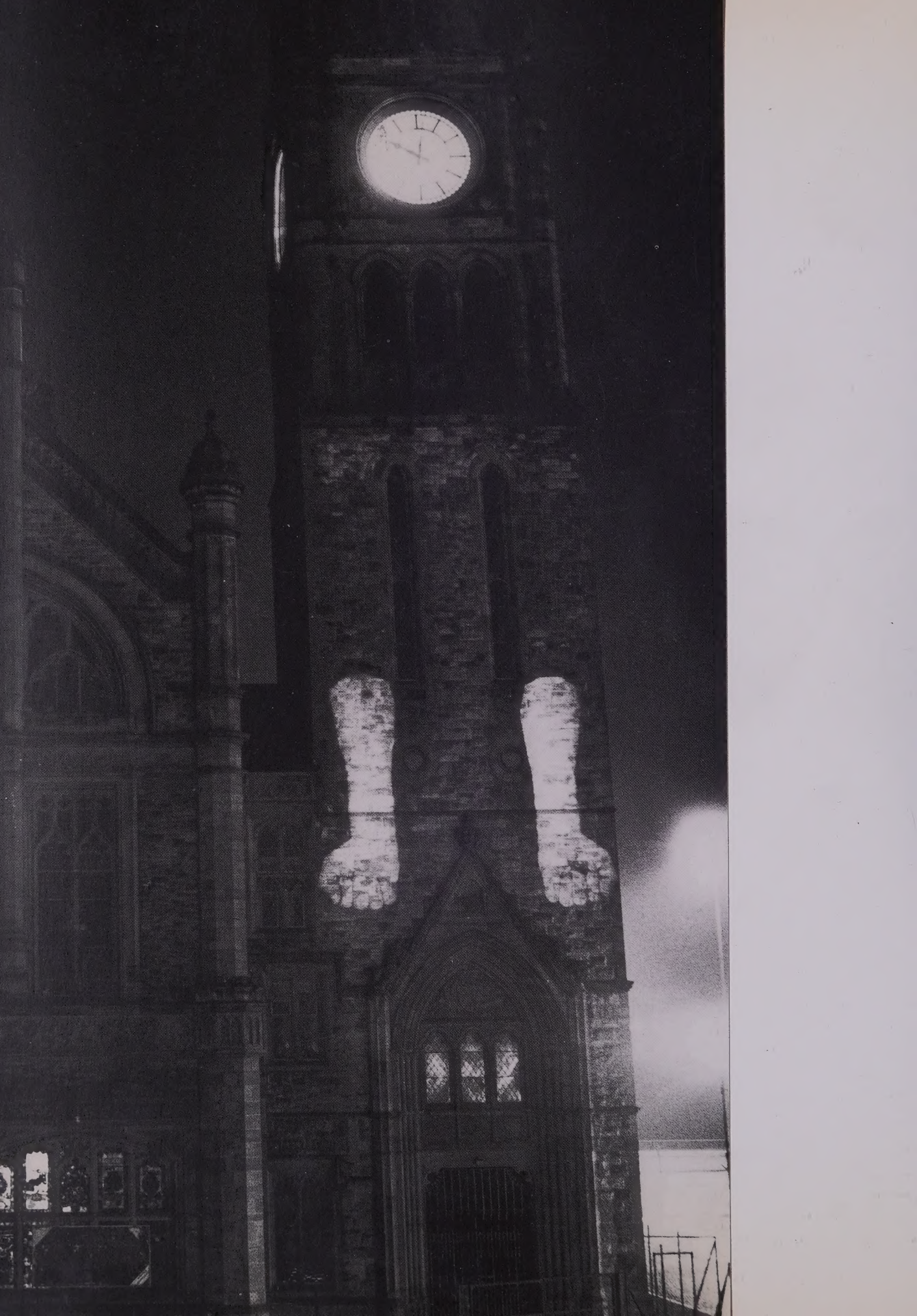


perspecta 26

The Yale Architecture Journal

Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture





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Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture

Theater, Theatricality, and Architecture

perspecta 26 The Yale Architecture Journal

edited by

Hans Baldauf

Baker Goodwin

Amy Reichert

designed by

Sheena Calvert

Perspecta Incorporated, New Haven
Rizzoli International, New York

Perspecta:

The Yale Architectural Journal is published in the United States of America by Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 300 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10017

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Perspecta:

The Yale Architectural Journal, Inc., and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
ISBN: 0-8478-5505-8
ISSN: 0079-0958
LC: 56-28005

Send editorial correspondence

to: **Perspecta:**

The Yale Architectural Journal, The Yale School of Architecture,
180 York Street,
New Haven, CT 06520

Send orders and business

correspondence to:

Subscriptions Department
Rizzoli International
Publications
300 Park Ave South,
New York, NY 10010

Meditations on The Frame by

José Ortega y Gasset is published here through the permission of the Fundación Ortega y Gasset for the original text and The Art Institute of Chicago for the translation.

The production of this journal has been made possible in part with support from the Robert Hale Symonds Fund.

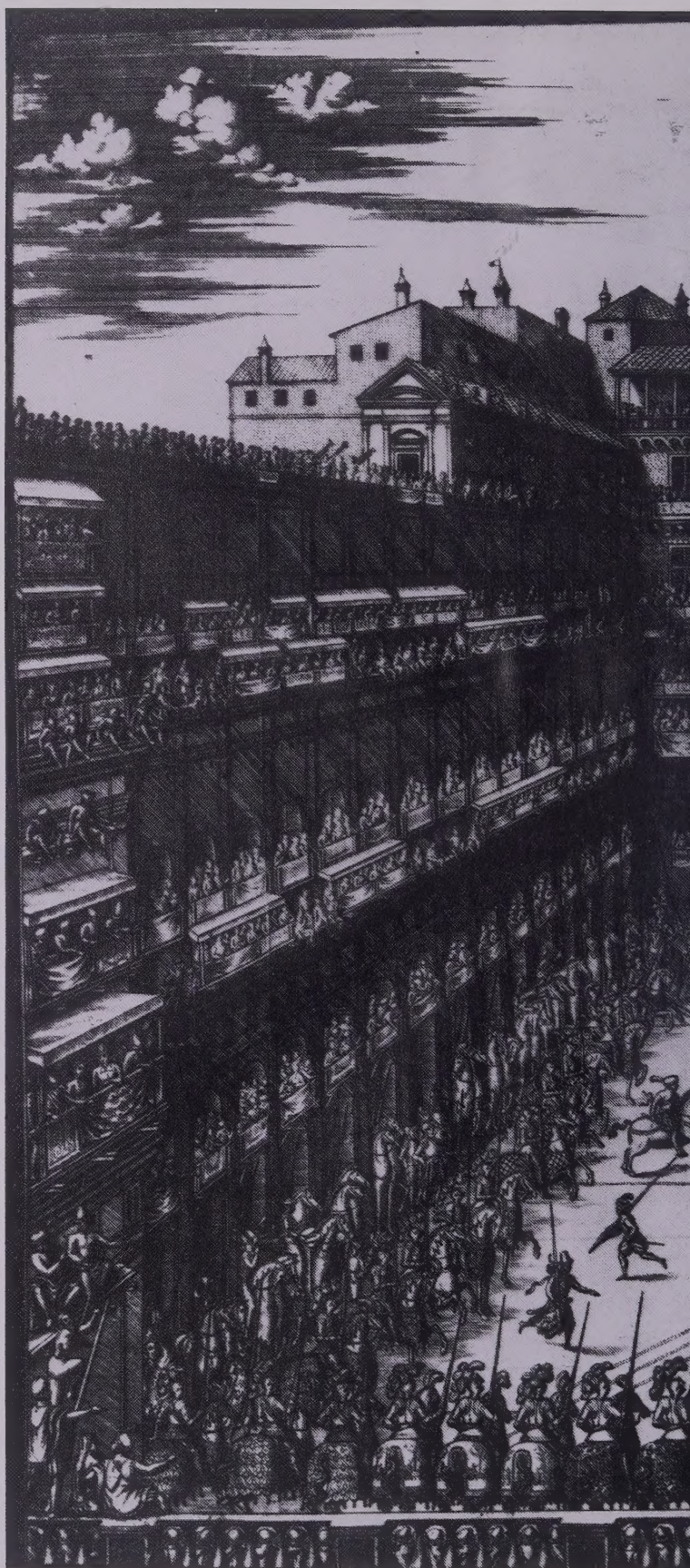
Perspecta 26 has been aided by a grant from The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

The Editors wish to thank the following, among others, for their generous gifts which made the production of this issue possible:

Anonymous
David Birkenruth
Turner Brooks
Joan and Norman Carver
Centerbrook Architects
Ted Chapin
Gary Chensoff
David Childs
CRSS Incorporated in
memory of Paul Kennon
Bruce W. Duncan
Field Paoli Architects
Gwathmey Siegel and
Associates Architects
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Treffinger, Walz, MacLeod
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William Turnbull Associates,
Architects
Venturi, Scott-Brown, and
Associates, Inc.
D. Randall Wilnot
Zimmer Gunsul Frasca
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Kajima Construction
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Bramante. Belvedere Court,
The Vatican, c. 1559-65.

Cover. Krzysztof Wodiczko.
Projection. Guildhall, Derry,
Northern Ireland, 1985.



*Modello della giostra fatto nel Teatro di Palazzo
edificato in questa forma dalla S.^a di S. Pio 4.^{to} come
si vede nella stampa della giostra, con le sue mura.*



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Each issue of *Perspecta* is conceived and edited by a different group of graduate students from the Yale School of Architecture. In the tradition of *Perspecta*, each board of editors has the opportunity and, in fact, the mission of realizing their own project. We are, however, grateful to many people for their help, especially to Karsten Harries and Francesco Dal Co. Our conversations with Professor Harries have helped us to clarify our concerns and have suggested ways of investigating them. Professor Dal Co, through his suggestions of authors and unexpected areas of research, has helped to shape the contents of this issue.

The editorial freedom of each issue is possible because of the continuing efforts of the *Perspecta* Board of Directors, especially Harold Roth, President of the Board and Thomas Beeby, Dean of the Yale School of Architecture. We thank them and Alvin Eisenman, Director of Studies, Graphic Design, in the Yale School of Art for their support.

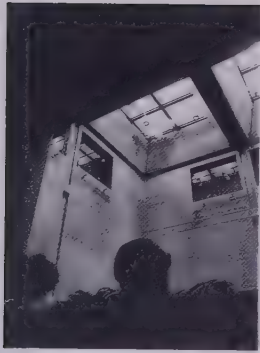
We also thank the staff of the Yale School of Architecture and the Yale School of Art, especially Sophie Powell, Dolores Gall, and Jackie McGuire. Our copy editor Barbara A. Emmel, photographer Bill Grego, and mechanical artist Page Rheinbeck were instrumental in the production of this issue.

We are grateful to all those who have helped us by suggesting possible contributors and topics. We particularly thank Alec Purves, William Jordy, Joseph Connors, Jennifer Tipton, Ming Cho Lee, Neil Levine, Martha Nussbaum, Susan Launi, Pat Pinnell and Ben Weese.

Andrew Garthwaite, Tae Hong, Sam Fleischacker, John Heist, Lisa Baldauf, Matthew Affron, Kazumi Futagawa, Luigi Mumford, Howard Fitzpatrick, Gil Schafer, Shelly Tatum, Rex Lalire, Christopher March, Robert Orr, Melanie Taylor, and the firm of Hammond Beeby and Babka provided invaluable assistance.

For her patience, inspiration, and courage, Sheena Calvert thanks Amy Cassello.

For their patient support of this endeavour we thank Bea and Bumps Baldauf, Margaret and Elliot Goodwin, and Ralph and Edith Reichert.



The success, even the survival, of the arts has come increasingly to depend on their ability to defeat theater.

Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood"

Might not the opposite be true—that its success lies in an ability to embrace theater, to investigate relationships between actor, audience, and stage? In architecture and theater (perhaps more than in the other arts) the receiver is central to the work.

Perspecta 26 investigates the editors' interest in the building as an occupied, inhabited space—as the site of events. It seeks to understand architecture through the relationship between the enduring object and the ephemeral (light, sound, posture, gesture...). Theater orchestrates these qualities to create particular images and experiences. Architects, social visionaries, and political reformers have drawn on this aspect of theater for certain buildings. While these buildings consciously exploit their theatricality, it is present, perhaps naively, in all buildings.



Louis Kahn. Yale Center for
British Art, New Haven, 1977.

STANFORD ANDERSON

is Professor of History and Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He edited *On Streets* (1978) and is presently at work on a translation, with commentary, of Herman Muthesius's *Stil Architektur und Baukunst* (1902) and essays on *sachlichkeit* and the significance of Sigfried Gideon's historeography.

TADAO ANDO

has practiced architecture in Osaka, Japan since 1969. He has built numerous widely acclaimed public and private projects including the Rokko Housing, Times Building, and Sumiyoshi Row House. He was awarded the Medaille d'Or de l'Académie d'Architecture in 1989 and was the Davenport Professor of Architecture at Yale University in the fall of 1987.

THOMAS BEEBY

is Dean of the Yale School of Architecture. His firm, Hammond, Beeby, and Babka, was recently awarded, through a competition, the commission for the new main public library for the City of Chicago. He has written numerous articles including "The Grammar of Ornament: Ornament as Grammar."

PETER BEHRENS

(1868-1940), best known for his design work, especially that for AEG, was a self-trained architect who began his career as a painter and graphic designer. His writings on architecture were highly influential in the development of modern architecture.

ALBERTO FERLENGA

is an architect in Milan and an editor of *Lotus International*. In 1985 he was awarded the Stone Lion by the Venice Biennale for his project for Este. He is author of a monograph on Aldo Rossi (1987) and has taught courses in design at the Universities of Miami, Clemson, and San Juan. He is Professor of Design at the University of Naples.

MARCO DE MICHELIS

teaches history of architecture at the Instituto Universitario de Arquitectura in Venice. His publications include *La Citta Soviettica 1917-1936*. He is presently working on a monograph on Heinrich Tessenow that will be issued on the occasion of an exhibition for the Venice Biennale of Tessenow's work that is to open in September 1990.

SOPHIE GOBRAN

is a doctoral candidate in Architectural History at Columbia University. Her article in *Perspecta 26* is drawn from her dissertation on the theater architecture of Gottfried Semper.

ANN HUTCHINSON GUEST

began her career as a dancer and has worked with choreographers George Balanchine, Antony Tudor, and Jerome Robbins, among others, as a dance notator. She has published several books on dance notation including *Labanotation* (1977) and *Dance Notation* (1984) and holds several honorary degrees for her work in this field.

KARSTEN HARRIES

is Mellon Professor of Philosophy at Yale University. He has written extensively on philosophy and architecture. He is the author of *The Meaning of Modern Art* (1968), *The Bavarian Rococo* (1983) and *The Broken Frame* (1989). His frequent contributions to *Perspecta* form a significant contribution to architectural theory, and will be published as a collection of essays.

DAVID HARVEY

is Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford. His books include *Social Justice and the City* (1973); *The Limits to Capital* (1982); *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (1985); *The Urbanization of Capital* (1985); and a paperback selection published under the title *The Urban Experience* (1989). His forthcoming book is entitled *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

JOHN HEJDUK

is an architect and educator who lives and works in New York City. He has served as Dean of Cooper Union since 1975 and has taught there since 1964. His collected works, 1947-1983 were published in *Mask of Medusa* (1985).

GEORGE IZENOUR

is Professor Emeritus of Theater Design and Technology Director Emeritus of the Electro Mechanical Laboratory of the Yale School of Drama. He is author of *Theater Design* (1977) and *Theater Technology* (1988). His article for *Perspecta* 26 is drawn from material for his forthcoming book *The Roofed Theaters of Classical Antiquity*. He has consulted on the design of many theaters and has contributed many inventions to the technology of the theater, including the electronic multipreset lighting control system, the synchronous winch flying system, acoustical substructures, and related analog and digital control systems.

ADA KARMI-MELAMEDE

is a partner with her brother, Ram Karmi, in the architectural design firm, Karmi Associates in Tel Aviv. Their projects include many public buildings. She was Bishop Visiting Professor of Architecture at Yale and has taught at Columbia, Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and at the University of Pennsylvania.

IRVING LAVIN

is Professor of Art History at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton. He is the author of *Bernini and the Unity of the Arts* (1980) and numerous articles.

JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET

(1883-1955), the influential Spanish philosopher and humanist, published frequently in periodicals and founded several journals. His most important books include *Invertebrate Spain* (1922) and *The Revolt of the Masses* (1929).

RICHARD SCHECHNER

is editor of *TDR: The Drama Review*, a journal of performance studies, and is Professor of Performance Studies at New York University. He is the author of *Essays on Performance Theory* (1977) and *Between Theater and Anthropology* (1985).

ROBERT WILSON

artist, designer, and director of theater, dance, film, and video works studied architecture at Pratt Institute and painting at the University of Texas. His works include: *Death, Destruction, and Detroit*; *Einstein on The Beach*; *Civil WarS*; and *Quartet*.

JOHN WINKLER

is Professor of Classics at Stanford University. He is co-editor of *Nothing to Do With Dionysus?: Athenian Drama In Its Social Context* (1989) and author of *The Rehearsals of Manhood: Athenian Drama and Social Identity* (forthcoming). He delivered the Martin Classical Lectures at Oberlin College in the fall of 1988.

KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO

trained as an industrial designer at the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw. He practiced industrial design from 1969-77 in Poland. Between 1970-79 he worked on "allegorical designs." Wodiczko emigrated to Canada in 1977. In 1980 he performed his first public projection in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1986 he represented Canada at the Venice Biennale. He moved to the United States in 1984 and, currently, is working on the Homeless Vehicle Project.

On the Unity of the Arts and the Early Baroque Opera House

Irving Lavin

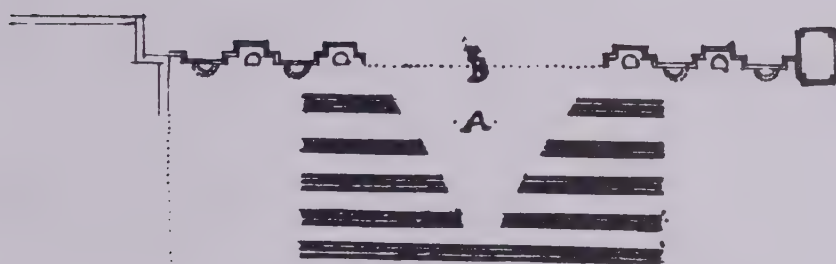
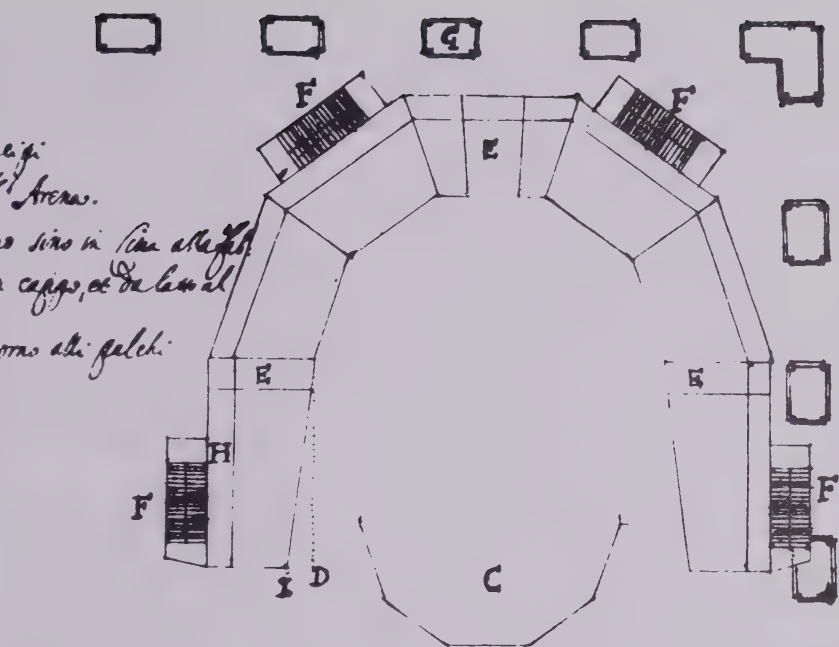
On hearing the word "theater," most people will automatically conjure up an architectural structure with certain definite characteristics: a closed building, horseshoe-shaped, with several levels of boxes rising vertically and rows of seats in the ground floor area called the orchestra. These arrangements for the spectator face a raised platform in front of which on the ground level is an enclosed area, the orchestra pit, reserved for the musicians. Above and at the front of the stage rises a fixed architectural frame, the proscenium. On a deep stage behind the proscenium, the players play and constantly changing, usually painted, scenery is displayed.

This understanding of what a theater is, is such an integral part of our heritage that few people realize it was developed only in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe. My purpose here is to isolate a very specific and limited, yet also seminal, moment in the creation of this formula, the full significance of which may best be appreciated after a brief survey of the prior development of theater architecture.

The Western conception of a place for the presentation of public spectacles as a monumental, permanent structure, emerged in classical antiquity, with three main

The portion of this paper concerning the Parma productions was originally published in French, with full documentation: "Lettres de Parme (1618, 1627), et debut du théâtre baroque," in J. Jacquot, ed., *Le lieu théâtral à la Renaissance*, Paris, 1964, 105-58. The complete version in English will appear in *Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University*, volume six. The new documents were discovered by the writer in the Biblioteca Comunale in Ferrara, where they bear the signature MS Antonelli 660.

