an imprint on the all-accepting space of the art work. This is even true of a photograph taken with the briefest of exposure times, for it still shows us its subject at every moment over the course of that duration.

In the everyday reality a physical effect must be proximate in time to its cause. Not so when time is suspended and held thrall to space. A work can make manifest the effects brought on by unrelated causes that would have acted in the real world at different times and different spaces.

## > WAYS IN WHICH TIME AND SPACE PRODUCE EQUIVALENT RESULTS

If there are two identical objects, what is the difference between seeing both objects at once in two locations in space, and seeing the same object at two disconnected times? If we know there are objects, in the latter case we do not know which object is seen second. If the two objects are far enough apart in space that we have to avert our eyes from one to see the other then, at least theoretically, what is to prevent some force from moving the object from one location to the other within the brief moment during which we change the direction in which we are looking?

## > TIME IN THE PAST OF SPACE

### > HOW A FORM GOT TO BE AS IT IS

For the suggestible eye the arrangement in an image can seem as if it has just come into its present form. It is as if the last pieces of a jigsaw puzzle have just snapped into place and we still hear the resonance. We see the last stage of a dialogue between time and space which began with space still unoccupied. The fact of space need not cover up the possibility of time. The temporally predisposed observer of a spatial work of art is able to consider, in place of changes still ongoing in time, the *what ifs* of time. *If* this part were not there yet, what could be put there? A still life can still be pregnant with the audacity of how one object just happened to become situated in a certain way relative to another object. If our eyes are fresh enough, we can feel as if the elements of the painting come together for the first time in front of our eyes. This impression can be brought arbitrarily close to the present as a limit, so that the fabric of space is still resounding from the force of the of time. It is also irrelevant whether the temporal processes we sense immanently within the work are the actual processes that the work's creator performed in creating the work, for what we are sensing is within the artistic time of the work, which is a time divorced from the creation-time of the work.

Though the image can only suggest an action, in compensation, the action cannot tear down or alter the form of the image. The temporally disposed observer, as a temporal archaeologist, examines what has been locked up in the fabric of space, unearths it and frees it of its spatial encumbrances. The past in time leaves behind form in space. In reconstructing the living process that created the form the viewer has indefinite time to do it. The imprint of the effects of time do not fade from space.

Form can also be thought of as the incarnation at a boundary of the resolution of forces pressing outwards from an unseen within and seen or unseen forces pressing inwards from without. This resolution is ongoing as in a dynamic equilibrium. The stillness we see is the result of forces pressing against each other.

### > SHAPE IS PLASTIC AND WAS MOLDED INTO ITS PRESENT FORM

There is nothing to prevent us from imagining that every shape that we see, at any time or in any place, is hot off Vulcan's forge, made of a common molten material, even that every form in nature is one of myriad forms taken on in time by a single proto-object of great plasticity. I am looking at the branches of a tree, each with a different shape, a different curve. If one branch were suddenly to be endowed with the power of movement, as if it were a dancer, it could at one time or another take on the shape and attitude of any of the other branches. This process comes alive as let my eye wander from branch to branch: like a series of photographs recently taken of just one protean branch and then arranged in front of me in a tree-shaped display. As I look I sense inside what the dancing form would feel like swinging from one posture to another through time as it swings from one position to another in space. The tree now appears as a single, throbbing or living organism.

### > TIME HAS JUST NOW STOPPED OR IS JUST ABOUT TO START AGAIN

If time does not seem to flow within the work but only play over its surface in the form of our own flow of time, we can hypothesize that our vantage point on the work is somehow limited. The villagers in the painting never seem to move, it is as if we are limited to witnessing but a single moment of its time. At the point of intersection between the two times, motion is suggested just over our temporal horizon, just as the light of the sun appears in the morning before sunrise or in the evening after sunset, capable of illuminating still forms in space. If something is at rest it may have just stopped moving or it may be just about to move.

At the next moment of the symphony, when any sound might happen, just a certain sound happens. The present moment is where the largeness of possibility becomes the vividness but narrowness of actuality. Spatial art is a testament to this significant moment. The figures in the painting seem to have just been stopped in their action. If we watch for too long this sense disappears. But we look away and back again to recapture this sense. We can preserve this sense despite the growing recognition that each time we look back what we see is no different than what we saw last time.

