



The Idea of Spatial Form

By Joseph Frank

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The Idea of Spatial Form contains the classic essay that introduced the concept of "spatial form" into literary discussion in 1945, and has since been accepted as one of the foundations for a theory of modern literature. It is here reprinted along with two later reconsiderations, one of which answers its major critics, while the second places the theory in relation to Russian Formalism and French Structuralism. Originally conceived to clarify the formal experiments of avant-garde literature, the idea of spatial form, when placed in this wider context, also contributes importantly to the foundations of a general poetics of the literary text. Also included are related discussions of André Malraux, Heinrich Wölfflin, Herbert Read, and E. H. Gombrich.

New material has been added to the essays in the form of footnotes and postscripts to two of them. These either illustrate the continuing relevance of the questions raised, or offer Frank's more recent opinions on the topic.

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The Idea of Spatial Form By Joseph Frank Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1348305 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Rutgers University Press
- Published on: 1991-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .49" w x 5.51" l, .62 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 214 pages

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