- A scena
 B Dorsal del frontispizio
 C Pila del portico: Principi
 E strade che vanno nell'Arco.
 F sale che ascendono sino in cima alle scale.
 G Pilastri, che sono in capo, et da lato al
 Corridoio.
 H Corridoio che gira attorno alle scale.



Scala di Pietro Novati misura di ferraro.

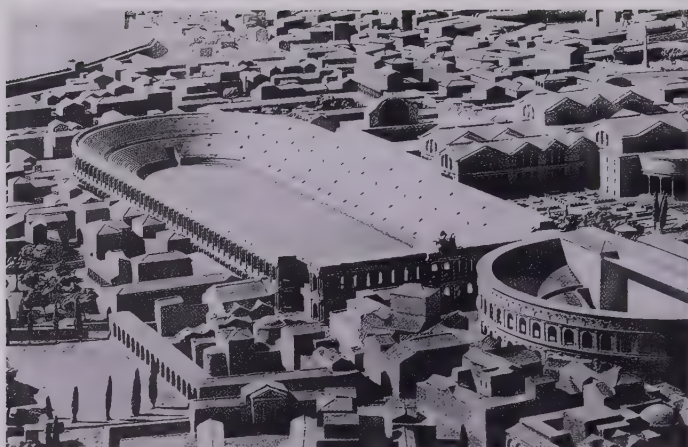
2. Stadium of Domitian, Rome, reconstruction.

3. Colosseum, Rome, reconstruction.

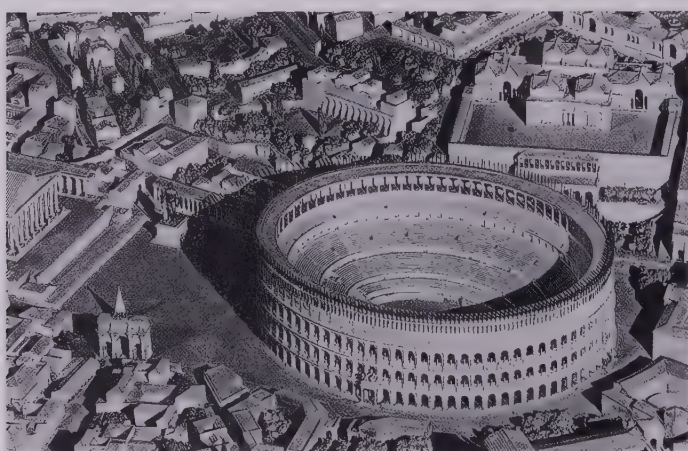
4. Palladio, section of the *cavea* of a Roman theater, from D. Barbaro, *I dieci libri dell'architettura*, Venice, 1567.

5. Theater of Marcellus, Rome, plan.

6. Theater of Marcellus, Rome, reconstruction.

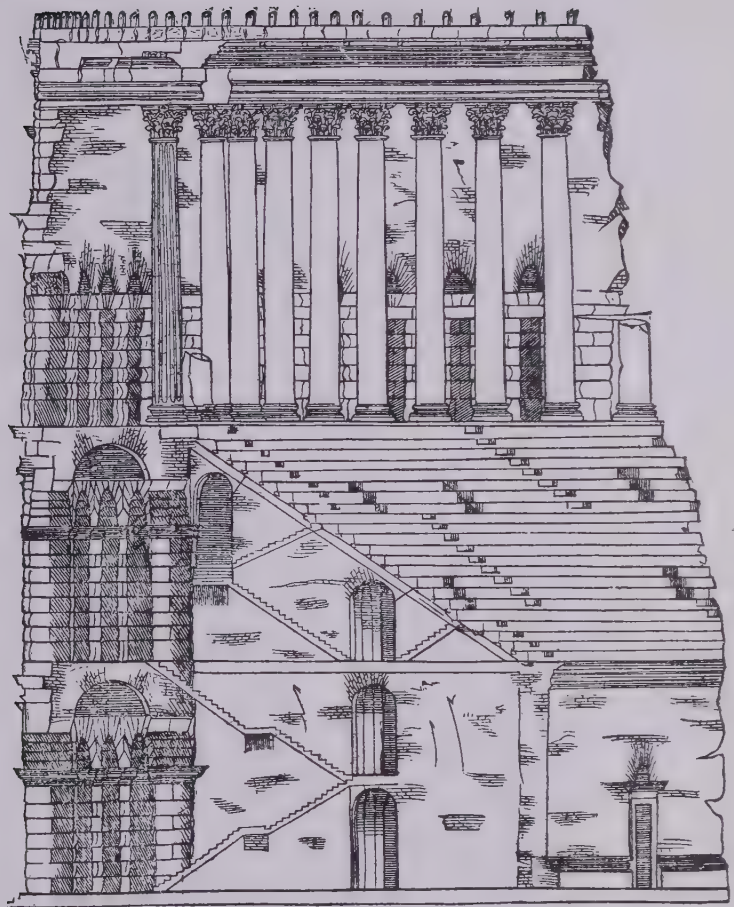


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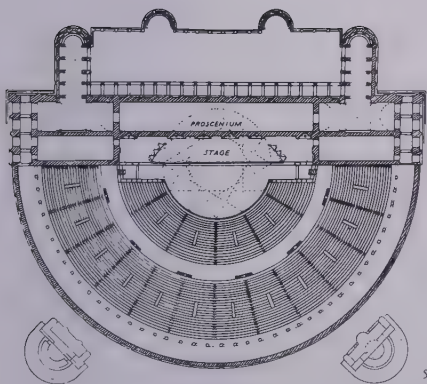


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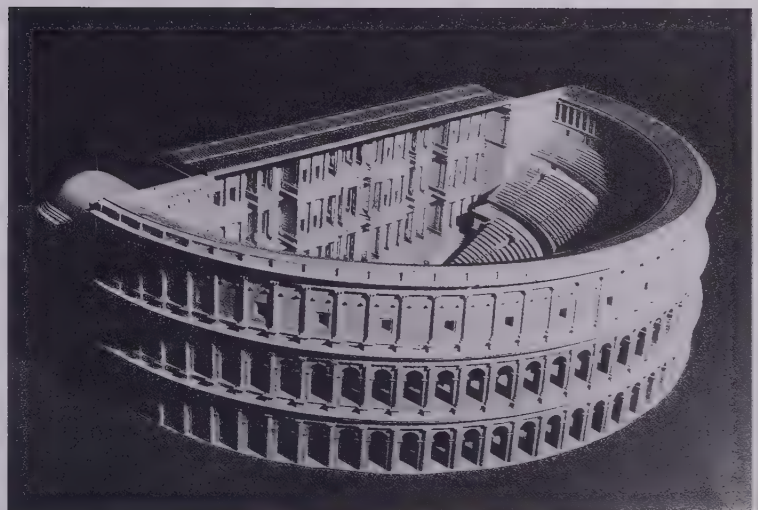
structural types determined by the kind of spectacle involved. One was the stadium or circus or hippodrome, which was essentially a race-course shaped like an elongated U, surrounded by a range of steps to provide seating for the spectators (fig. 2). The second type, the amphitheater, was invented by the Romans for what might be called non-directional spectacles, mainly combats of men and animals. The amphitheater was, in effect, a symmetrically-shaped stadium, ovoid in plan with the seats running all round the *cavea*, or bowl (fig. 3). The third type was the theater proper, semi-circular in plan with stepped seating around the orchestra, where the chorus performed, facing a raised stage for the actors (fig. 4). Changes of locale were introduced by means of movable painted screens, or by so-called *periaktoi*, that is, scenes painted on turning triangular frames (fig. 5). The Romans introduced several important variations on the Greek theater type: rather than carving them out of the hillside, they raised their theaters from the ground up as independent buildings; they introduced a new structural arrangement consisting of superimposed corridors that gave access to the *cavea* (fig. 4); they introduced seating in the orchestra; and they constructed on the stage a huge, permanent architectural enclosure, called the *scenae frons*, that provided a backdrop and frame for the performance (fig. 6).



4



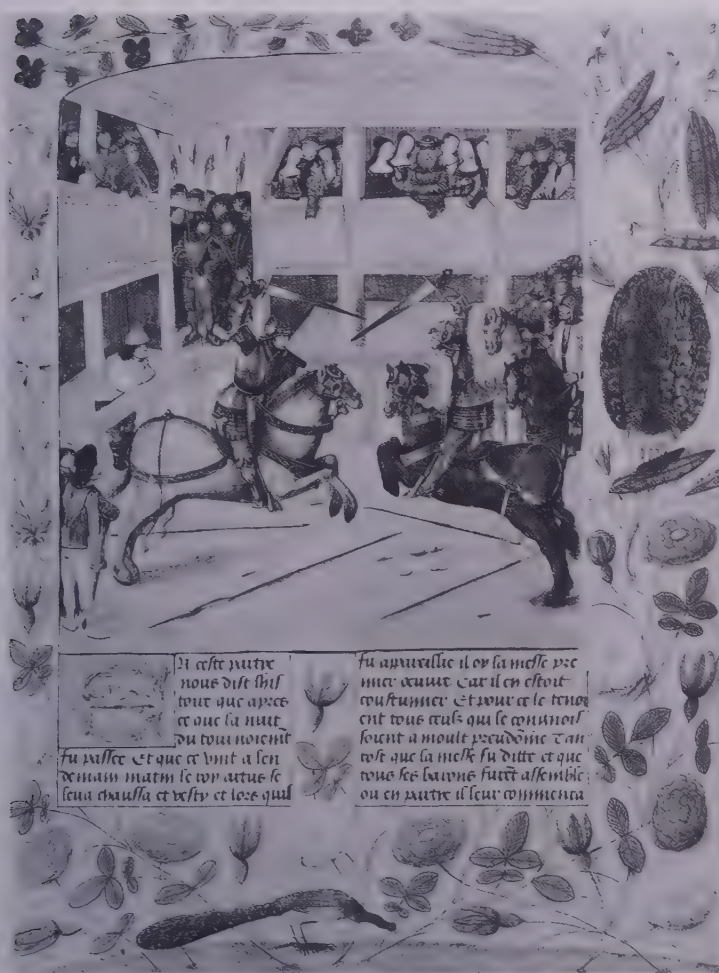
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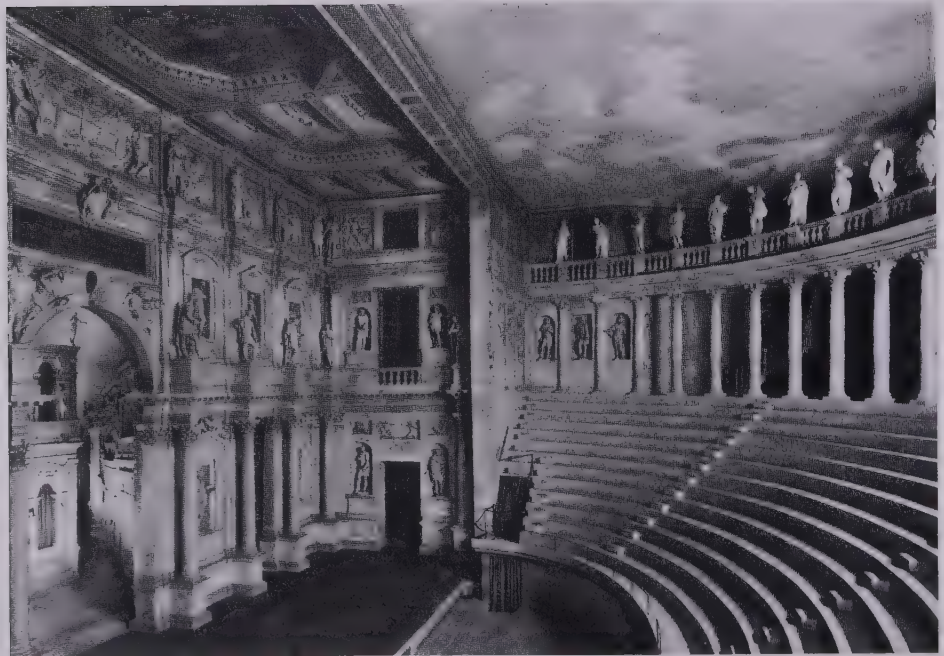
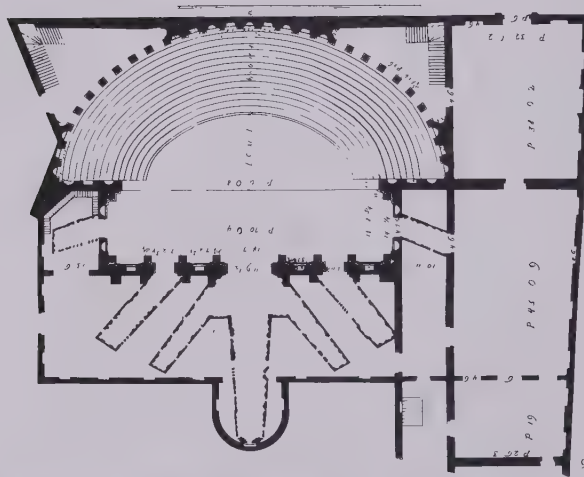
In the Middle Ages the public entertainments that elicited these grandiose architectural expressions disappeared, replaced in effect by two kinds of events with no real counterparts in antiquity. Mystery plays and chivalric tournaments were non-professional activities in which there was no clear distinction between audience and participants. These events often took place in the town square and required no permanent, monumental architecture. In the case of the mystery plays, the different locales where the events occurred were suggested by separate structures, variously called places or houses or mansions, built of temporary materials, with the town-folk shifting from one to another as the sequence evolved (fig. 7). Instead of the sets moving, the *audience* moved. No longer confined to one place as a self-contained representation of a mythic past, the spectacle merged with the real world and became a dynamic, continuous enactment of a miraculous present—like the Mass itself. The tournament, or joust, involving “real” people rather than professional performers, was also a part of life, no less a participatory than a spectator event. The lists, where the combats took place, were flanked by temporary tribunes, erected vertically rather than on an inclined plane. These grandstands served the patrons, judges, and musicians, as well as the spectators, who were all part of the event (fig. 8).

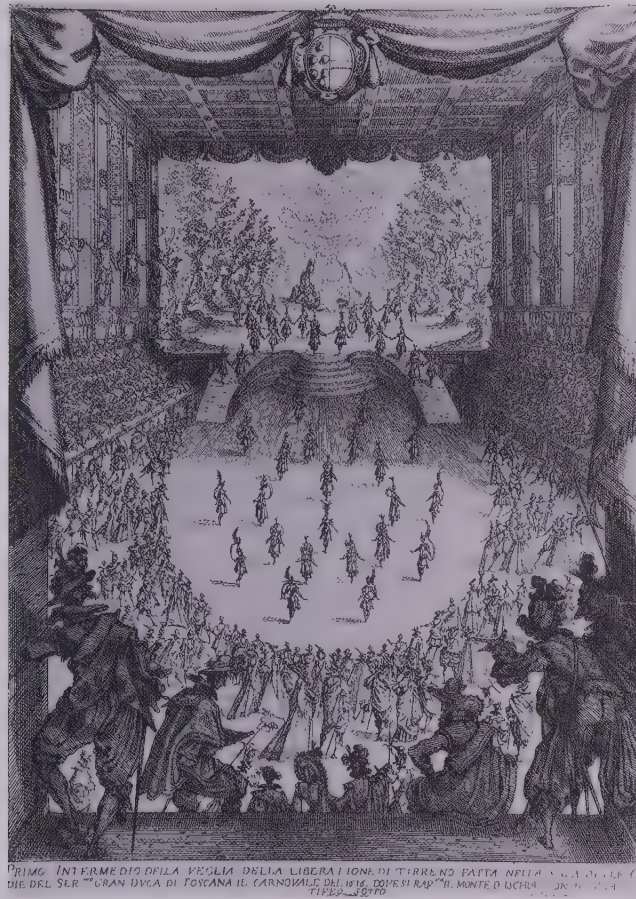


7. Lucerne Easter Plan, first day, 1583.

8. Tournament of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, miniature, Flemish 1480-1500.

In the course of the Renaissance two main theater types evolved, partly out of medieval precedent and partly as a consequence of the revival of ancient prototypes. The academic theater, best exemplified by Palladio's Teatro Olimpico built at Vicenza in the 1580s, was relatively modest in size and specifically intended for the production of classical plays (figs. 9, 10). Its relation to classical models is obvious, but there are many differences, as well. The building is not only permanent, it is also permanently covered—it is a true playhouse in the modern sense. The architecture creates a specific setting both for the spectator, who is surrounded by a colonnade, and for the stage, where elaborate, built-out perspective illusions give an immediacy of effect the classical theater never sought.



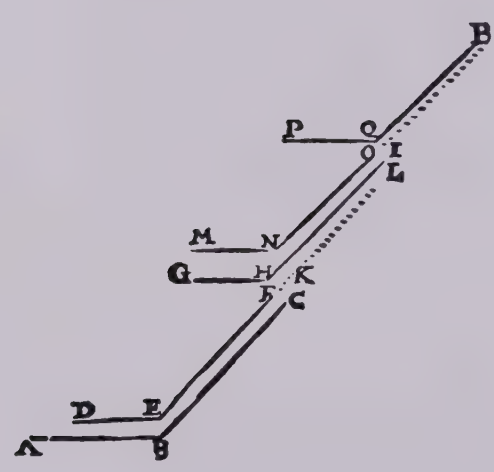
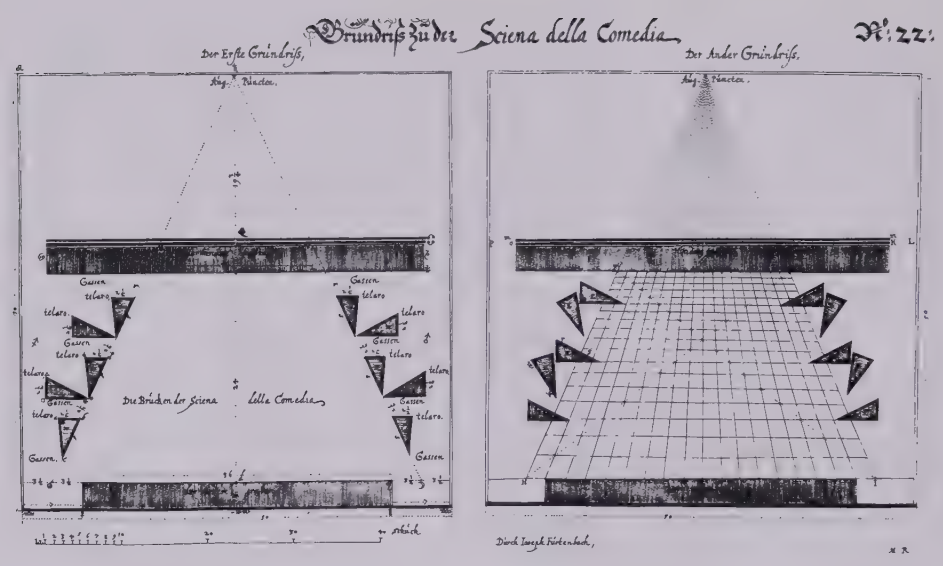


9. Palladio, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, plan, from Bertotti Scamozzi, *Le fabbriche e i disegni di Andrea Palladio*, Vicenza, 1796.

10. Palladio, Teatro Olimpico, *cavea and scenae frons*.

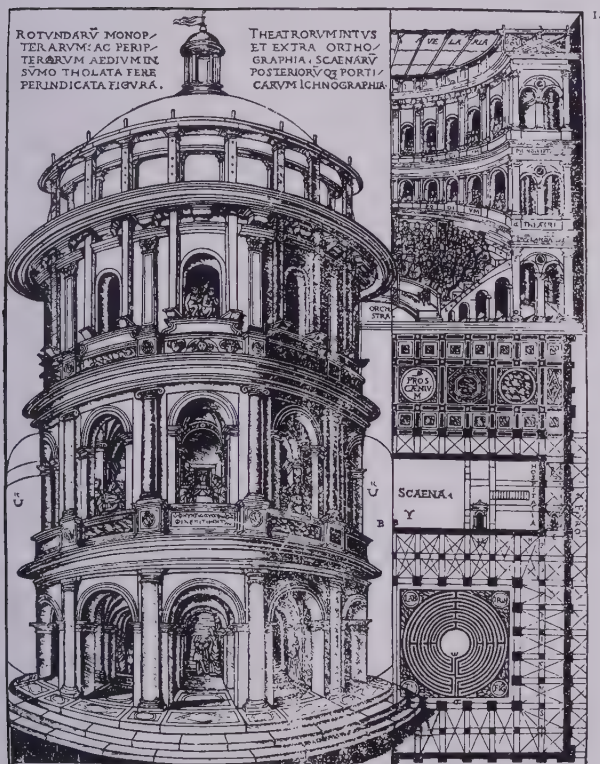
11. Jacques Callot, First Intermezzo or the Veglia of the *Liberazione di Terreno*, 1616.

The second Renaissance type was the great court theater, installed within the confines of a palace building and therefore covered and sometimes also permanent. The theater of the Medici built by Bernardo Buontalenti, also in the 1580s, once occupied a long hall in the Uffizi in Florence. The walls and ceiling were richly decorated, and a range of stepped seats along the sides became semicircular at the end opposite the stage (fig. 11). The basic form, as one contemporary observed, resembled that of the Roman circus. Theaters of this kind served for productions of contemporary plays, with spectacular interludes, called *intermezzi* or *intermedii*, often including tournament jousts, that might take place partly on the stage and partly in the arena in front. Unlike the academic plays, the court spectacles included many wonderful stage effects and changes of scene. These ephemeral illusions recalled the miraculous events and shifts of locale of the medieval mystery plays now all in one place. The changes of setting were brought about chiefly in two ways. One was a system of multiple *periaktoi* based on but more elaborate than the devices described in the classical texts (fig. 12); the other method was a system of partially built angle wings painted on two faces, which provided for lateral passages and perspective diminution into depth (fig. 13). Both systems offered far more versatility than either the classical or medieval settings did, and thus implemented for a time the increasing demand for frequent and rapid changes of scene.