> SHAPE IN CONJUNCTION WITH HUMAN OR UTILITY MEANING SUGGESTS  
>> MOTION AND DIRECTION IN TIME

A form in the shape of an arrow will suggest motion in one particular direction. Specifying this direction however requires that we have added a utility-meaning to the pure form in space. If we did not recognize the shape as being that of the object arrow, and know from experience how an arrow, or similarly shaped objects, is used, and how it moves during this use, it is far less likely that we would assign a direction of motion to the shape. A form in the shape of a person with one foot forward of another will suggest motion in the direction of the front of the face. Assigning the direction in this case implies the addition of a human-meaning to the pure form, the form becoming a person who seems to be trying to get somewhere<sup>1</sup>. Through our own experiences through time we can feel objects as if bracing themselves against something, or protruding into something else. If we lived in a frozen time, perpetually seeing still forms, we would not impute these qualities to shape. The artist is allowed to take for granted our previous experience with form in motion. Choosing a particular pose or attitude for a human figure can imply motion that has happened or that can happen, or is in the midst of happening. The same for any other object, organic or non-organic, that we have seen in motion and in use. Knowing the utility-meaning of an object, or the human-meaning of an object, enables us to presume the existence of time when seeing only a spatial form.

> GESTURE

The gesture of a human figure can suggest motion without exhibiting motion. If we do *not* look at the figure the next moment, we could assume that the gesture that is in progress continues towards completion. When we do look next we realize that we may have missed seeing the movement and that somehow we are transported back in time to the same moment as before when the movement was about to occur. The process repeats. Nascent loops of time come to birth within space. Unlike the movement in the temporal arts, which occurs and then is over, we have as many opportunities as we wish to try and catch the *same* movement, being always poised in time when it is about to happen. Rather than frozen, the gesture is immanent. It is *only* the confirmation to the sense of sight that the motion has completed that is lacking. If this confirmation actually occurred, we might lose the excitement of being poised at the movement's threshold.

What is true about motion is true of emotion as well. The spatial work of art can keep us poised on the verge of the climax of an emotion<sup>2</sup>. The emotion is never spent, it is always immanent. As our time recycles over this single moment in its time, the emotion is rekindled and thus doesn't pass unless we choose to let go of it internally.

> TIME IN THE PRESENT OF SPACE

> TOUCH: THE VIEWER AS A SCULPTOR RECREATING FORM

Though painting is limited in its primary senses (see chapter one) to vision, we can touch a sculpture or a work of architecture. Touch is quite different than sight. For one thing it is not static in time. By this I mean that touching something is an act of exploration and rarely remains constant. If a sensation of touch remained constant we would quickly ignore it. The act of

exploring an object with our hands involves constantly changing sensations as the hands move over the surface of the object. We mold our hands to the shape, in fact *shaping* the object. On a minute scale, first one set of touch receptors and then others respond to the object as we subtly and even subliminally shift its position in our hands. Thus while the object remains constant through time in its spatial properties, our tactile awareness of it, whether actual, or ideated as with painting, is a constantly changing phenomenon in time. It creates a flow of time that is on the border line between our own internal experience and what is proper to the work itself. We can go further and say that our touch is a life-giving force, that until the form is re-sculpted by our hands, it is not yet actively there, but existing only as a visual blueprint<sup>3</sup>.

### > MOTION DUE TO ALIGNMENT AND SHAPE

Only one portion of the retina is capable of seeing in maximum detail: the fovea. The result is that if we look at a static form, our eye must wander about the form, albeit very quickly, to provide us with the sense that we are seeing the entire shape "all at once".

A diagonal line is drawn on a piece of paper that rises from left to right. A second piece of paper, much wider than the first, covers the first. It is blank except that a narrow vertical slit has been removed from it. Where the slit is reveals a brief portion of the diagonal line underneath it. By slowly moving the second piece of paper relative to the first, I will see gradually changing portions of the diagonal line. Instead of seeing what I understand are different parts of a single line, I see what looks like a single, short line, that moves up (or down) [provide a diagram of the procedure]. It is an effect similar to that of the barber pole, but instead of the apparent motion being due to the rotation of the column, it comes from moving the slit over the first sheet of paper. The question for this section is, to what extent do we see the diagonal line this way even when we see it in its entirety and our eye is not guided through external means? Perhaps the motions of our eye create the same effect, only it is present *together* with our awareness of the entire presence of the diagonal line.