A crucial step was taken in the second decade of the seventeenth century, in the theater built in the Farnese ducal palace at Parma by the great Ferrarese architect and engineer, Giovanni Battista Aleotti (figs. 15, 17-19). In the Farnese theater, Aleotti effectively combined the two chief and antecedent traditions: the fixed proscenium on the stage and the screen-like, non-functional loggias around the auditorium recall the *scenae frons* and colonnade above the *cavea* in Palladio's Teatro Olimpico; the design of the superimposed arcades may reflect Renaissance reconstructions of ancient theaters (fig. 14). On the other hand, the elongated shape and stage unencumbered by fixed scenery are adapted from the court spectacle theater. All these features, greatly modified in one way or another, became essential ingredients of the Baroque opera house. In this merger of types the court theater achieved a coherent architectural form it had never had before, while the academic theater acquired a new measure of grandeur and flexibility.

Such, broadly speaking, was the situation in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when the events I shall now proceed to describe took place at the court of Duke Odoardo Farnese in Parma. Negotiations for the marriage of Odoardo Farnese to a Medici princess began in 1615, when Odoardo was three years old. The marriage contract, which was signed in 1620, provided some leeway as to which of the Medici girls would be Odoardo's wife. Ultimately Margherita was chosen, though Maria de Medici made an eleventh-hour attempt to marry Margherita to her own son, the Duke of Orléans. The effort was in vain, however, and the wedding between Margherita and Odoardo took place in the Cathedral of Florence on October 11, 1628.



12. Periaktoi.
13. Angle wing sets.
14. C. Cesariano, *Vitruvio*,
Milan, 1521.

The marriage was the occasion for a series of celebrations in Florence and then in Parma that rank among the most lavish of the seventeenth century. In Florence the festivities included *Flora*, a play by Andrea Salvadori, with music by Marco da Gagliano and sets by Alfonso Parigi, performed on October 14 in the Medici theater; on October 17, *La Disfida d'Ismeno*, a tournament, was held, text also by Andrea Salvadori. The second round of celebrations took place nearly two months later, when Margherita arrived in Parma to take up residence there. The city fathers elected Giovanni Battista Magnani, the official architect of Parma, and Marcello Buttigli, a local literato, to prepare the decorations for her solemn entry, which took place on December 9. For that occasion too, Girolamo Rainaldi, "architetto del popolo romano," designed a great artificial palace of Venus and Hymenaeus

that served as a place for taking refreshment outside the city. There were two major theatrical events. On the evening of December 13 there was a performance of Torquato Tasso's pastoral play *Aminta*, in a temporary wooden theater specially built in the Cortile di S. Pietro Martire adjoining the Farnese Palace in Parma. For this performance Claudio Achillini wrote a prologue, *Teti e Flora*, while Ascanio Pio di Savoia wrote the text of five intermedii. Monteverdi wrote the music for the prologue and intermedii. The second and culminating spectacle was a great tournament, *Mercurio e Marte*, held on December 21, also written by Achillini, and for which Monteverdi also supplied the music. The tournament was performed in the Teatro Farnese, which Aleotti had built almost a decade before.

In some respects these productions are unusually well documented. We have the texts of the prologue and intermeddi of the *Aminta*, as well as that of the Torneo. Of the Parma festivities in general and the theater productions in particular, Buttigli has left us an exceedingly meticulous description. We have in addition several other eyewitness accounts of the proceedings written by foreign representatives. The richness of this verbal documentation is some recompense for the loss of Monteverdi's music and the illustrations to Buttigli's text that were planned but never finished.

We may take further consolation in a remarkable series of letters I discovered some years ago, written to the Marchese Enzo Bentivoglio of Ferrara, who was in general charge of the theatrical productions. The letters, which record the nearly eighteen-month-long preparations for the spectacles, are practically unique for this period. Normally we must glean what information we can regarding the preparatory phases for works of art indirectly from sources such as contracts, payments, and studies by the artists concerned. Here, we have a substantial series of actual descriptions of the work as it proceeded, the decisions to be made, and the problems to be solved. That we do so results from Enzo Bentivoglio's evident inability or reluctance to go to Parma to oversee the preparations in person, necessitating frequent "progress reports" from those who were responsible for the work there. The correspondents include a young Ferrarese disciple of Aleotti, the architect and stage designer Francesco Guitti, who was responsible for the stage and theater arrangements; a certain Francesco Mazzi, who evidently shared Guitti's duties; Count Fabio Scotti, who was Maggiordomo to the Duke of Parma; and finally, Antonio Goretti, an amateur of music and friend of Monteverdi who was in charge of musical arrangements.

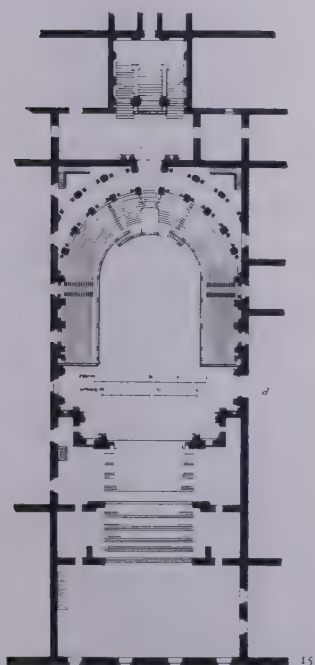
Much of the letters' interest lies in the close view they provide of the actual work on the stage machinery and sets for the spectacles. These "sceno-technical" aspects are a subject in themselves, however, in which I am scarcely competent, and I should like instead to comment briefly on three particular matters of design that help to define the place of the 1628 production in the general development of the theater in seventeenth-century Italy.

The first of these is the temporary theater for the Cortile di S. Pietro Martire, a structure which I believe represents a critical phase in the creation of the Baroque theater. It was conceived, as Mazzi's letter of December 8, 1627, makes clear, by Francesco Guitti. By combining this letter and the accompanying sketch plan (fig. 1) with Buttigli's careful description of the theater as it was finally built, we gain a fairly complete picture of Guitti's idea. The structure was roughly 26.4 meters wide by 29.7 meters long, excluding the stage. The shape was basically half an oval, but the sides were straight and formed a seven-sided polygon. Contrary to the impression given by the sketch, the sections of the polygon do not seem to have been actually separated from one another. A flight of ten steps raised on a two-meter-high platform provided seats on the ground level. Above, supported at intervals on columns, were superimposed two loggias, the first of which, at least, contained a flight of four steps. Access to the loggias was from corridors surrounding them at the rear. Access to the corridors was provided by four sets of stairways. On Mazzi's plan three passages, two at the sides and one at the rear, lead directly into the theater from the outside, presumably running under the galleries. Placed in the center in front of the stage was a large platform reserved for the princely family. In case there was to be a tournament, Mazzi explains, this platform could be moved. The theater was covered with a huge cloth canopy. Finally, Buttigli describes two elaborate portals that flanked the proscenium.

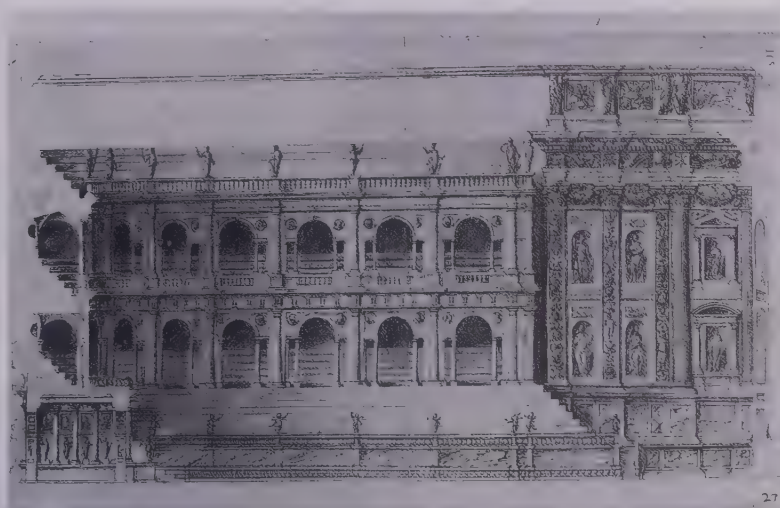
So far as I know, this is the first time in a theater of this kind that two of these elements occur, namely the polygonal shape, and the corridors with stairways that give access to the galleries. While the polygonal plan as such had little effect, the system of corridors behind the balconies and stairways leading up to them has been standard for theaters ever since and would alone assure Guitti a conspicuous niche in the history of theater architecture. Nevertheless the two innovations are closely related, and their basic significance emerges from consideration of the background and sources of Guitti's design as a whole.

15. Teatro Farnese, Parma, plan.

16. Attr. to G. B. Aleotti, project for the Teatro Farnese. Parma.



15

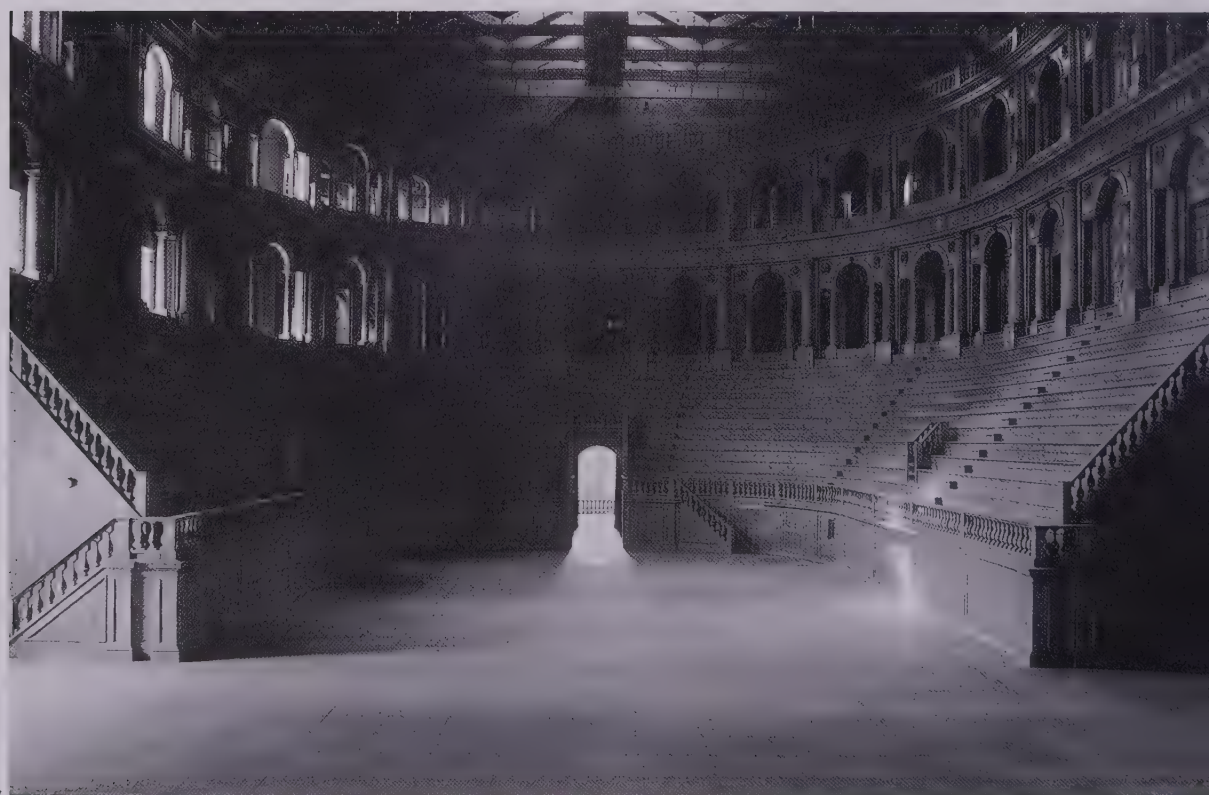


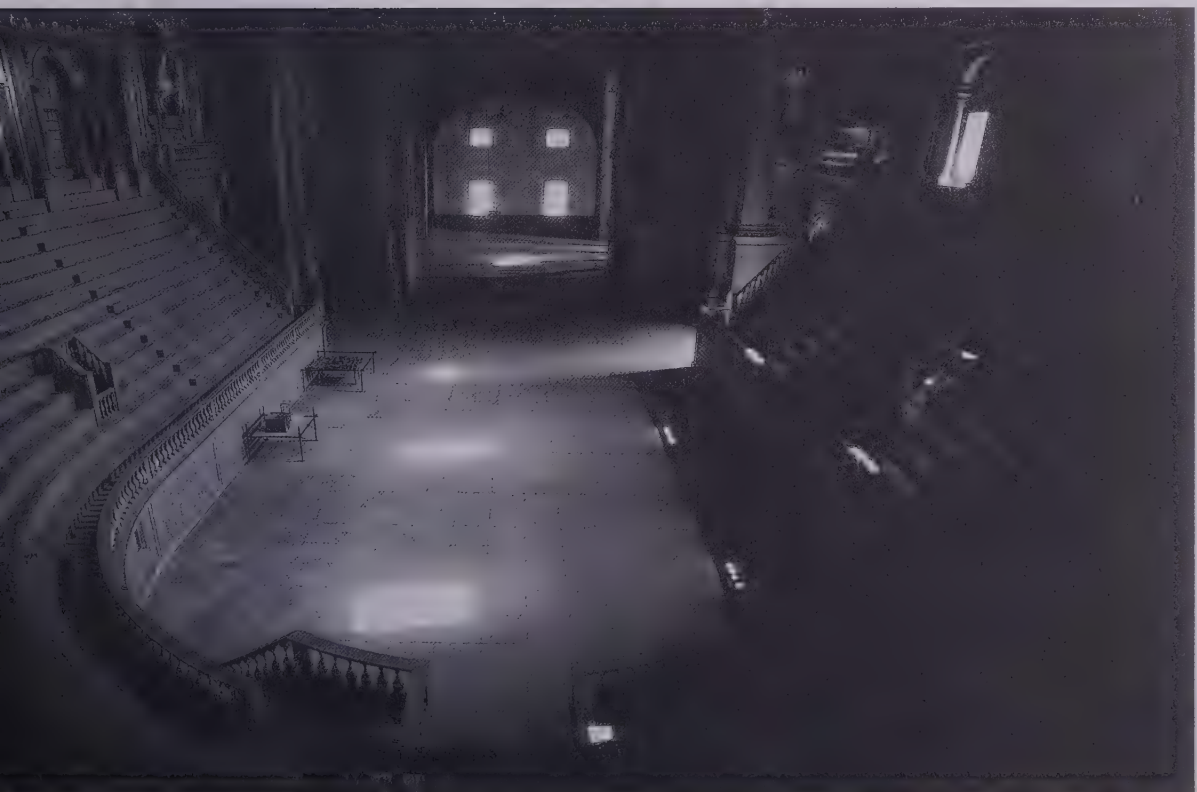
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10

It is clear that Guitti was inspired chiefly by Aleotti's Teatro Farnese: the elongated shape, the amphitheater seats raised on a high base, the lateral portals, all probably spring from that source. However, one of the most distinctive features of Guitti's theater, the superimposed galleries also containing continuous amphitheater seats, recalls not the Farnese theater in its final form, but what is presumably a project for it by Aleotti, preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale at Ferrara (fig. 16). While flanking portals are absent, we find here an analogous arrangement of superimposed galleries with stepped seats. Although the galleries were discarded in the construction of the Farnese theater, Guitti evidently revived the device from Aleotti's original project.

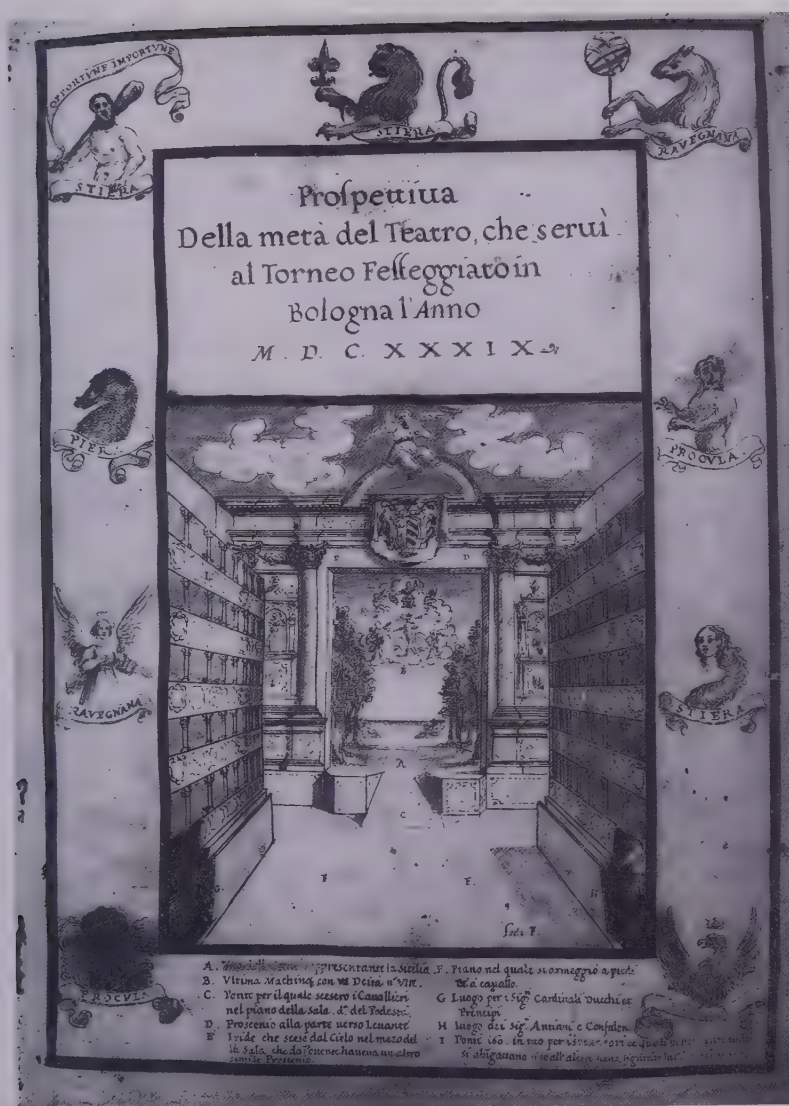
It was an important step. The Teatro Farnese had laid the foundation for the Baroque theater by giving a coherent, monumental architectural form to the court spectacle theater, which, though often extremely elaborate, had until then been little more than a large hall with banks of seats along the walls. In effect, Aleotti adapted the one coherent theater type that had been developed in the sixteenth century, the classically-inspired, semicircular theater that had served primarily as the setting for more or less academic productions of ancient plays and imitations thereof. Here, Aleotti found precedent for the predominantly architectural character of his design, in which temporary decorations can have been accorded only a minor role, if they were intended at all. In the process of adaptation, however, the integrity of the "academic" formula was compromised, by the change in shape and—in the project recorded in the Ferrara drawing—by the addition of galleries.





We have seen that the decorative arcades of the actual building recall, and may indeed have been influenced by, the colonnade that crowns the *cavea* in Palladio's Teatro Olimpico. The functioning galleries shown in Aleotti's Ferrara drawing, however, recall the galleries surmounting the *cavea* that certain Renaissance reconstructions imputed—wrongly, as far as I can determine—to ancient theaters (fig. 14). I suspect the basic idea may have been inspired by an entirely different conception of theater architecture, derived from the medieval tournament tribunes, that was current in Aleotti's own time and native territory of Emilia. One example is recorded in a description of a theater built in the Palazzo del Podestà at Bologna in 1615 by an otherwise unknown architect, Giovanni Gabriele Guidotti. The theater was peculiar in that, owing to the nature of the production for which it was built, a "*contrasto*," it had two stages at opposite ends of the room. At the sides were placed three steps that served as a base for three superimposed galleries supported at intervals by columns. Another example is illustrated in a drawing by Guercino, preserved in the British Museum (fig. 20), representing an outdoor performance, perhaps in Guercino's native town of Cento, between Bologna and Ferrara. Spectators are shown seated on individual chairs in front of the stage; a step-like arrangement (difficult to make out clearly in the drawing) is visible on either side, and above on either side is a covered gallery. The drawing has been dated stylistically to the period before Guercino went to Rome, i.e. before 1621.





20. Guercino, theater scene.

21. Alfonso Chenda, theater
in Palazzo del Podestà,
Bologna, 1635.

It is clear that these structures have little or nothing in common with the academic tradition. The theater is perceived not as a solid mass carved from some imaginary block in front of the proscenium, but as a volume of space organized in tiers. Aleotti's project reflects this spatial point of view, and effects a compromise between it and the academic tradition.

Aleotti's compromise was, so to speak, Guitti's point of departure. Of the Farnese theater one feels that the determining factor in the plan was still, as in the academic theater, an abstract geometrical configuration. Guitti, on the other hand, shows a tendency to build up his design out of single units: the sections of the polygon create divisions in the vertical plane analogous to the galleries dividing the space in the horizontal plane. Indeed, the surrounding corridors and stairways, by providing access from the rear, actually render the units independent in a functional sense.

Seen in this light, Guitti's theater seems to foreshadow the true box theater, in which the galleries are treated in fact as individual spatial "cells" linked together by rear corridors into flexible chains that could be given a variety of shapes. Yet, one would hesitate to regard the solution as more than an isolated experiment if it were not apparent that Guitti was aware of its implications and subsequently developed them further. For a tournament held in the Palazzo Bevilacqua in Ferrara in 1631, he employed four galleries, again in seven sections arranged to form a half oval; but now, it seems, the sections were definitely separated from one another. For a tournament held in the ducal palace at Ferrara in 1638, he provided five galleries with an ample system of stairways and corridors.

That Guitti's designs do indeed belong in the mainstream of the development of Baroque theater architecture is also evident from their relationship to the theaters of his contemporary and compatriot Alfonso Chenda. Chenda worked as a scene painter under Guitti's direction for the 1628 Parma productions, and subsequently became a theater architect in his own right. His first theater, for a production in the Castello at Ferrara, was of the traditional academic type, reflecting Aleotti's original Teatro degli Intrepidi. Subsequently, however, in 1636 at Padua, Chenda built a theater with five orders of true, separated boxes that held sixteen people each. Needless to say, the presence of isolated compartments implies a system of stairs and corridors to give access. Then, in a reconstruction of the theater in the Palazzo del Podestà at Bologna in 1639, Chenda used no fewer than six orders of boxes, 160 in all (fig. 21). These are the first major Italian box theaters on record, and as such they follow directly in the path that Guitti had marked out. The same path led two years later (1641) to another landmark in the history of the modern theater, Andrea Sighizzi's Teatro Formagliari at Bologna. There the individual boxes were in part actually "disconnected," projecting beyond and above one another in a kind of sawtooth configuration. Sighizzi's idea, in turn, was taken up in the early eighteenth century by Francesco Bibiena for his famous Teatro Filarmonico at Verona (fig. 22).

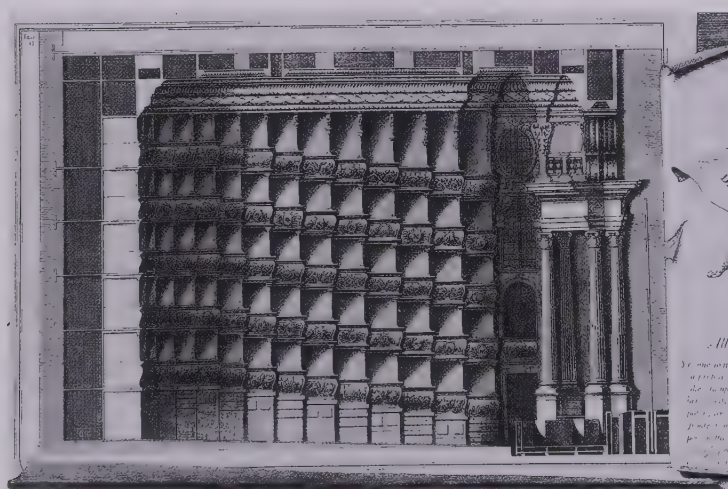
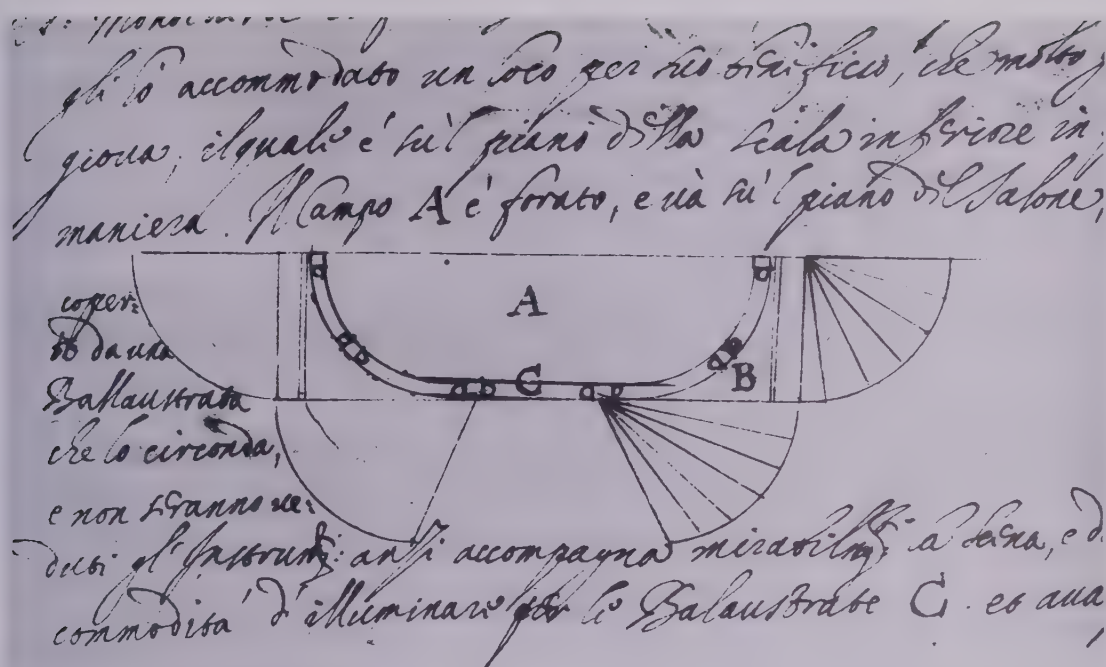


Tavola I. Pianta del Teatro, e dell'Accademia Filarmonica. Tav. III. Prospetto col Sipario ed Orchestra.
Tav. II. Spaccato dell'Auditorio, e del Proscenio. Tav. IV. Veduta esteriore dell'Accademia, e del Teatro

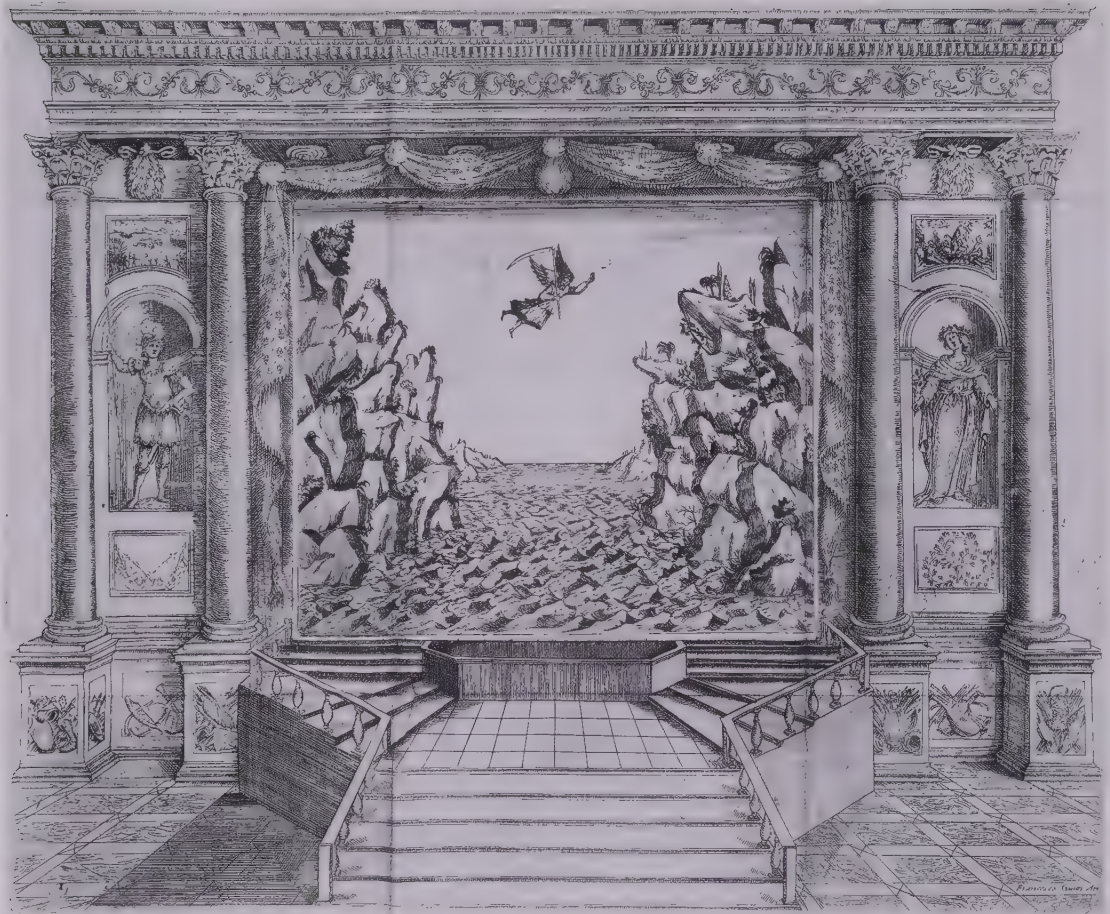


22. Francesco Galli Bibiena,
Teatro Filarmonico, Verona,
1729.

23. Francesco Guitti, orchestra
design for the Teatro Farnese,
Parma; letter of February 18,
1628.

Our second point of interest concerns the stage sets shown in Mazzi's sketch. They are flat wing sets, three changes of scenery being indicated. This is, I think, the first visual record of a stage on which flat wings were used exclusively. It seems likely that in this respect, too, Guitti was the heir of Aleotti. Numerous painted and movable *tellari* are mentioned in the documents of the 1618 productions for the Teatro Farnese, and Aleotti has been credited with the creation of the flat wing stage. We cannot be quite certain of the meaning of the term *tellaro* at this period, however, nor that the 1618 sets were to have *only* flat wings. Mazzi's sketch for the 1628 production is the first record we have of a stage on which flat wings were used exclusively, a major hallmark of the fully developed Baroque theater.

The last feature of the letters we shall discuss is another first as far as visual documentation is concerned, namely the "orchestra" that Guitti used for the production in the Teatro Farnese. Guitti's letter and sketch of February 18, 1628 (fig. 23), is supplemented by the description of Buttigli. It consisted of a long ovoid area in front of the stage surrounded by a parapet that had the function in this case not only of hiding the musicians but also of protecting them from the famous flood of water engineered by Guitti for a marine scene that formed part of the spectacle. The parapet was in turn surrounded by the traditional stairs—in this case they were moveable—communicating between the theater floor and the stage. Like the polygonal form and corridors with steps we examined before, the device seems to have found a permanent place in Guitti's repertory. He used an orchestra pit, in somewhat altered form, again in his theater for the 1638 production of *Andromeda*. The engravings that accompany the publication of this work illustrate the arrangement in relation to the proscenium as a whole (fig. 24).



24. Francesco Guitti,
orchestra, proscenium and
stage set for *Andromeda*, 1638.

Again, Guitti did not actually invent the device. Six years before, in 1621, for a production of Jacopo Cicognini's *Martirio di Sant'Agata* in the oratory of the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Florence, the musicians were placed behind a parapet in front of the stage and stairs were placed on either side leading up to the stage. The architect was Giulio Parigi, probably the most famous Italian stage designer of the day. Another fact pointing toward Florence is that Joseph Furttenbach describes a proper orchestra pit in his *Architectura Civilis* of 1628. Furttenbach had been to Florence and studied with Parigi, and much of his work is a record of what he learned there. It should not be overlooked, however, that a passage in one of Goretti's letters suggests that the device may also have been used before in Ferrara.

Whatever the sources, the letters show that the orchestra was not a standard part of the theater at this point, such that Guitti might have included it as a matter of course. On the contrary, it is clear that he did not plan on having an orchestra at the outset, and the phraseology of some of the passages creates the impression that it was adopted as a new, if not unprecedented, solution to a variety of specific scenographic and musical problems. One sort of difficulty is illustrated by Guitti's

letter of October 24, 1627, mentioning a set for the theater in the Cortile in which musicians were to perform from atop the building of the scenery itself (cf. fig. 20). Guitti says that the Bolognese scene painters were annoyed with this arrangement, on the grounds that it spoiled the architecture and hampered their creative fantasy. Though this particular situation may not have been typical, it had been the general rule that musicians were placed somewhere on stage, distributed behind the sets or in balconies along the lateral walls.

The musicians were equally dissatisfied with things as they were. On November 16, 1627, Goretti complains, even of the huge Teatro Farnese, that the space available for the musicians was insufficient. And he laments that no thought is ever given to the placing of the music, which is yet such an essential part of the whole. To be sure, this is a complaint one might expect from a music lover at any time. However, in connection with a work for which Monteverdi was the composer, it is I think indicative of a new attitude toward the role of music in the theater, requiring that the accompaniment be physically as concentrated and focused as the stage itself.

For the interdependence of the music and architecture generally we have Monteverdi's own word when he says, in a letter written shortly before his first visit to Parma, that he intended to suit his music as well as possible to the great Farnese theater. But the significance of the orchestra in particular is best illustrated by Guitti's letter describing it, in which he asserts that the composer Monteverdi had finally been able to set the instrumentation ("*trovare l'Armonia*") only *because* the problem of placing the musicians had been solved.

Most remarkable perhaps is the fact that Buttigli actually calls the place reserved for the instrumentalists the "orchestra," misappropriating the term from Vitruvius. To my knowledge this is the first time the word, which would eventually be applied to the body of musicians as well, is used with this meaning. It is the "philological" symptom of a new conception of the musical accompaniment as a coherent entity with a specific location and a specific name.

We would be justified to conclude that the orchestra struck the keynote in the development of the modern theater: it made the scene designers happy since it got the musicians out of their way, and the musicians happy since it gave them a place of their own. The architect was happy, too, since, according to Guitti, the orchestra not only served the music well, but also enhanced the beauty of the proscenium.

1. Charles Garnier. Paris Opera,
grand stair.

Theatricality and Re-presentation

Karsten Harries

That post-modern eclecticism should lack the show of conviction of its nineteenth century precursor should not surprise us: critical reflection has made us disenchanted modernists too reflective, too aware of the arbitrariness of conventions, to leave us content with pastiches of the past. We experience such historicizing as mere theater.

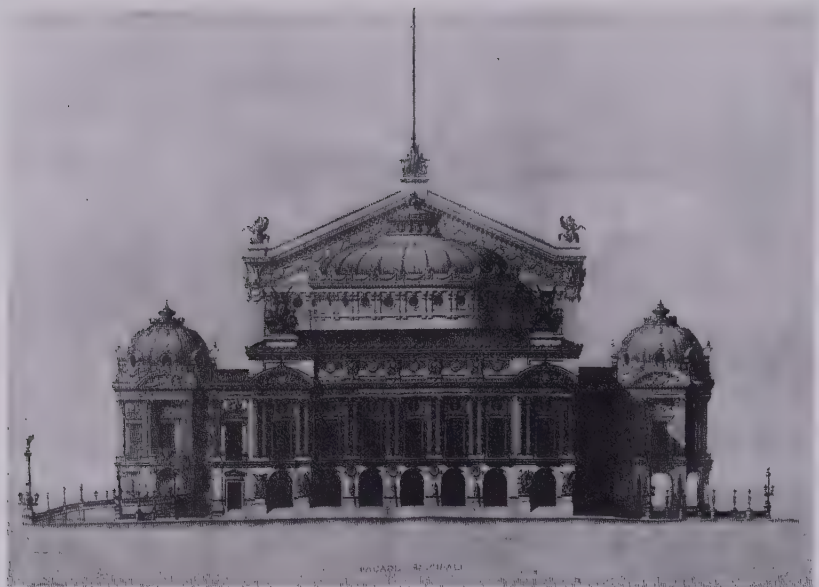
Theatricality was indeed one of the cardinal sins with which modernists had charged nineteenth century culture, especially its architecture, decked out with quilting made up of fragments drawn from the great styles of the past. And how can theatricality be defended? Theatrical behavior suggests superficial role playing—"Don't be so theatrical!"—a dishonest concealment of reality, more especially of our own selves, behind masks and disguises. Authenticity would seem to preclude theatricality. And is this not true of buildings as well as persons? Think of the "honesty" of a grain elevator.

How theatrical in comparison is Charles Garnier's Paris Opéra (1861-75), which, like so many buildings of the time, hides its quite up to date structural frame of iron beneath a splendid Neo-Baroque skin. This extravagant architecture not only functions as a theater; it also re-presents a theater. It puts on an act.

Garnier himself accompanied his masterpiece with *Le Théâtre*, a treatise in which he laid down the principles of theater architecture as he had come to understand







2. Paris Opera, main elevation.

3. Paris Opera, longitudinal section.

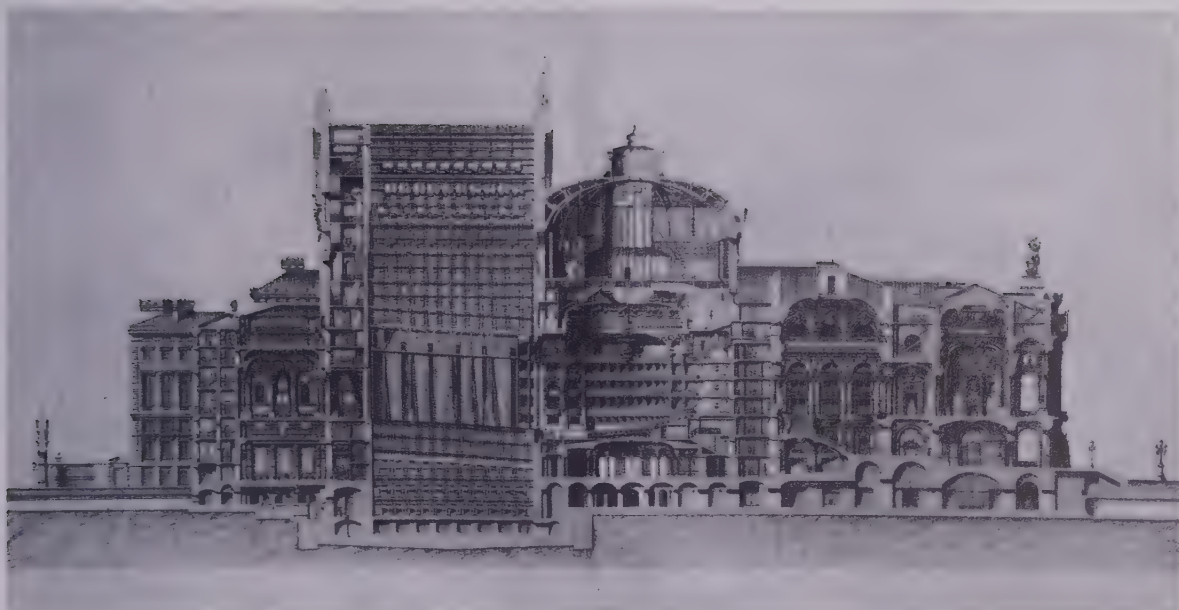
them, both as a practicing architect and as a thoughtful observer of the leading theaters of Europe. In a manner recalling Laugier, Garnier begins with an attempt to found his architectural practice in the state of nature: he takes the desires for affection and self-preservation to be basic; but right after them, “the most natural, the most instinctive, is without doubt, the theatrical sentiment.” Human being is being with others; as such, according to Garnier, it is essentially theatrical. Wherever two or three people gather, there is theater, at least in principle. “All that happens in the world is in sum only theater and representation.”¹ Garnier, too, sees all the world as a stage, life as a sequence of dramatic, tragic or comical scenes. “To see and to make oneself be seen, to understand and to make oneself be understood, that is the fated circle of humanity; to be actor or spectator, that is the condition of human life.”²

A critic of Garnier may well want to insist on the difference between genuinely being oneself and putting on an act. Garnier could have replied with a question: is it possible to be really oneself before other persons? Insisting on the essentially social character of human beings, Garnier leaves no room for Heideggerian authenticity: we all put on acts, adopt poses, cast ourselves in certain roles, and observe others doing the same. And just because we are all actors and spectators, we take pleasure in the theater, which may be understood as a re-presentation of life that raises its natural theatricality to a higher power and thus makes it conspicuous. Precisely because the theater draws paradigms from the theater of life, it interests and delights; as an idealizing re-presentation of life the theater has an ethical function, can become “the school of the people” and “the glory of humanity.”³

¹ Charles Garnier, *Le Théâtre* (Paris: Hachette, 1871), p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ Ibid., p. 4.



On this understanding of the significance of the theater, Garnier bases his claim that, given the spiritual situation of the age, church and theater must be considered its two leading building types. Both are linked by Garnier to leisure and placed in opposition to work, “that necessity of life.” Both are theatrical in a broader sense in that we go there to watch spectacles, to the church to witness the spectacle of the divine, to the theater to be moved by the human spectacle.⁴ Both, although perhaps not visited by all, exist for all. While Garnier still gives the church its traditional place of honor, it is the pleasure human beings take in spectacles that really matters. “The ancient saying still is, and will never cease to be timely: *panem et circenses*; food for the body and food for the spirit, that is the word of the human species, the immortal word; it will survive revolutions, monarchies, and republics, just as love and all original passions will survive all governments.”⁵ The equation of the theater with Roman spectacles is telling—and troubling—as is the equation of both with food for the spirit: as if the spirit knew no other food than what is offered in the arena.

Spectacles demand proper settings. Theatrical spectacles demand stage and auditorium, where Garnier insists on a sharp separation between the two, corresponding to a sharp separation between actor and spectator, so very different from the theater of life, where these roles constantly blur and change. Like Wagner and Nietzsche, Garnier, too, finds his model in antiquity, notes the decline of theatrical culture in the Middle Ages, and welcomes its resurgence in the following centuries, leading to the evolution of the theater as a firmly established architectural type, especially in Italy. It is indeed above all the Baroque theater that informs Garnier’s understanding

⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵ Ibid.

of what a theater should be, as it has informed theater architecture ever since the eighteenth century.