What may be true of rise or fall may be true for expansion and contraction. The latter are feelings. Prior to our associating them with the sights. We know what it feels like to be compressed, embraced, confined or squashed. We know what it feels like to grow, be set free and allowed to expand beyond our normal bounds. At one extreme there is claustrophobia where we feel smothered until the pressure is unbearable. Our lungs and chest cannot even expand to hold the breath of life. At the other extreme is the feeling that we are about to burst apart and can no longer be contained by our body. It is possible that any of these feelings can be evoked in response to see shapes or lines whose mutual distance changes.

In figure A we have two lines which vary in their distance from each other<sup>4</sup>. We can say that we see two lines approaching or receding from each other. Either is true, each is equally untrue. Time is missing and cannot provide us with the 'direction' that would settle the issue. If we add time from within we choose the direction. We can imagine ourselves being between the two lines and feeling modeled as if we were clay in the hands of a sculptor.





FIGURE A

Another alignment (as in figure B) might suggest a different rate of approach or recession.



FIGURE B



The change in the rate of separation or contraction is also suggestible by static form.

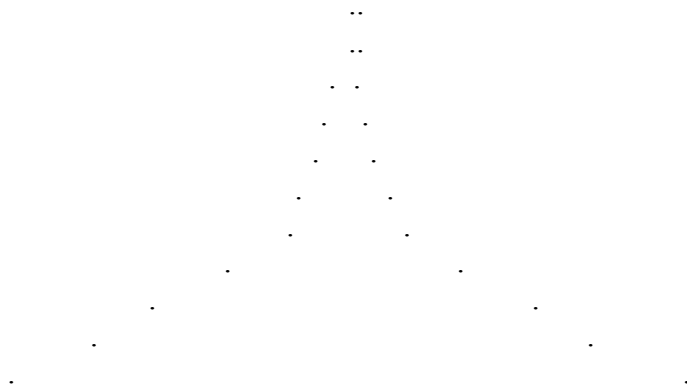


FIGURE C

When I look at a sculpture by Henry Moore [reproduction] or by Franz Arp [reproduction], as my head subliminally bobs and weaves, the boundaries of the surfaces of the work change. By being

ignorant that the cause of these changes lies in my own motion, I attribute a constancy to the forms, but regard them as expanding and contracting, throbbing with life.. The work looks molten, as if at the end of the glass blower's tube. Even the way one part of the work connects to an adjacent part can suggest to me a process of expansion or contraction, as if one part grows out of another. In animation, if we saw a shape expand or contract there would be no spatial substrate that remained constant. Spatial art by only suggesting change can have change coexist with static presence in time.

### > RELATION AND PROPORTION DUE TO MOTION

We can sense how far apart two things are, by imagining them moving towards each other and joining, then internally sensing the magnitude of that motion. This may form a basis of our aesthetic reaction to proportion in space. It is hard to attribute this to an awareness of a mathematical ratio. There may be an internal sense of what it would *feel like* for one figure to undergo a change that would make it become the size of the other. We feel this change through ideated sensations of growth and diminution through time. Math, in contrast operates outside of the flow of time. There is no moment that is before, during, or after, the occurrence of the division of space stated by the ratio. From the point of view of math 3:2 and 1.5 are the same, it does not matter if the division implied by the ratio is carried out or not. In our artistic reaction to proportion it is important to begin *before* the division happens out and that we experience carrying it out.

### > OTHER CAUSES OF APPARENT MOTION IN THE WORK

When a spatial work of art is in three dimensions, movement on our part will cause the appearance of relative motion between parts of the work. Nearer parts line up with varying parts further away. Parts will draw closer, move further apart, or disappear. To some extent we may forget that we are the cause of this motion and attribute it to the work.

When we see a curved line we can imagine that it is a path on which we are travelling as if in some sort of vehicle. It might be the track of a roller coaster. In our imagination we feel in our body ideated sensations of acceleration and deceleration especially around the turning points.

Most of us have had experiences in which we think we see something or someone in motion, when in fact there was no motion. If we are frightened we are apt to think we see things moving. A flickering light playing over the surface of an object can be mistaken for movement by the object itself.

When we look at a glacier we know intellectually that it is flowing, but that the rate is too slow to note within the embrace of our conscious awareness of time's flow. If time dilated, we would see the flow. So perhaps with a painting or sculpture.