From Garnier's understanding of the theater as one of only two leading building types, follows his insistence that it be given a splendid appearance. With pride he cites his own Opéra: those who enter it are overwhelmed; they cannot help but feel morally uplifted. The sumptuous elegance that now surrounds them, so different from their everyday environment, shapes their thoughts, their character, even the way they speak, and their bearing. That is to say, in Garnier's Opéra the spectator, too, is forced to play a part, even if usually quite willing to collude with such coercion. He is himself transformed into an actor, the theater into a stage—this, especially, is what demands the Opéra's splendid staircase and festive foyer.

Such transformation invites questioning. Does Garnier want us to lose ourselves to the spectacle he has prepared for us? What Nietzsche wrote, not about Garnier's Opéra, but about Wagner's Bayreuth Festival, comes to mind:

One leaves oneself at home when one goes to Bayreuth, one renounces the right to one's own tongue and choice, to one's taste, even to one's courage, as one possesses it within one's own four walls against God and the world. Nobody brings the finest senses of his art with him into the theater, least of all the artist who works for the theater—lacking is solitude; all that is perfect tolerates no witnesses. . . . In the theater one becomes folk, herd, woman, pharisee, voting cattle, patron, idiot—Wagnerian: even the most personal conscience succumbs there to the levelling magic of the large number; the neighbor reigns; one becomes neighbor.⁶

Theater here means magic and seduction; absorbed in its spectacles we surrender ourselves. Countless modernists followed Nietzsche in this understanding of the essential inauthenticity of the theater. Michael Fried speaks for them when he claims that "theater and theatricality are at war today, not simply with modernist painting (or modernist painting and sculpture), but with art as such—and to the extent that the different arts can be described as modernist, with modernist sensibility as such."⁷ Modernism has indeed laid claim to an authenticity that has to place it "at war" with the theater.

But do we today still idealize authenticity? Do we still believe in the possibility of being really oneself? What would that mean? When we try to seize our own self, do we not always discover only more masks, poses, roles? Is Garnier not right to refuse the opposition of authenticity and theatricality? His Opera, at any rate, can teach us disillusioned modernists how difficult it has become today not to be moved by such festive theatricality. Was Pevsner not right to call the Opéra "glorious?"⁸ Does life itself not demand the theater, as Garnier insists? And must

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* "Wo ich Einwände mache," *Werke in drei Bänden* (München: Hanser, 1966), vol. 2, p. 1042. The passage is almost identical with one in *The Gay Science*, (V, 368).

⁷ Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1968), p. 139.

⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1976), p. 84.

architecture, if it is to serve life, not embrace the theater? Today Garnier's own naively confident description of his doubly theatrical masterpiece is likely to fill us with a certain nostalgia: at least a side of us would like to be able to embrace the theater so whole-heartedly. We would-be post-modernists cannot simply dismiss his assertion of the theater as a, perhaps even *the*, leading architectural task.

2

In his *Verlust der Mitte* (the title given to the English translation, *Art in Crisis*, fails to capture the meaning of the German, which suggests that the crisis of modern art has its origin in an age that has lost its spiritual center) the art historian Hans Sedlmayr asserts that, since the end of the eighteenth century, only six or seven artistic tasks have come to claim anything like the significance that once belonged to church and palace. He mentions "landscape garden, architectural monument, museum, theater, exhibition, factory."⁹ Not one of these could retain its leadership position for more than one or, at most, two generations. Not one, with the possible exception of the theater, offered all the visual arts a major task, and painting and sculpture insisted on going their own way. Such increasing autonomy may indeed be considered one of the key characteristics of modern art, which thus tends to place itself in opposition to the synaesthetic art of the theater. "Leading artistic task," as Sedlmayr understands it, pretty much turns out to mean, "leading architectural task."



4. Garnier and his collaborators, (Louvet, Jourdain, Le Deschaut, Noel, and Robert) in the studio at the Opera site.

⁹ Hans Sedlmayr, *Verlust der Mitte* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1959), p. 13.

Sedlmayr himself raises the question: why focus on just these few? Why exclude “stock exchange, parliament, university; hotels, hospitals, railroad stations, stadia, etc.?”¹⁰ In answer he offers a fourfold analysis. Artistic tasks may be called leading:

1. because the form-giving fantasy likes especially to turn to them;
2. because the attitude here gains its greatest security and often a clearly defined type evolves;
3. especially because from them emanates, if only in a limited realm, something like the power to form a style, because other tasks adjust and subordinate themselves to them;
4. because consciously or unconsciously they appear with a claim to occupy the place of the great sacred architecture of the past and to form a center of their own.¹¹

Presupposed is an understanding of sacred architecture as the only really leading task of architecture. Having elided, or at least obscured, the dimension of the sacred, modernity faces the task of reoccupying the place of the lost center. Architecture participates in this task by seeking to reclaim at least some of the significance of the lost paradigm.

The theater deserves a special place in Sedlmayr’s brief list: it alone is said by him to have joined once more architect, painter, and sculptor in a genuine *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Furthermore, the nineteenth century’s rhetoric placed the theater, even more than the museum, quite explicitly in the position once occupied by the church. Garnier’s Opéra is only the high point of a series that includes Schinkel’s Berlin Schauspielhaus (1818–21); Dresden’s first opera house (1834–41), which was almost immediately destroyed by fire, and its successor (1869–78), both by Gottfried Semper; and Otto Brückwald’s Festspielhaus in Bayreuth (1872–76).

As especially this last example suggests, inseparable from the elevation of the theater as a leading, perhaps even the leading architectural task, is a new understanding of the significance of drama, more especially of opera, which is endowed with a religious significance, although Wagner, whom Sedlmayr calls “the genius of mid-century” looks back not to the Christian church, but to the Greek theater.¹² Not that Wagner thinks we moderns can or should attempt to recover the art of the Greeks. Our task is

to widen the *garb of religion*, in which alone it was a communal Hellenic art... to widen this garb of the specifically *Hellenic religion* to the bond of the religion of the future—that of *universality*—in order to form for ourselves even now a just conception of the art work of the future. Yet, unfortunate as we are, it is precisely the power to close this bond, this *religion of the future*, that we lack, for after all, no matter how many of us feel this urge to the art work of the future, we are *singular and individual*. An art work is religion brought to life; religions, however, are created, not by the artist, but by the *folk*.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 36.

¹³ Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, in *Source Readings in Music History: The Romantic Era*, selected and annotated by Oliver Strunk (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 140.

Théophile Gautier's celebration of the Paris Opéra, and indeed any opera house, as "une sorte de cathédrale mondaine de la civilisation" is in the same spirit.¹⁴

Wagner conceives the art work of the future as the creation of the folk, fully aware that modernity with its emphasis on the individual must render such folkish talk anachronistic or utopian. Certainly his own operatic art could not claim to present us with the hoped-for art; it offered no more than theatrical metaphors of the artwork of the future. The work of this unique genius, it appealed not to the folk, but to bourgeois patrons who found in Bayreuth edifying entertainment. Despite Wagner's hopes, his operatic festivals were in the end no more than aesthetic events, mere theater, lacking the strength to restore that sense of genuine community which is inseparable from every genuinely religious festival.

No one has written more eloquently of the hopes associated with Bayreuth than Nietzsche in the last of his *Untimely Meditations: Wagner in Bayreuth*. Only a few years later Nietzsche was of course to turn against Wagner and what he came to recognize as a merely aesthetic theater, but here he presents himself to us as a convert, or as someone who has been seduced. All, who genuinely participate in the Bayreuth Festival, we learn, are rendered untimely by such participation, that is, they lose their place in the modern age—dare we say, using today's jargon, become "post-modern?" Nietzsche insists on the ethical significance of Wagner's work. He calls the *Ring of the Nibelungs* "the most moral music" he knows: "e. g., where Brünnhilde is awakened by Siegfried; here he [Wagner] reaches up to a height and holiness of mood that lets us think of the glow of the snowy peaks of the Alps."¹⁵ The sublime rhetoric of the sacred keeps returning in this essay, which presents us with a case study of the attempt to reoccupy the place left vacant with the death of God. Thus it offers us a key to the nineteenth century's turn to the theater.

That the author of *The Art Work of the Future* should have felt flattered and have welcomed this attempt to attribute a genuinely ethical and religious significance to his work is to be expected. To support such an attribution Nietzsche had to reject any merely aesthetic understanding of Wagner's theater:

For us Bayreuth means the morning consecration on the day of battle. One could not do us a greater injustice than if one were to assume that what mattered to us was art alone: as if art should count as a medicine and anaesthetic with which to rid oneself of all miserable conditions. We see in the image of the tragic art work of Bayreuth precisely the battle of a few persons against everything that confronts them as seemingly insuperable necessity, against power, law, tradition, contract, and all that orders things. These few cannot live a more beautiful life than when, battling for justice and love, they ready themselves for death and self-sacrifice.¹⁶

¹⁴ Pevsner, *Building Types*, p. 86.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, *Werke*, vol. 1, p. 373.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

What is experienced as the stale old order is here the enemy. Wagner's work hallows our dissatisfaction with the modern world, bathing it in the aura of the sacred. At the same time it presents us with paradigms of a more natural, simpler life. On the stage of Bayreuth the problems of life seem to receive clear solutions:

The isolated person is to be consecrated to something supra-personal—this is what tragedy wants; he shall unlearn the terrifying anxiety, which death and time bring the individual. For even in the smallest moment, in the shortest atom of his life, he can meet with something holy, which far outweighs all battle and all need—this is what it means to possess a tragic sense.¹⁷

What Nietzsche expects from Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* is clear enough: the establishment of a tragic ethos that would overcome what in *Zarathustra* he came to call "the spirit of revenge," where "revenge" names that "ill will against time and its 'it was'" Nietzsche understands as the deepest source of our self-alienation.¹⁸ Nietzsche would have us unlearn "the terrifying anxiety that death and time bring."¹⁹ But death terrifies only as long as we understand ourselves first of all as individuals whose existence must end with death. Those who have learned to understand themselves as parts of a larger whole, as members of a genuine community, will no longer feel such terror. As Christianity, too, knows, the gift of community and redemption from the terror of time belong together. Wagner's tragic festivals appeared to Nietzsche to promise both. Thus they promised to recover for our age what *The Birth of Tragedy* ascribed to the tragic theater of the Greeks. Tragedy reveals to mortals who they are: noble in their desire to give structure to their lives and their world, yet at the mercy of higher powers that we cannot control and that preside over the meaning of our existence. The Greek gods are personifications of these forces and of those original experiences to which they are linked. Do we not still know the power of Dionysus, Apollo, and Aphrodite?

Tragedy also teaches that we are limited by a fate that is ours because we were born into a particular family, a particular historical context. This fatedness finds expression in the way the tragedians keep returning to the same families, to the same already familiar tales, which, as Aristotle tells us, should be kept as they are. Particular tragedies re-present these often told, familiar, paradigmatic stories. Inseparable from such re-presentation is the festal character of this art, which invites comparison with the way the celebration of festivals marks the church year and recalls the limiting situations of human life. Such festivals help to bind the community more firmly together by presenting it with a common measure. That Nietzsche did not read this ethical or religious character into Greek tragedy is shown by the *Republic*, where Plato criticizes this function so severely precisely because he takes it so seriously.

Once more I would like to underscore that the purpose of tragedy is to teach us to unlearn the spirit of revenge. Nietzsche knows that he who cannot banish the terror

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 386.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Werke*, vol. 2, p. 394.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, *Wagner in Bayreuth*, *Werke*, vol. 1, p. 386.

of time and death has to remain selfish. In the face of this terror he will attempt to assert and secure his own being. Tragedy is to help us overcome that exaggerated self-assertion that tradition has called pride. But pride is the greatest obstacle to genuine community.

That Nietzsche read into Wagner his own hopes is evident. These hopes were easiest to maintain as long as Bayreuth had not yet become a reality, as long as Nietzsche could still visit Wagner in the Swiss Tribschen, this “distant isle of the blessed.”²⁰ As Wagner became more preoccupied with the realities of Bayreuth, Nietzsche became more and more aware of the extent to which he had substituted for the real Wagner an ideal image of his own construction. Bayreuth opened Nietzsche’s eyes not only to who Wagner really was, but also to the role that illusion, self-deception, and wishful thinking had played in his own understanding of Wagner. At the same time he became aware of the extent to which Wagner’s theater depended on illusion and wishful thinking.

Beginning with this disillusionment we find Nietzsche increasingly suspicious of illusion. Wagner comes to be seen as an actor of genius who gives his public the illusions they want; the art work of the future that was to return to art its ethical and religious function settled for the appearance of such a return. Wagner’s theater turned out to be escapist after all, an anaesthetic and opiate.

Nietzsche thus came to understand not just Wagner’s theater, but theater in general as inauthentic. For when Nietzsche condemns Wagner and Bayreuth, at issue is much more: a culture that having lost its faith seeks refuge in bad faith. That substitution finds its architectural expression in the substitution of the theater for the church. That the theatrical spirit of Bayreuth helped shape or capture the spiritual situation of the entire age is witnessed by its architecture: think of Vienna’s Ringstrasse. This, too, is theater, a theater repeated in city after city. It is hardly an accident that the leading architect associated with the Ringstrasse, Gottfried Semper, already mentioned as architect of the Dresden operas, was also to be the architect of the Festspielhaus that Wagner and his patron King Ludwig II of Bavaria had planned for Munich. Or consider once more Garnier’s Opéra: itself a theatrical re-presentation of a Baroque theater. A caricature of the nineteenth century’s architectural theater is furnished by the castles mad King Ludwig had built for himself: Linderhof, Herrenchiemsee, Neuschwanstein. By re-presenting this theater yet once more, translating it into an amusement park, Walt Disney turned its pathos into farce.

That Wagner did in fact aestheticize the theater is shown by the way he wanted the spectator to lose himself to the theatrical event, to become absorbed in the stage happening, oblivious to the musicians actually performing on their instruments, now hidden in the sunk orchestra pit, oblivious to their neighbors, all but invisible in the darkened auditorium. Not the folk, but the mad king, dreaming of bygone splendor, alone in the darkened auditorium, lost to himself, lost in the spectacles unfolding on stage, was the ideal spectator of Wagner’s theater.

²⁰ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo, Werke*, vol. 2, p. 1119.

The real meaning of Wagner's theater was revealed to Nietzsche by a mishap that occurred at the opening of Bayreuth. At one point when Walhall, the castle of the gods was supposed to appear, the stage machinery failed to work properly. Instead of the sacred abode of the gods, all one could see was a gaping void, and before it some stage manager desperately trying to correct whatever went wrong. Theatrical illusion here unmasked itself. What was to occupy the place of the holy were all too obviously contrived aesthetic constructions. Nietzsche could not stand it any longer. In disgust he fled to Klingenbrunn, a small village in the Bavarian Forest, and began work on *Human, All Too Human*.

3

Nietzsche called *Human, All Too Human* "the monument of a crisis":

It calls itself a book for *free* spirits: almost every sentence in it expressed a victory—with it I freed myself from *what does not belong* to my nature. What does not belong to me is idealism: the title says, where *you* see ideal things, I see—what is human, ah, only all too human.²¹

But can human beings exist without ideals, without ideal images of themselves, without theatrical representation of heroes that can give direction to life? Even if all such ideals should be illusions born of human need, does this mean that we can dispense with them? If we cannot accept these ideals in good faith, will not bad faith have to do? Anyway, why is bad faith so bad? Is it not better than no faith at all?

Such questions are raised by William Hubbard's thoughtful discussion in *Complicity and Conviction* of the contemporary situation of architecture. According to Hubbard, "We in society want to believe in ideals about the places we inhabit, but we know that such ideals are indefensible."²² Indefensible does not mean ineffective: an evolving ideal image of human existence has presided over the history of architecture. "The architect has in mind an ideal about how people ought to live, and he has chosen those particular conventions because he sees a way in which he can use them to express that ideal."²³ Church architecture offers the most obvious illustrations. This returns us to Sedlmayr's claim that one reason an architectural task can be called "leading" is because it lays claim to the place once held by sacred architecture; inseparable from this task is the attempt to reoccupy the place left vacant by the death of God.

But even if we know, as Hubbard suggests, that the ideals we would like to believe in are in fact indefensible, we cannot do without them. So we want to be taken in by them, to be seduced by them, to be seduced by the theater staged for us. Nietzsche of course knew about this desire, which he took to be a defining characteristic of modern decadence. Here he found the key to the nineteenth century's receptiveness to the theater. Such a will to believe demands also a theatrical architecture, an

²¹ Ibid., p. 1118.

²² William Hubbard, *Complicity and Conviction: Steps Towards an Architecture of Convention* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1981) p. 153.

²³ Ibid., p. 155.

architecture that settles for representations of meaning no longer believed in, for reenactments of dreamed of significance; for lies. Such a will must elevate the theater into the leading architectural type.

But was not Nietzsche right, were not modernists right, to reject such theatricality? It is difficult to be seduced by what one knows are lies. Modernism does not accept the premise that all ideals about human dwelling are indefensible. To be sure, we have learned to distrust the authority of past precedents and established conventions, learned to become suspicious of appeals to nature and essence that all too often mask special interests. Still, do we have a better hope to escape from bad faith, from the theater, than to attempt to articulate the requirements of dwelling with an eye to what is essential and natural, knowing full well about the precariousness of all such articulation? Such conviction helps to explain the significance of recurring speculations about the appearance of the primitive hut.

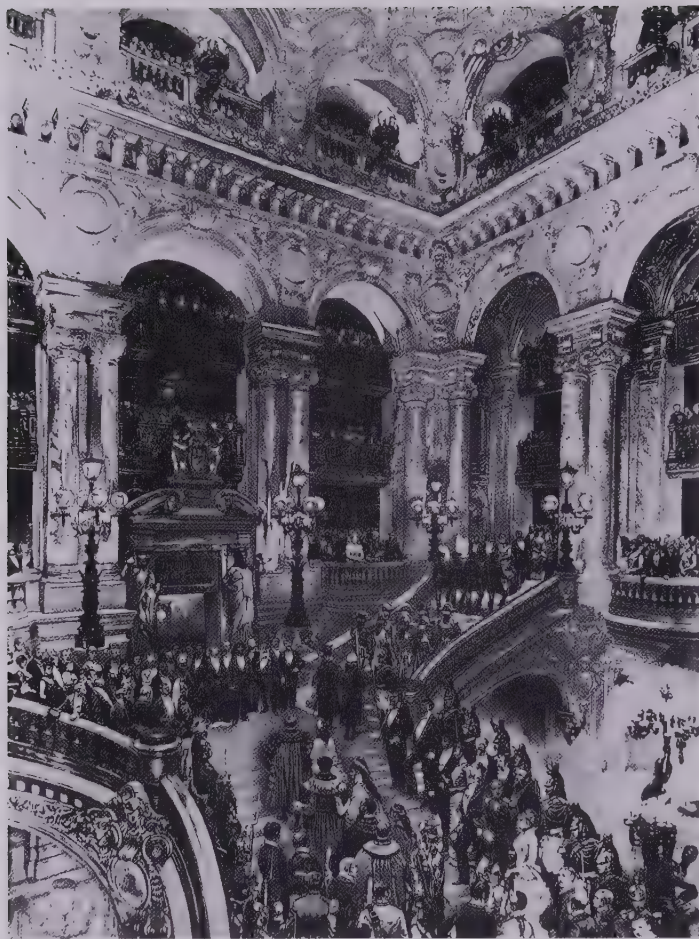
In architectural theory such speculation has played a part very much analogous to that played by speculations about the social contract in political theory. Not that there ever was such a contract, any more than there was an original house. Both are constructs of reason, supposedly based on nature and meant to legitimate a certain practice. In their most familiar versions, say in Locke's or Laugier's, they betray the individualistic bias of the Enlightenment with its idealization of the simple, natural life, from which the critique of theatricality would seem to follow as a corollary. (The critique of Baroque theatricality helped indeed constitute the ethos of the Enlightenment, just as the critique of nineteenth century theatricality helped constitute the ethos of modernism.) Today we know about the artificiality of these constructions. Thus, even while it is difficult to dispense with the pursuit of nature and essence, we yet must question Rykwert's claim that the construct of the primitive hut "will retain its validity as a reminder of the original and therefore essential meaning of all building for people: that is of architecture."²⁴

Questionable, first of all, is the identification of "all building" with "architecture." Pevsner has an obvious point when he begins his *An Outline of European Architecture* by insisting that we distinguish mere buildings (his example is a bicycle shed, but he might as well have chosen Laugier's primitive hut) from works of architecture, such as Lincoln Cathedral—or Garnier's Opéra.²⁵ Most dwellings and functional sheds do not merit being called "architecture." They seem content to be no more than buildings. Leaf through any history of architecture, say through Christian Norberg-Schulz's *Meaning in Western Architecture*:²⁶ what will you find? Re-presentations of what Garnier called the divine and the human spectacle. The first chapter on Egyptian architecture thus shows temples and pyramids, structures that help establish and preserve the dimension of the sacred and address the problem of death. And this remains pretty much true of most of the following chapters—as if building serving everyday life did not qualify as architecture at all. To be sure,

²⁴ Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1972), p. 192.

²⁵ Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), p. 23.

²⁶ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Meaning in Western Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).



5. Paris Opera, opening night, 5 January 1875.

as we turn from Greek to Roman architecture the number of significant architectural types begins to proliferate: besides temples, we now find triumphal arches, city gates, imperial villas, basilicas, baths, also an apartment house and a house in Pompeii. The opposition between sacred building and profane architecture here gets blurred. But the following chapters, which bring us to the end of the Middle Ages, deal once more almost exclusively with church architecture whose structures represent that ideal community which is the Church, by representing that ideal architecture which is The City in Heaven. Only a few illustrations—a view of San Gimignano, Carcassonne seen from the air, a street and the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, and the Royal Hall in the Hradcany in Prague—signal the beginning of a turn to the secular. That turn becomes more pronounced in the chapter on the Renaissance: while church architecture still dominates, the palazzo, representing the majesty not of God, but of some merchant prince, asserts itself as a significant architectural type. In the chapter on Mannerist architecture, villas and palaces begin to dominate, and even if in the Baroque period the church once more asserts itself as the leading architectural task, with the Enlightenment the modern proliferation of leading building tasks sets in earnest.

From any such history one can learn that until the modern period most structures that today count as “architecture” served the sacred and/or the community. To be sure, most buildings have always been quite ordinary houses and sheds, but this is just to say that the history of building cannot be reduced to the history of architecture. The former has turned around two poles, one marked by the house, the other by temple or church; one comparatively private, the other comparatively public and for that very reason theatrical.

This bipolarity also has found expression in the history of architectural theory: attempts to ground architectural practice by locating the origin of building in the need for shelter, which led to the construction of the first hut, have not been able to do justice to the most significant works of architecture. The church building thus was given legitimacy, not as a variation on the theme of the primitive hut, but as a representation of ideal structures that were thought to have had God as their real author, including especially the temple Solomon is said to have built in Jerusalem on a divine plan and the City in Heaven of which *Revelation* speaks.

In an earlier paper I therefore used an ellipse that had its foci in the house and the temple to figure the inherited essence of building.²⁷ The distance that separates them is the distance that separates the private from the public, the profane from the sacred. Can we add: the functional from the theatrical? It is possible to relate these foci as ground to figure. What we find discussed in histories of architecture is first of all architecture that presents itself as theatrical figure on the ground of more or less anonymous building. Such figures also illuminate the ground that supports them. Perhaps the point can be put this way: architecture not only uses, but also theatrically re-presents, and by so doing transfigures the vernacular of building. Consider the traditional understanding of the church as a house (*domus*—*Dom*) in which the community joins in sacred celebration, a building which both is and signifies a house, but by also signifying an ideal architecture, casts a special light on ordinary houses and on the activities they serve. Just about every traditional village or city illustrates this figure-ground relationship. As sacred figure on the ground of the profane, such architecture helps gather a multitude into a genuine community by providing it with a center. Individuals gain their sense of place, both in space and time, by relating their dwelling to that center.

I pointed out that for much of the history of Western architecture, the church has been the leading architectural type, even if towards the end of the Middle Ages other building types begin to assert themselves, such as the city hall or the palace, both representations of the majesty of the state, be it city or kingdom. Still, neither could quite replace the church as *the* leading architectural type. Only with the Enlightenment does the church lose this position, to become just one of many architectural types, and by no means the most significant.

What human need allowed the church to play its part as leading architectural type? Garnier points to the way it served the whole community. Consider once more the

²⁷ Karsten Harries, “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” *Perspecta XX* (1983): p. 19.



6. L'Avène de l'Opera, Paris.

traditional understanding of the church as the house in which the community joins in a theatrical celebration of the sacred. Entering this house, the individual leaves his or her normal cares and preoccupations behind. The time of celebration is set off from the routines of the everyday. Just as the church building presents itself as a figure on the ground provided by ordinary buildings, so the religious festival (think of Christmas or Easter) presents itself as a figure on the ground of ordinary time. Such celebrations recall us to those limiting situations of human life, such as birth, marriage, childbirth, and death, that grant it significance. By re-presenting these situations, such festivals recall the individual to what matters, where in the case of the Christian church such re-presentation gains its special significance by the way it is supported by a narrative that was taken to be authoritative and believed to provide the key to the significance of life. Re-presenting the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, such celebrations provided ordinary life with its measure, meaning, and hope. Garnier is right to note the proximity of such re-presentation to theatrical representation.

For most of us, for over two hundred years now, that sacred text and, with it, the church, have lost their authority. But does this mean that we no longer experience the need to inscribe sacred figures on the ground of the profane? If so; what can we put in the place that with the death of God has become empty? Does it still make sense to demand of architecture that it create works that help us to stage festivals that allow us to join in genuine community? Many, no doubt, still go to church or to temple; churches and temples still get built. But what function do they have in the society as a whole? Think of their usually peripheral placement and comparatively modest appearance. To be sure, there are churches that belong with

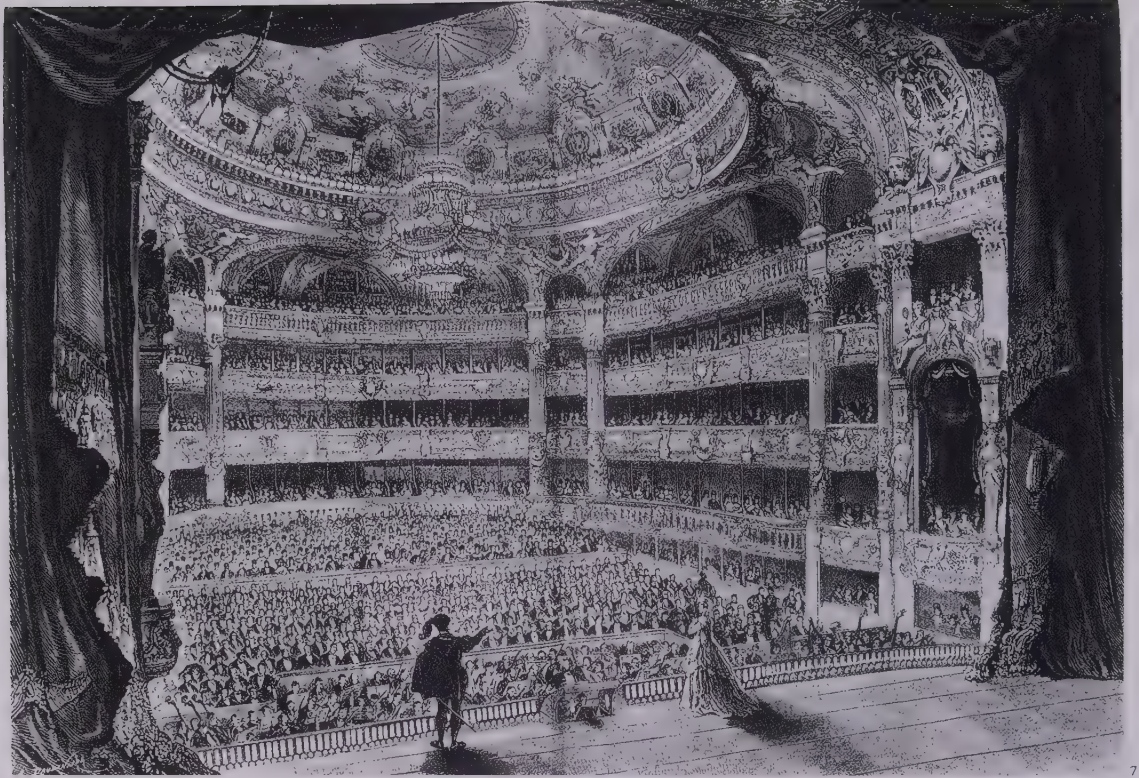
the best works modern architecture has produced: Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, for example; or Aalto's Imatra Church; or Gottfried Böhm's forbiddingly crystalline church in Neviges. Notwithstanding their success, these fail to re-establish the former significance of the church.

The fragmentation of the old value system, inseparably tied to a fragmentation of life of both the individual and the community, has its architectural counterpart in the proliferation of leading architectural tasks. Nikolaus Pevsner's *A History of Building Types* can serve as an illustration. While the book excludes certain building types for already having been covered too well, especially of course churches, but also schools and dwellings (only in the modern period has the private home asserted itself as a significant building type, demanding the attention of major architects, thus signifying the collapse of my ellipse into a circle), the number of types covered remains impressive: national monuments, government buildings, theaters, libraries, museums, hospitals, prisons, hotels, exchanges and banks, warehouses and offices, hospitals, railway stations, market halls, conservatories and exhibition buildings, shops and department stores, and factories. Each one has claimed something of the dignity once reserved to sacred architecture, pressing this claim by dressing itself up with classical temple fronts and Baroque domes, with Gothic arches and stained glass, playing the part of the sacred architecture of the past. Along with this proliferation of building types goes a disorienting homogenization of the built environment—the proliferation of architectural figures produces a kind of white noise, as the opposition of figure and ground, architecture and mere building becomes ever more tenuous.

If, as I have suggested, the opposition between building and architecture is essential to the latter as it has traditionally been understood, then architecture will have a future only if the place once occupied by temple and church can be reoccupied. Are there among the building types mentioned by Pevsner any that address human being in its entirety and thus possess the required complexity? As we have seen, the nineteenth century did make such a claim for the theater. It is indeed not difficult to see why the theater presents a special challenge: from the very beginning religious action and theatrical performance have been linked; both draw festal figures on the ground of the everyday.

But is it important that architecture in its traditional sense have a future? Is the nineteenth century's attempt to endow the theater with a quasi-religious significance not born of an unwillingness to accept modernity's non-hierarchical, secular, democratic ethos, which lets us be suspicious of all attempts to speak of "the leading building task?" Is Kaufmann not right to suggest that ever since the French Revolution "any type of building has been considered worthy of an architect's abilities?"²⁸ Is the architect's task not just to transform functional sheds into aesthetic objects? Does it matter what kind of shed, as long as it provides the architect an opportunity to prove himself as an artist? Why insist on the two foci of my ellipse? Why attempt to reoccupy the place once occupied by the church? And why turn to the theater?

²⁸ Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason* (New York: Dover, 1968), p. 153.



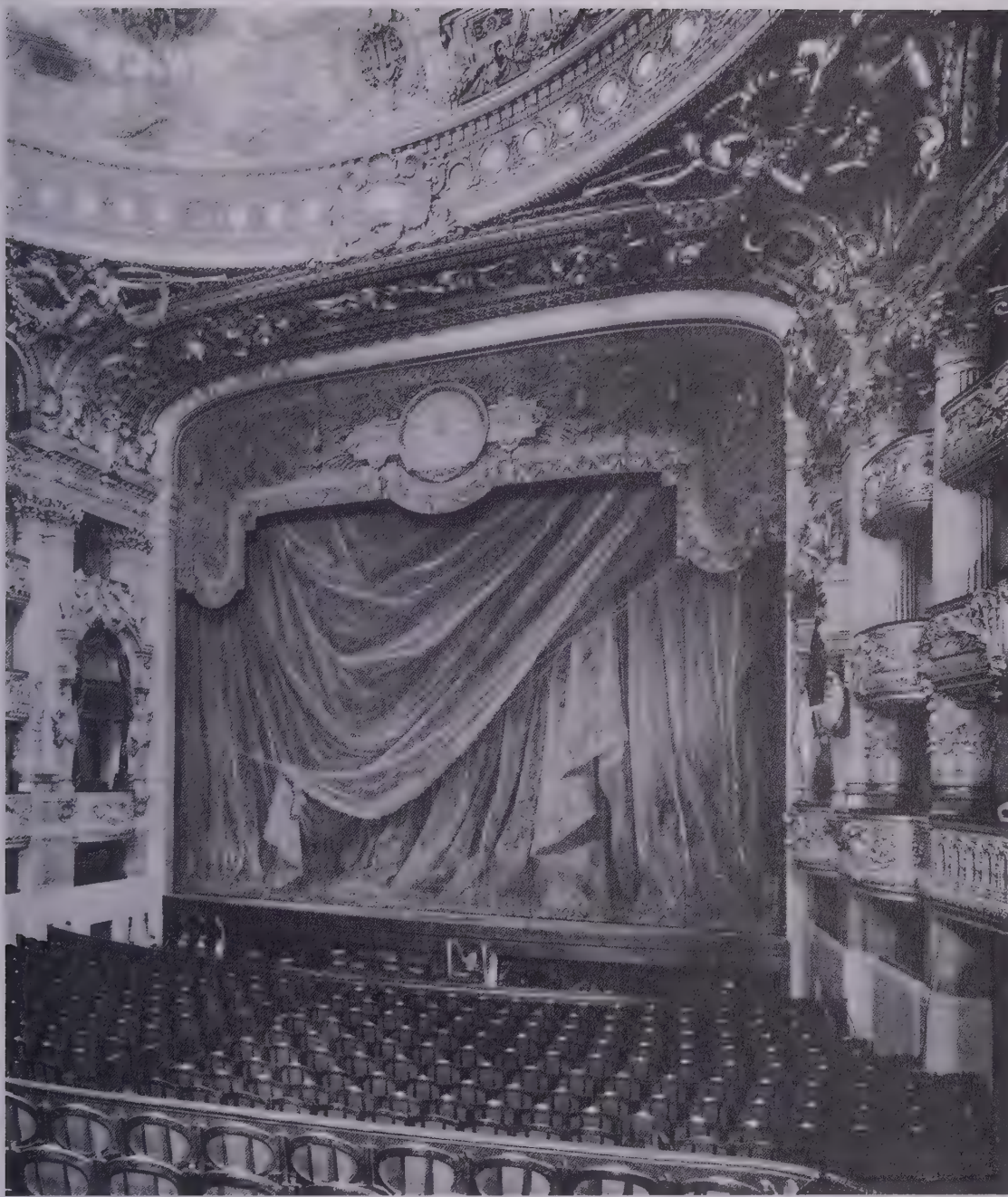
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We do violence to the requirements of dwelling when we reduce them to the need for physical shelter. As Rykwert emphasizes, the soul, too, needs a home. Although more difficult to specify, psychological needs are as real as physical needs. If it is to answer to the requirements of dwelling, building may not forget the latter.

We can feel at home in the world only as part of a community. In his brief introductory remark on the state of nature, Garnier thus places the need for affection even before that for self-preservation. Affection alone, however, cannot forge a lasting bond. This requires the mediation provided by a shared way of life, requires entry into a language game, where, with Wittgenstein, we can understand such a game as a “whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven.”²⁹ To enter into such a game is rather like learning to play a certain part: this presupposes opportunities to see others in the same role. To repeat Garnier’s dictum: “To be actor or spectator, that is the condition of human life.”

But if playing such a part is to be experienced as more than a meaningless routine that has little to do with who we really are, it must be supported by dreams and ideals that put us in touch with what most deeply moves us—with the gods, the Greeks might have said, with the subconscious, we might say—at any rate, with a power that, while obscured by the routines of the everyday, still needs to be recalled from time to time if our lives are not to become superficial and hollow. Religious festivals have served such a recalling; so has theater.

²⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), par. 7.



7. Paris Opera, the auditorium

8. Paris Opera, view of
auditorium showing
proscenium and painted
curtain.



9. Schloss Neuschwanstein ,
built by King Ludwig II of
Bavaria as seen from Schloss
Hohenschwangau.

I began the last section with the suggestion that human beings cannot exist without casting beyond themselves dreams of a fuller, more perfect existence, idealized images of themselves, images of heroes and gods, utopian dreams of ideal communities served by an ideal architecture. Life needs to be illuminated by idealized re-presentations of that life.

If it is to satisfy fully the requirements of dwelling, building, too, has to answer to this need. It therefore cannot be reduced to the construction of functional sheds. Building, too, has an ideal utopian dimension. Building is transformed into architecture when it seizes and makes visible this dimension. Think once more of the church built as a representation of the City in Heaven. The distinction between architecture and mere building has its foundation in the very essence of building. And from the very beginning architecture has been theatrical in the sense of providing a setting that invites idealizing re-presentations of everyday life.

Does the theater as we know it today provide for such re-presentation? Nietzsche's critique is not easily dismissed. Perhaps we are given a better pointer by Venturi, who seems to me to recall architecture to its essential theatricality when he admonishes us that:

To find our symbolism we must go to the suburban edges of the existing city that are symbolically rather than formalistically attractive and represent the aspirations of almost all Americans, including most low income dwellers and most of the silent white majority. Then the archetypal Los Angeles will become our Rome and Las Vegas our Florence; and like the archetypal grain elevator some generations ago, the Flamingo sign will be the model to shock our sensibilities towards a new architecture.³⁰

That Las Vegas provides no model for domestic building is obvious enough. How many of us would want to spend more than a small part of our lives with such an architecture? To fly to Las Vegas is to take leave from the everyday. The architecture of Las Vegas seems peripheral in that it touches only the periphery of our lives. But instead of "peripheral," should we perhaps say "utopian?" Doesn't Venturi suggest this when he speaks of the aspirations of almost all Americans: dreams of sudden riches, sex, power? If Las Vegas is to "shock our sensibilities towards a new architecture," such shock, it would seem, has very little to contribute to rethinking the problem of the house. But it does invite a rethinking of the other pole of my ellipse: of architecture, as opposed to building. Architecture, I suggested, places public figures on the ground provided by private buildings. I also suggested that this architectural reading of figure and ground has a temporal analogy: the everyday with its mundane concerns may be considered a ground illuminated by festal times. The ability or inability to celebrate festivals is closely linked to the ability or inability to establish places that let a multitude understand itself as a community, joined by a common destiny. Do we today still know how to celebrate festivals? There is a deep connection between this question and that other: is modernity still capable of creating an architecture worthy of being placed beside the great architecture of the past? Despite all that separates them, like Bayreuth, Las Vegas invites us to ask both questions.

How are we to reoccupy the public pole of my ellipse? Struggling with that question, I thought of a Fourth of July celebration in Tamworth, New Hampshire that became a genuine festival: a tree-lined public space, fireworks, strangers brought together in genuine community. It provides a pointer.

³⁰ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977), p. 7.

Erinnerung an eine Revolution

an installation by Robert Wilson







From 1811-48, a twelve-meter-high, bronzed-plaster elephant stood on the Place de la Bastille. It was erected as a model for a fountain whose appearance and function were decreed by Napoleon himself in 1810:

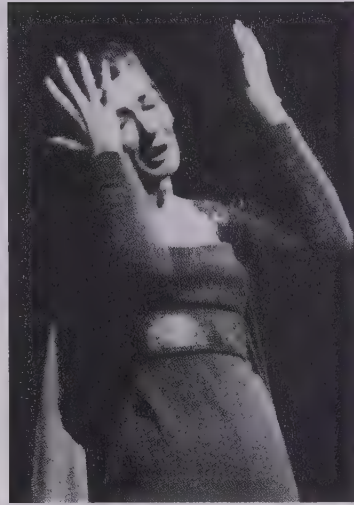
There shall be erected on the Place de la Bastille a bronze fountain in the form of an elephant. Forged from cannons captured from the Spanish insurgents, this elephant will be surmounted by a tower that will serve as a look-out point like those that served the ancients. Water will gush from its trunk.¹

1 Marie-Louise Biver, *Le Paris de Napoléon* (Paris, 1963), p. 201 (Napoléon. Correspondence. No. 16.233) as quoted in Brigitte Reinhardt, "On the Environment of Robert Wilson," in Robert Wilson, *Erinnerung an eine Revolution* (Stuttgart, Galerie der Stadt, 1987), p. 19.