### > TIME IN THE FUTURE OF SPACE

#### > DE-CONSTRUCTION, DE-CREATION

Creation and destruction are identical but for time's directionality. Once things have been put together, the only way to dynamically understand *how* they got together is to take them *apart*, to do the reverse of creation in time. Once creation is there in the directionality of time, only its mirror can exist in time: de-creation.

When everything is coalesced in front of us, it is hard to imagine the moment when nothing yet coalesced, how in the process of creation elements first came together and bonds of creative form took hold between the parts. With a temporal work of art we get to see the work being put together, we do not have to arrive at it afterwards. The price, however, is that once it is finally all together, nothing is left, and the experience of it is over. With the spatial work of art, though we never get to see it put together, it will never go away. The temporal work controls what we see when, but the spatial work, though it will not unlock its hold on the content of any one place, cannot control where I look. Using my imagination I can endow a part of a painting with a will of its own leaving it mobile in space. I can ask: why, if it were roaming around in the space, it decided to become sessile at one particular place? Or I can imagine the separate pieces of a mosaic, already painted, mutually seeking each other to find fellows to whom they are related. If I cannot imagine these processes I could unlock the temporal energy stored in space if take the work apart, try to rearrange it, or even destroy it. What may have happened in a past inaccessible to us is accessible if it becomes the future. Creation becomes destruction. I answer the ineluctable movement from past to present by relying on the future to retrieve the past. In this way the work returns to the possibility of its creation in the first place. Bonds of all types, be they structural, chemical, or aesthetic, once made, await sufficient energy to undo them. Form in spatial art stores aesthetic energy which I can release with the energy of my imagination.

Like many other kids I enjoyed destroying things that I had painstakingly put together. Destruction was not only creation with time reversed, but concentrated into a much briefer, ecstatic, duration unattainable during construction. The full impact of how things joined together burst into my imagination as it became undone. Though too young to create as an artist, I came close by becoming an artist at destruction. As an adult I have an appreciation of the ruins of ancient architecture such as the Parthenon, an old church or a tumble down barn. Perhaps the appeal of these ruins lies in the fact that nature has revived my childhood role by de-constructing the work for me. The only difference is that if what I did as a kid is more like a moving picture, what nature shows me now is more like a photograph taken of a stage in the process.

If I had to compare the intensity of the effect of seeing the final bit of order being brought about in what began as disorder, with that of seeing the first bit of disorder being wrought on what is already fully ordered, it is the onset of disorder that makes me appreciate more the order for I can no longer take it for granted. As does the slight imperfection in an otherwise "perfect" face, so the first wound to beauty is often of greater beauty than what preceded it.

## > THE SENSES IN THE SPATIAL ARTS

Hearing played a major role in many of the temporal arts because it led inwards and revealed processes through time. Sight leads outwards and reveals form and content in space and thus it is not surprising that sight plays a primary role in the spatial arts and that hearing does not. Touch, though more internal than sight, most often works symbiotically with sight and thus has a large role

to play in the spatial arts. Sight leads us to what we can touch. It hints at that touch and prefigures it. When we come to architecture, hearing will be readmitted into the experience of the art work because the work is itself the environment in which *we* exist, and therefore contains all the senses that reach us from this environment. We now proceed to examine each of the spatial arts separately.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> If we have never seen or experienced a human body in motion including our own, would looking at the form of the body in any way suggest the motions that the body is capable of making or what the ambits of movement are at what may be points of articulation? Does any posture of the body suggest any other?

<sup>2</sup> Delaying the climax of an emotion is a motivation for various sexual practices, though a less risqué analogy might be the moments after taking a pinch of snuff and before sneezing. Feeling the impending arrival of something, which at the same time is being held off, can be either extremely pleasurable or a cause for unbearable tension and dread.

<sup>3</sup> This is in reminiscent of the fact that the performer of a temporal art work does not technically create but re-creates the work. The path to be traced is known in advance, as the musician reads the next series of notes off the score.

<sup>4</sup> There is a subtle point involved in my stating that the lines vary in distance from each other. How do we define their mutual distance? How do we choose which corresponding point on the other line to which to measure the distance from a point on the first? There is a mathematical definition but when we simply look at the lines we are not necessarily aware of that definition. Our instinctive sense of their distance somewhat begs the question that we see the lines as converging or diverging.