2 Reinhardt, "On the Environment of Robert Wilson," p. 18.

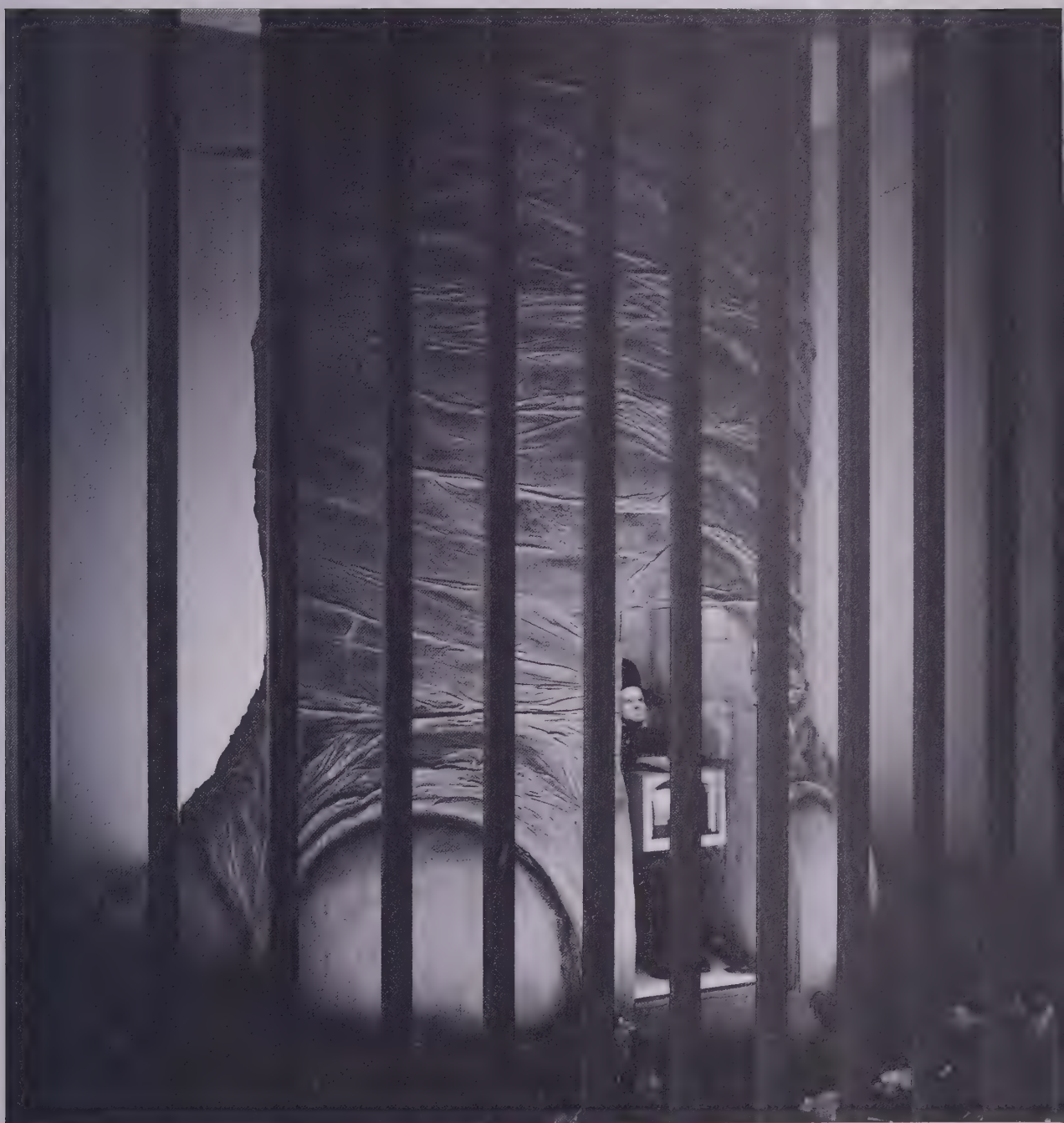


In his novel *Les Misérables* (1862), Victor Hugo tells the story of a Parisian street urchin, Gavroche, who takes in two homeless boys he finds roaming helplessly about during a tempest. They crawl through a crack in the stomach of the colossal elephant statue which is slowly disintegrating on the Place de la Bastille. In the wooden structure of the plaster figure, an empty space has remained free. Gavroche has made camp there. As the children lie down to sleep, chewing, rustling, peeping, and metallic scratching begin everywhere. Frightened, the youngest boy asks what it could be. Those are the rats, Gavroche explains. They have already eaten the cat. But, he adds, they couldn't possibly chew through the iron grill.²



Erinnerung an eine Revolution (Memories of a revolution) was created by Robert Wilson in the Galerie der Stadt, Stuttgart, in 1987. One entered into a narrow space where Baroque chairs evoked the seating of a salon, or even theater, performance. The chairs faced a row of vertical bars. Behind the bars stood a colossal elephant's foot. In a niche in the foot, a man, dressed as Napoleon, sat calmly holding a model of a proscenium stage. The voice of Maria Callas singing Cherubino's *Medea* filled the space.³

³ From a conversation between Robert Wilson and the editors in Cambridge, in the fall of 1987.



1. Gottfried Semper: Festival Theater with bridge over Isar River, copy of model (original, 1866), König-Ludwig II Museum, Herrenchiemsee.

The Munich Festival Theater Letters

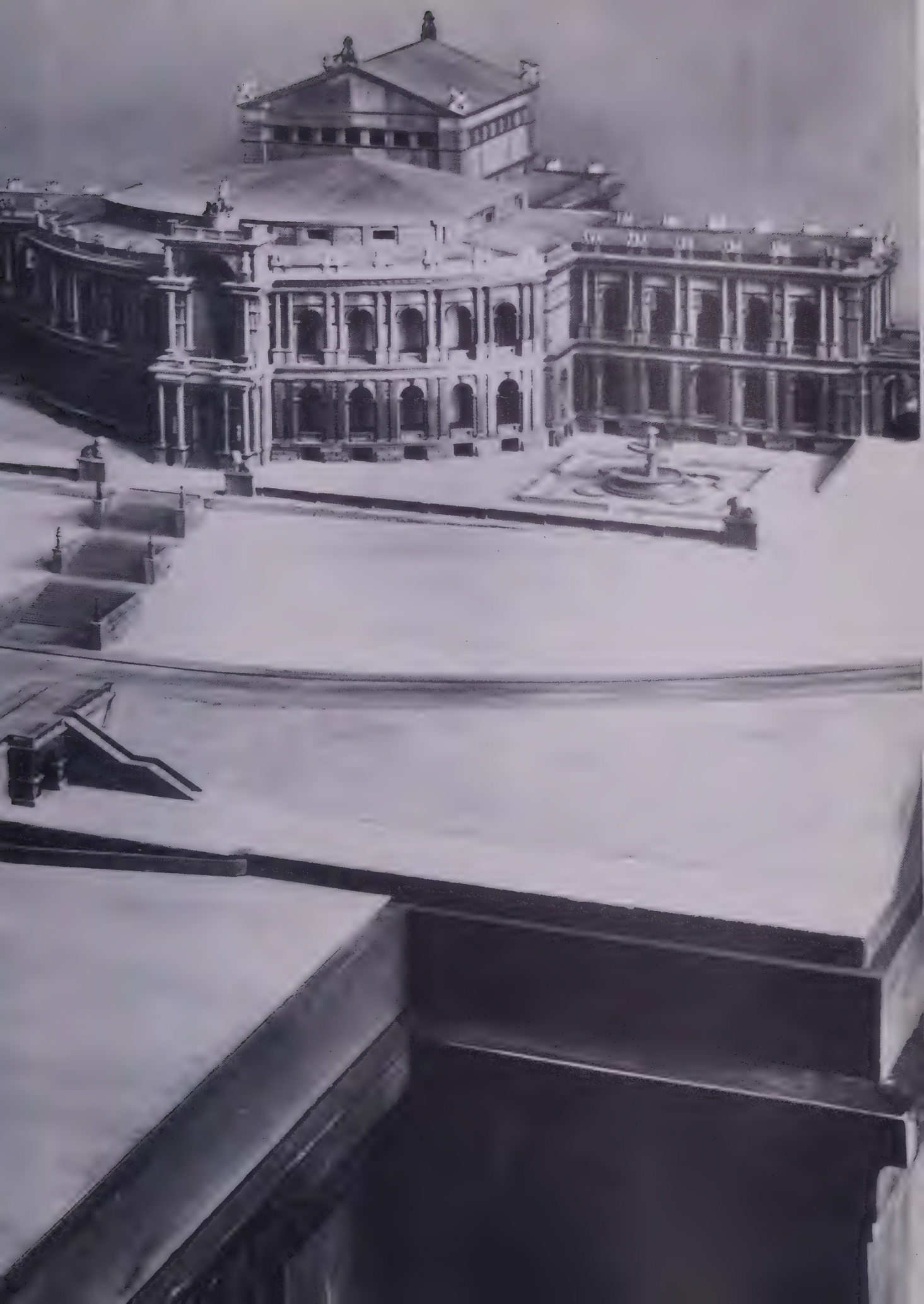
Sophie Gobran

In May of 1864, Ludwig II, newly crowned king of Bavaria, summoned to court his lifelong hero, Richard Wagner. At this and subsequent meetings the king extended a generous offer of patronage. In addition to paying off Wagner's debts and supporting his work as a composer, the king wanted to build a permanent, monumental theater for the performance of Wagner's ambitious music dramas.

I have resolved to have a great stone theater built therewith the performance of the Ring of the Nibelungen may be perfected; this incomparable work must obtain a worthy place for its production; your troubles to find capable dramatic singers would be crowned by beautiful success!¹

The projects for the Munich festival theater are remarkably well-recorded in drawings and documents as well as in hundreds of letters. Many of the letters were first published by Semper's son, Manfred, in an effort to clarify the record. His book *Das Münchener Festspielhaus: Gottfried Semper und Richard Wagner* (Hamburg: Conrad H.A. Kloss) appeared in 1906. More recently an even greater number of the letters have been compiled by the architectural historian Heinrich Habel in a volume which thoroughly chronicles Wagner's involvement with architecture: *Festspielhaus und Wahnfried: Geplante und ausgeführte Bauten Richard Wagners* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1985). In the following pages a number of the festival theater letters have been selected and excerpted for translation to provide in bold outline a history of the building projects and the theoretical issues they raise. The German used in these letters is often ornate and convoluted. For the most part, the translations aim to be literal. When this is not possible, every effort has been made to remain true, at least, to the tone and nuance of the original language. I would like to thank several institutions for generously supporting my work: The Department of Art History & Archeology, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Columbia University, the Institut für Theorie und Geschichte der Architektur of the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, Zurich, and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). My thanks also to Professor Barry Bergdoll, J. Duncan Berry, Ann Whitman and Frau Therese Schweitzer.

¹ Letter dated October 7, 1864. In Otto Strobel, ed., *König Ludwig II und Richard Wagner: Briefwechsel* (Karlsruhe: B.G. Braun, 1936-1939), I, p. 39. Excerpted in Habel, p. 23.





Initially Wagner had a more primitive, temporary structure in mind. In the foreword to his publication of the “Ring” poem of 1862, he had called for “a provisional theater as simple as possible, perhaps made merely of wood, and calculated solely for the artistic purpose of what transpires inside.”² But Wagner was quick to understand the king’s passion for architecture and wisely did nothing to discourage it. Although Wagner had definite requirements and ideas about theater design, architecture per se did not figure largely into his intellectual and artistic universe. He would have had to rely on the expertise of others in order to please the king. Thus, Wagner recommended his old friend, the architect Gottfried Semper,³ then professor of architecture in Zurich, for the commission. He wrote to Semper on the king’s behalf on December 13, 1864.⁴

² Richard Wagner, “Vorwort zur Herausgabe der Dichtung des Bühnenfestspiels ‘Der Ring des Nibelungen,’” *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1912), VI, p. 273. An older English translation of this text made in 1895 appears in *Richard Wagner’s Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (reprint, New York: Brondé Brothers, 1966), III, p. 274ff.

³ Born in Hamburg in 1803, Semper studied architecture briefly in Munich (under Friedrich von Gärtner) and in Paris (under Franz Christian Gau). The precocious young architect was appointed as professor at the Kunstakademie in Dresden in 1834 at the age of 31. Among the many building types to which he devoted his attention, Semper’s lifelong interest in theater architecture dated from his years in Dresden. There, one of his first important commissions was to design and build the Royal Hoftheater (1835–41). It was in Dresden, as well, that Semper came to know Richard Wagner. Semper’s career in Saxony abruptly ended when he took part in the populist uprising of 1849. He was forced to flee to England and only years later in 1855 did he find secure employment as the first professor of architecture at the Swiss Polytechnikum. Working in Zurich, Semper renewed his friendship with Wagner.

⁴ Manfred Semper, p. 1ff.; Habel, p. 25.



My dear Semper!

At his commission the king of Bavaria wishes that you should build a great theater in Munich in the most noble style, the special purpose of which I shall indicate to you forthwith. My young protector believes deeply in the veracity of my ideals regarding a dramatic artwork, which differs essentially and importantly from the modern theater arts as well as from the opera. In order to achieve comprehensible performances in this style, he wants to abandon my attempt to insert the same into our traditional theater repertoire. In order to designate such performances as exceptional, he intends that in the future they should take place not in the everyday opera house, but in a specially appointed theater built only for this purpose... a worthy [building] carried out in stone and precious materials.

In the objections that I put forward to him, I stated that I could not take on the responsibility for the success of such a building, namely with regard to the problematic appointing of the interior; that I knew such a task could only be assigned with assurance to a real genius at building; and as such only you, dear Semper, could I designate. This was enough for the king to charge me at once to ascertain whether you would like to undertake building such a theater.

Herewith is my charge at an end. I presume that you will want to grant the wish of the king of Bavaria, remarking by the way, that it seems to me more prudent, not to mention more purposeful, to commence at once with the construction of a provisional theater built of wood and perhaps of brick. Above all it would be most agreeable for me to have such a theater for use very soon, in order to be able to undertake in it a few principal, special performances of my future dramatic works. Perhaps it would also be desirable for you to have the opportunity to solve known problems at first experimentally. In the end you would save time when carrying out the definitive building in precious material, which, according to the sense of its founders, should be left behind as a meaningful and lively monument to the German nation.

... For now be assured that nothing can compare with the ardour, depth, energy and idealism with which this young, wonderfully talented king devotes himself to the most noble and sublime.

Let me hear from you soon and with most cordial greetings from your true devoted R.W.

Semper was flattered and eager to have the opportunity to see, for the first time in many years, one of his theater designs built. Wagner's letter was followed on December 29, 1864, by a telegram from the Royal Adjutant asking Semper to appear for an audience with the king.

In an attempt to forestall the negative reaction expected from the Bavarian press, sympathetic colleagues, such as the artist Friedrich Pecht, rushed to advocate the project in print. The strategy failed. Popular disapproval and distrust of Wagner was easily transferred to the festival theater project. Munich was already deeply suspicious of Wagner—his politics, his wanton extravagance, and his increasingly

2. Ludwig II, King of Bavaria (1845-86).

3. Richard Wagner (1813-83).



4. Semper. Royal Hoftheater,
Dresden, 1835-41.

obvious affair with Cosima von Bülow.⁵ The press could discredit Semper by pointing to his subversive involvement with Wagner in the Dresden uprising of 1849, an episode that forced both men into exile for many years.

Discussion proceeded nonetheless, and together Semper and Wagner came up with the idea to construct the provisional theater in Munich's Glaspalast, its major exhibition building.⁶ Wagner was very enthusiastic, in part because the new proposal resembled his original idea to build a temporary wooden structure. At this time the court instructed Semper to work on drawings for both the permanent and provisional theaters simultaneously. Burdened with professorial responsibilities and lacking essential information about the sites, Semper was slow to produce. The king's minister, Franz Seraph von Pfistermeister was partially to blame for

⁵ Cosima von Bülow (1837-1930) was the illegitimate daughter of Franz Liszt and the Comtesse d'Agoult. She married the noted pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow in 1857. As Wagner's mistress, and after 1870 as his wife, Cosima devotedly attended to all of his affairs.

⁶ The Glaspalast was designed by August von Voit for the Munich industrial exhibition of 1854. It was destroyed by fire in 1931. The Glaspalast was the first exhibition hall on the continent to follow the prototype set in London by Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1851. While in exile, Semper designed several national and industrial installations for the London exhibition. After the Crystal Palace was moved to Sydenham, Semper was asked to draw up preliminary plans for an open-air theater to be located in its transept. This experience provided the background for Semper's work in Munich with Wagner.

⁷ Manfred Semper, 18f.; excerpted in Habel, p. 23 and p. 34f.

withholding this information. Realizing that the project was both financially and politically inopportune, he followed a course of sabotage by delay. Friedrich Pecht shrewdly recognized a connection between the behavior of the press and that at court. He shared his suspicions with Semper in a letter dated March 17, 1865.⁷

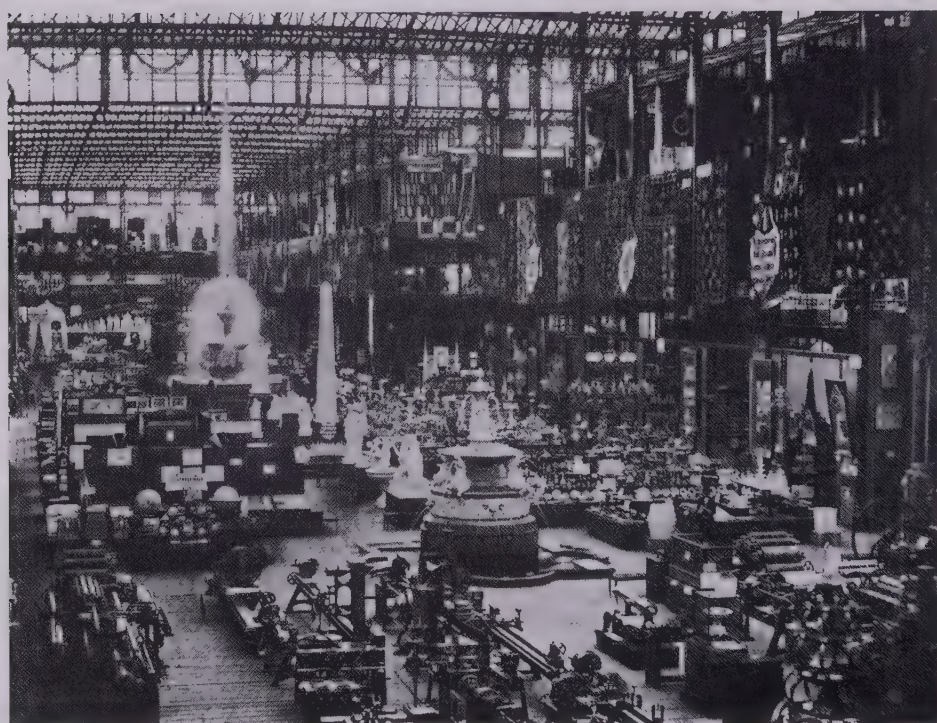
Most dear Sir and friend!

Yesterday I finally learned from Wagner why there were such unending difficulties in obtaining permission from the Royal Cabinet to survey the Gasteigberg to make a profile drawing. It is, to wit, a united effort by the cabinet, the royal family, the Queen-mother and finally also King Ludwig [I] to coerce the young king to forgo the building of a proper festival theater *for the present* and have it be enough to erect a provisional theater in the Glaspalast. You are thereby released from your obligation to work out a plan for the former—if I have correctly understood the gibberish that Wagner spewed forth as explanation. He will write to you himself within the next few days and I, in the meantime, want here to vent my rage. Yesterday this was very great, as I received the piece of news, yet today I regard the thing somewhat more coolly—The plan to build a great theater solely for Wagner's operas, when one perceives the thing *as such*, was something too adventurous. But do we now have the time to carry out the thing in the Glaspalast in order to show that operas by other people will look so much better in such a house; that one could also give concerts and perhaps also have balls and other festivities there; that, above all, it would be something wholly better and new so that general opinion will gradually become friendly toward the thing [?]—The core of the opposition rests now, to be sure, in the court party, which does not want the civil list to be used at all for building or to spend money on the arts and sciences. They would rather the king bestow the surplus of his revenues in the form of court offices, pensions, and gratuities. With this the royal family, which does not feel any more secure, joins in agreement. They believe the king would be better to save for worse times than to build, since this would remain a prospect.

But now because the notion to build does not come in any way from Wagner—who would be just as happy with the wooden shed—rather direct from the king. I hope that he comes back with a tenacity against his relatives, as soon as he sits more securely and feels more sure of himself. One must continually remind him that a king of Bavaria *should and must build*, and, indeed, in the most noble way. . .

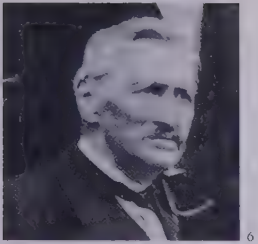
In order to have a representative in Munich, Semper asked that a colleague, the architect Gottfried Neureuther (1811–1887), be appointed to the project. Wagner, meanwhile, sought to consolidate his position by entrenching himself in Munich's cultural life. In a report to the king he proposed the founding of a new music school to produce German singers and musicians capable of performing his music dramas.⁸ Wagner presented all the components of the festival program as interrelated and contingent. Thus, he set the music school as a prerequisite to performance of the *Ring* as well as to construction of the permanent theater. By relying on the king's love of architecture, Wagner was making a wager potentially at Semper's expense.

⁸ Richard Wagner, "Bericht an Seine Majestät den König Ludwig II von Bayern über eine in München zu errichtende deutsche Musikschule," in *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, VIII, p. 125–176. See also Ellis, IV, p. 173ff.



In May 1865, Semper finished a set of drawings for a provisional theater. He sent the drawings to Wagner first for review. The accompanying explanatory letter is an important document, as Semper never prepared a formal building description for the provisional theater.⁹ Semper seems very aware of the growing disapproval and resentment in Munich to Wagner's taking over the beloved Glaspalast.

⁹ Manfred Semper, p. 27ff.; Habel p. 38f.



My dear friend Wagner!

For several weeks now I have been keeping preliminary work relating to some of your plans beside me in a folder. Until now I have not had the courage to come out with them. This is because I recognize all too well their inadequacy and at the same time think how busy you must now be with your *Tristan*.

Your preliminary judgment of the sketches is altogether necessary before they are laid before his Majesty the King; I would also hope that you undertake to discuss thoroughly their value and practicability with Minister von Pfistermeister, because I very much fear [his reactions] in relation to the latter, namely the practicability of the plans, which raise serious considerations. It will seem to many that an installation such as the one I have projected would detract for quite some time from the public's enjoyment of the splendid and impressive interior of the Glaspalast and that this would adversely affect [Pfistermeister's] determination.

But perhaps the means will be found to counter these considerations right from the outset. For example, I would suggest that during the festival the entrance tickets for performances to be held on the built-in stage be valid for entrance to the entire palace. Thus the palace would form an undivided, unified festival space that would offer to the public the opportunity to enjoy art and nature in a variety of ways—as the ultimate climax: the music drama.

To this purpose the total space would be divided into three sections: in the high middle hall would be the *skena* with the *theatron*, the right and left of which would be two large festival halls. The [hall] on the left or the right would serve as a gathering or conversation room, as grand foyer for the waves of people before the performance and between acts; the other would serve as a banquet hall. There, splendid suppers would be arranged after the performance, under exotic greenery among works of fine art.

Briefly then, the following is an explanation of my designs:

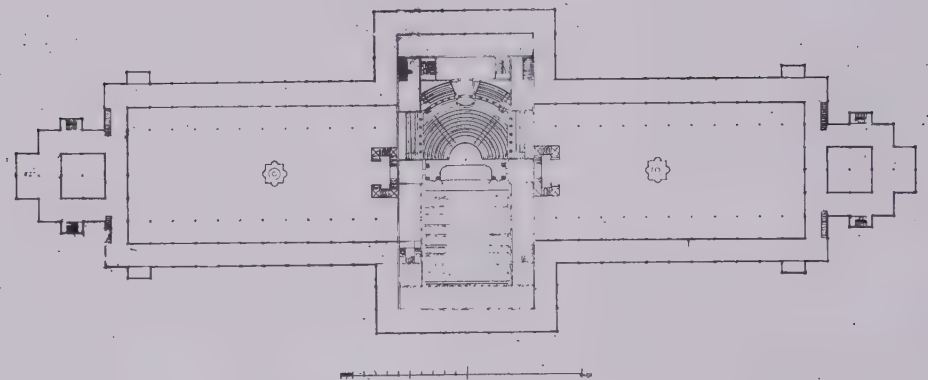
There are two of them: the first comprises 5 sheets each of which is provided with the title 'Project A.' This version was composed with special consideration to the total effect of the palace, the greatest possible preservation of which lies close to my heart.

With it the unity of the whole building will be disturbed as little as is possible. The new installation should occupy only the high inner room of the middle pavilion, the height of which is necessary for the exigencies of the stage and the sunken orchestra. The actual *theatron*, i. e. the auditorium, must be elevated significantly for the sake of the orchestra and the floor under the stage. It is accessible from both side halls via two great staircases to be decorated according to preference. Four steps, already available, are situated very conveniently for communication with the higher floor of the auditorium.

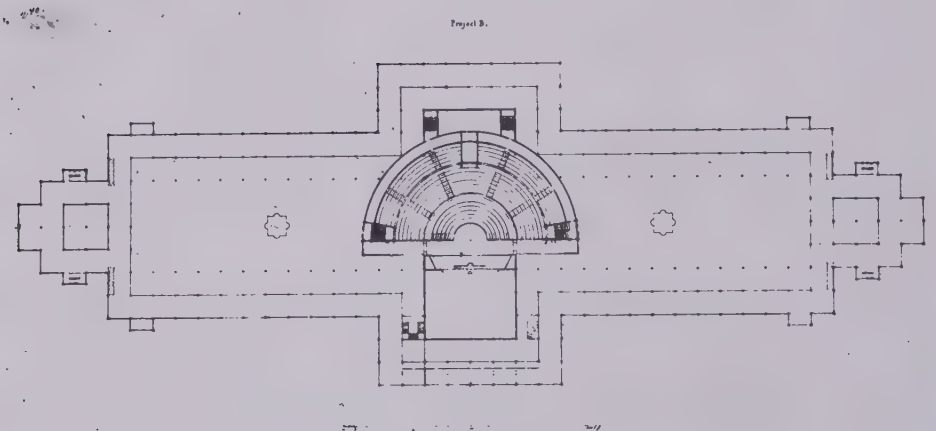
In its placement and form the arrangement of the auditorium is so simple that an explanation is scarcely needed. It would hold approximately 1,000 seats in a comfortable, amphitheatrical arrangement. Following antique (Roman) custom, the court and other privileged members of the audience would be seated in moveable chairs in the so-called orchestra, i. e. in the semicircle that immediately

5. August von Voit. Glaspalast, exterior and interior, Munich, 1854.

6. Gottfried Semper (1803–79).



7



8

surrounds the center of the theater. However, I have designated a special loge for H. Maj. and the royal family; that, like an aedicule with a gable, rises high above the entablature that is itself above the arch of the colonnade that surrounds the hall. Located behind this loge are additional rooms for the court's use between acts.

The arrangement of the proscenium is the result of the inescapable conditions of both the lighting of the scenery from above and the sunken (invisible) orchestra. This explains the depth of the proscenium, which will also be beneficial in that it provides a separation so necessary in mediating between the real world and the world of the stage, a separation that is for the most part wanting in the traditional theater...

The elevation of the auditorium permits use of the rooms below for communication and other purposes.

I remark also with respect to this project, that I have thought as well about the sculptural decoration of the proscenium and of the colonnade surrounding the auditorium. The outfitting of these can be accomplished more simply with decorative painting according to the manner that I have indicated to you for the 2nd project.

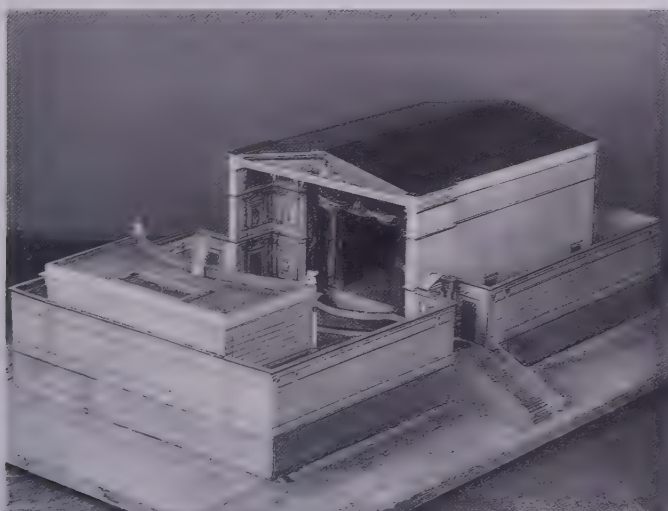
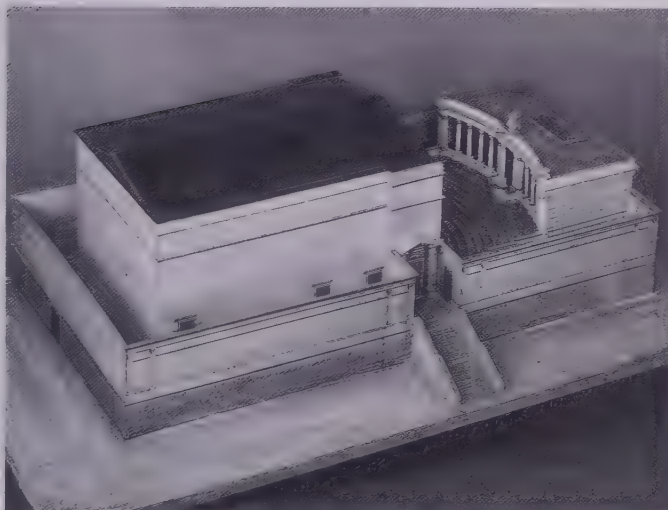
This latter differs throughly from that of which I have just spoken [Project A] in that the stage forms a freestanding structure, completely separate from the auditorium according to the custom of ancient Greek theater, while the other combines both prime components into one according to Roman custom. Thereby, the auditorium in this second project forms a significantly more extensive semicircle that extends at its furthest reach on both sides beyond the high mid-section of the building. Thus, one gains room for approximately 1,500 seats with the enclosure of the higher gallery. The disturbing side views past the stage into the iron framework of the Glaspalast will be somewhat prevented by two theater curtains with painted architecture and landscape approximately as I have indicated in the color sketches.

As in the first plans two steps in addition to those available are to be specially constructed on both end-wings of the semicircularly-formed column hall of the auditorium, leading to the last rows and to the gallery seating. The outfitting of the forestage and the music floor is almost the same as in the first project, except that the forestage is calculated to be a lighter wooden construction only for

7. Semper: Provisional Theater in the Glaspalast. Project A, the 'Roman' plan. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

8. Provisional Theater in the Glaspalast. Project B, the 'Greek' plan. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

9. Provisional Theater, two views of model according to project C. Finished in late 1865. König-Ludwig II Museum, Herrenchiemsee.



painted decoration. The actual stage is shrunk here to accommodate the extended auditorium. At this point I still omit details of construction because spatial conceptions need to be resolved first. These, I believe, are expressed clearly in both sets of drawings. The details would present no difficulties once the idea is decided upon.

I have prepared the sketches for the monumental theater that I am thinking of erecting on the high bank of the Isar not far from and to the right of the Maximilianeum. But before I fix them, I would very much like to know what your opinion is concerning the implications of the contents of these projects sent under separate cover.

I close this long letter with the fondest greetings and compliments to Minister von Pfistermeister, the Bülow and all dear acquaintances in Munich.

I would very much like to come over to the first performance of your *Tristan* were I not chained to this spot.

Your friend Gottfried Semper.

Semper was right; when Wagner received the drawings for the provisional theater, he was frantic with last minute preparations for the premiere of *Tristan and Isolde*. He did not delay, however, in forwarding them to the king, who was very anxious to see them. Wagner preferred to leave the business of the proposed theaters to Pfistermeister. The minister, as might be expected, preferred to leave matters shrouded in silence.

A major setback to the entire festival project came on July 21, 1865, when the tenor Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Wagner's beloved Tristan, died suddenly at the age of 29. Shaken and distraught, Wagner pleaded desperately for his music school. In so doing he further undermined the building projects, as is clear in his letter of July 30th to the king.¹⁰

Now I regard this school . . . as the first and most important point of attack for the work of the future . . . The opponents and combatants of your noble project with respect to the festival theater building are absolutely correct; *who* then, when this theater is finished, should perform therein?

Undaunted by all this turmoil, King Ludwig remained as dreamy and optimistic as ever about the future. He kept Wagner abreast of the business at all times.¹¹

In September Semper will arrive in Munich to determine a site for the building and to make himself available at once for a conference with me personally; in my soul I can see it standing before me, the majestic building; thousands will make the pilgrimage from near and far to the national festival. Which sounds make me drunk with joy? I hear the waves of the waters of the Rhine. . .

Because of the intricacies of Bavarian politics, Semper's instructions from court were always intermittent and often contradictory. Yet, Semper was by no means aggressive in pursuing his own interests; the gentleman scholar waited in Zurich

¹⁰ Strobel, I, 136ff.; excerpted in Habel p. 41.

¹¹ Letter dated August 14, 1865; Strobel, I, p. 152f.; excerpted in Habel p. 41.



10. Festival Theater, site plan with new street cut from the Hofgarten of the Residenz through the St. Anna district and across the Isar.

with reserve and irritation until he was contacted. It was only at the king's request that Semper made the trip to Munich in September. At first Wagner despaired having to bother with the theater building proposals. But, in the end, the two men had several long and productive sessions in which they were able to resolve problems that had arisen in the design of both theaters. They focused especially on the provisional theater, which both regarded as more pressing. Wagner wrote about the outcome of these sessions in a letter to the king, who, because of illness, was unable to meet with Semper. This letter, dated September 13, 1865, is the first in which urbanistic aspects of Semper's permanent theater are discussed.¹²

... [Semper] attended to his commission and studied the terrain of Munich for the purpose of choosing a site on which to build the theater. We have decided upon one and propose the following to Your Worship:

As his exalted father and grandfather had founded for them, so will King Ludwig II (whose reign was prophesied to me to last fifty-eight years) found a street in Munich. This is something of the future that can, however, already be taken into consideration in our plans. This street will be an extension of the Briennerstrasse, [running] past the Residenz, through the Hofgarten, then straight until it leads to the Isar, over which a bridge leads to a terrace on the higher opposite bank. From this eminence the ideal festival theater will proudly tower. This plan can be carried out completely one day when the time and circumstances are right. For now the theater itself, which in the future should be connected to the Residenz by a bridge and a new street, is to be built in the location specified in these plans, near to the most beautiful promenade in Munich, as specified modestly distant from the Maximilianeum. ...

¹² Strobel, I, 176ff.; Habel p. 43.

But, my ardent friend wants soon to obtain a foretaste of the ideal for which we strive. To this end I offer the plans of which we have just spoken for a provisional theater in the Glaspalast. There are acoustical problems to surmount; to experiment with these in a provisional location is most advisable. Of the costs to be employed, the greatest part will be applicable to the monumental theater, and from now can be included in the cost calculations for this. Previews are not possible in the next summer. We can use the entire next year, 1866, for saving and preliminary work. In 1867 the provisional theater will be erected: I hope I can then produce something significant for my friends. (I promise for this winter—if it is at all possible—*Lohengrin*).

In early November 1865, for the first time in the history of the project, Semper engaged in a bit of self-promotion. He sent the first two volumes of his recently published theoretical opus, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik* (Style in the technical and tectonic arts or practical aesthetics) as a gift to the King. Ludwig was impressed by the ponderous tomes and thanked Semper graciously in a letter. After receiving this royal thank-you note, Semper's interest in the festival theater project became noticeably more acute.

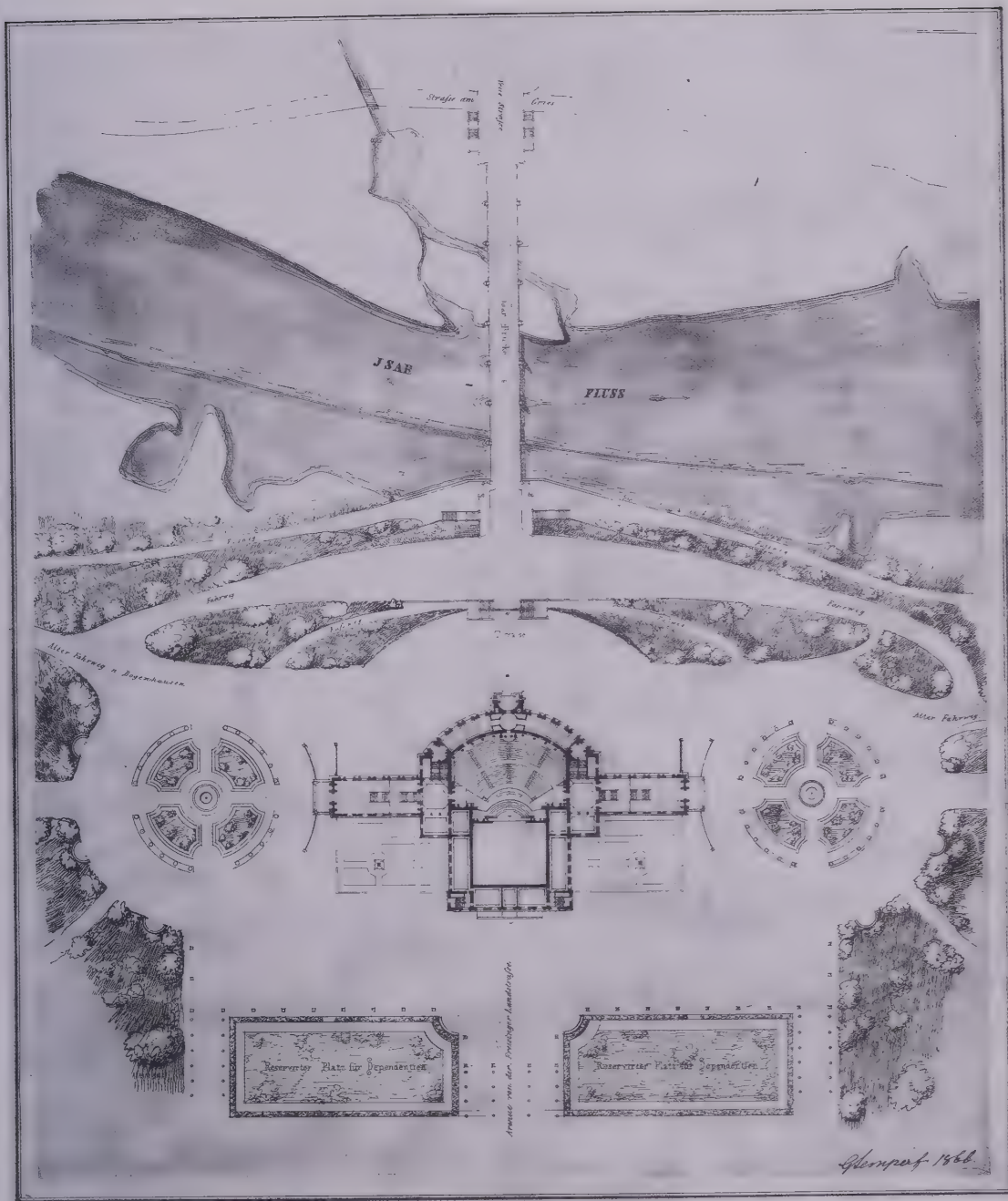
But alas, as Semper's star was rising, Wagner reached the absolute nadir of his popularity. He was so preoccupied with scandal that, upon receiving Semper's final drawings for the provisional theater, he absentmindedly packed them away, never forwarding them to the king. In December, as a result of Wagner's untoward behavior—his surreptitious attempt to have Pfistermeister removed from office, his shockingly extravagant lifestyle, and innuendo about his relationship with von Bülow—the king was forced to ask his friend to leave Bavaria. Unbeknownst to Semper, Wagner settled in Switzerland at Tribschen, a house on Lake Lucerne.

Incredibly, in the face of all this scandal and intrigue, King Ludwig remained confident that building would start soon at the Glaspalast and that all would proceed as he had dreamed. He wrote to von Bülow on January 4, 1866:¹³

Recently I crossed over to the Isar heights, the sun sent down its transfiguring rays, there I met the image of the festival building otherworldly and rapturously in my mind's eye. 'Rhinegold! Rhinegold!' It resounds in me! ... Yes, I want to hope!

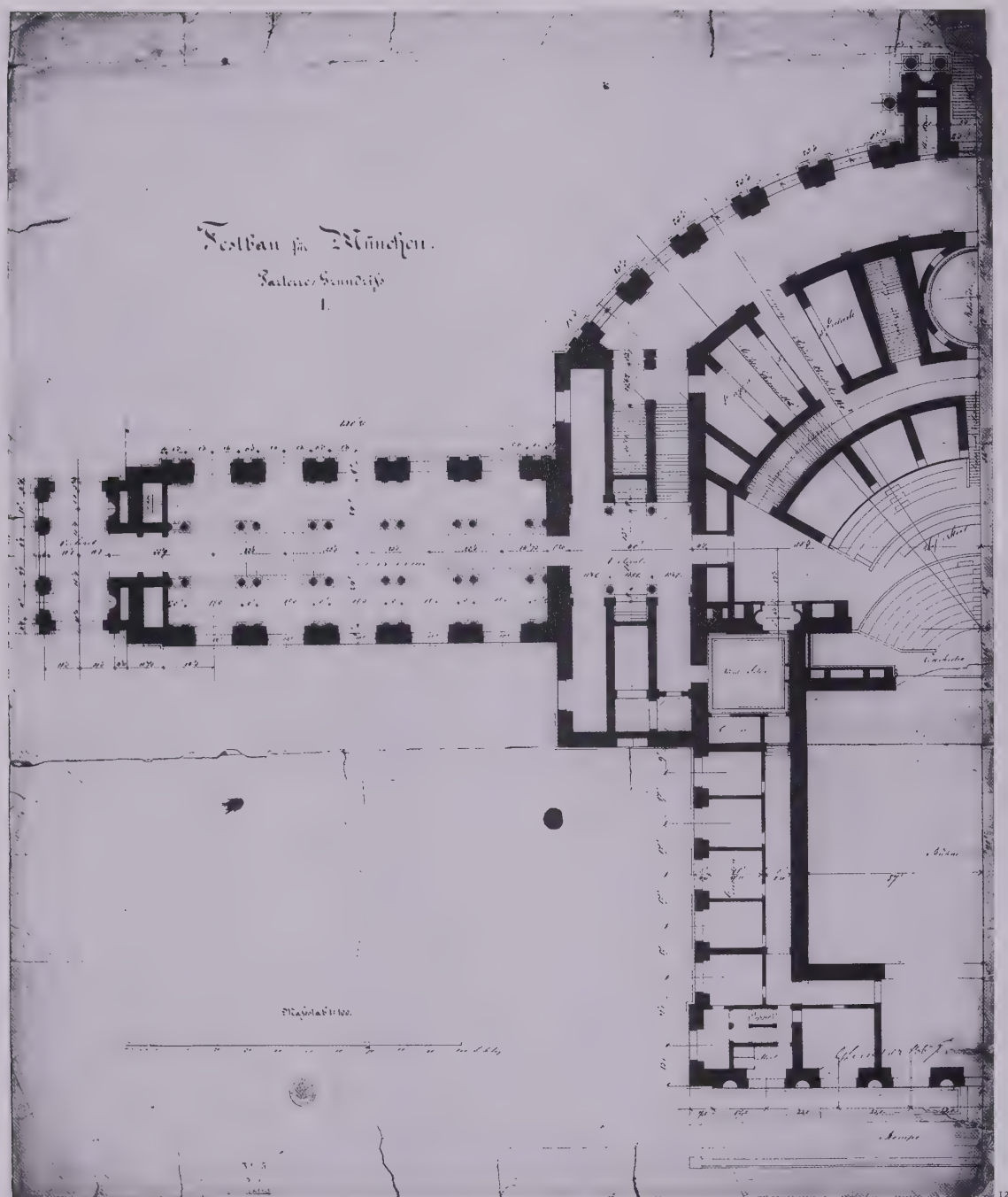
But the king's optimism was unfounded; prospects for the provisional theater were growing dim. Upon reviewing the cost estimate for the building, the architect Neureuther felt that Semper had come in far too low. This judgment placed the project in great jeopardy with the cabinet. To make matters worse, no one in Munich had yet seen the finished drawings, which were still packed away with Wagner's belongings. On June 16, 1866, Bavaria was drawn into war with Prussia. Not another word was spoken about the theater projects for quite some time, as attention shifted to graver concerns. The political turmoil that the war brought in its wake resulted in a thorough reorganization of the Bavarian government. In December 1866, a number of high-level ministers, including Pfistermeister, were replaced.

¹³ Excerpted in Habel p. 52.



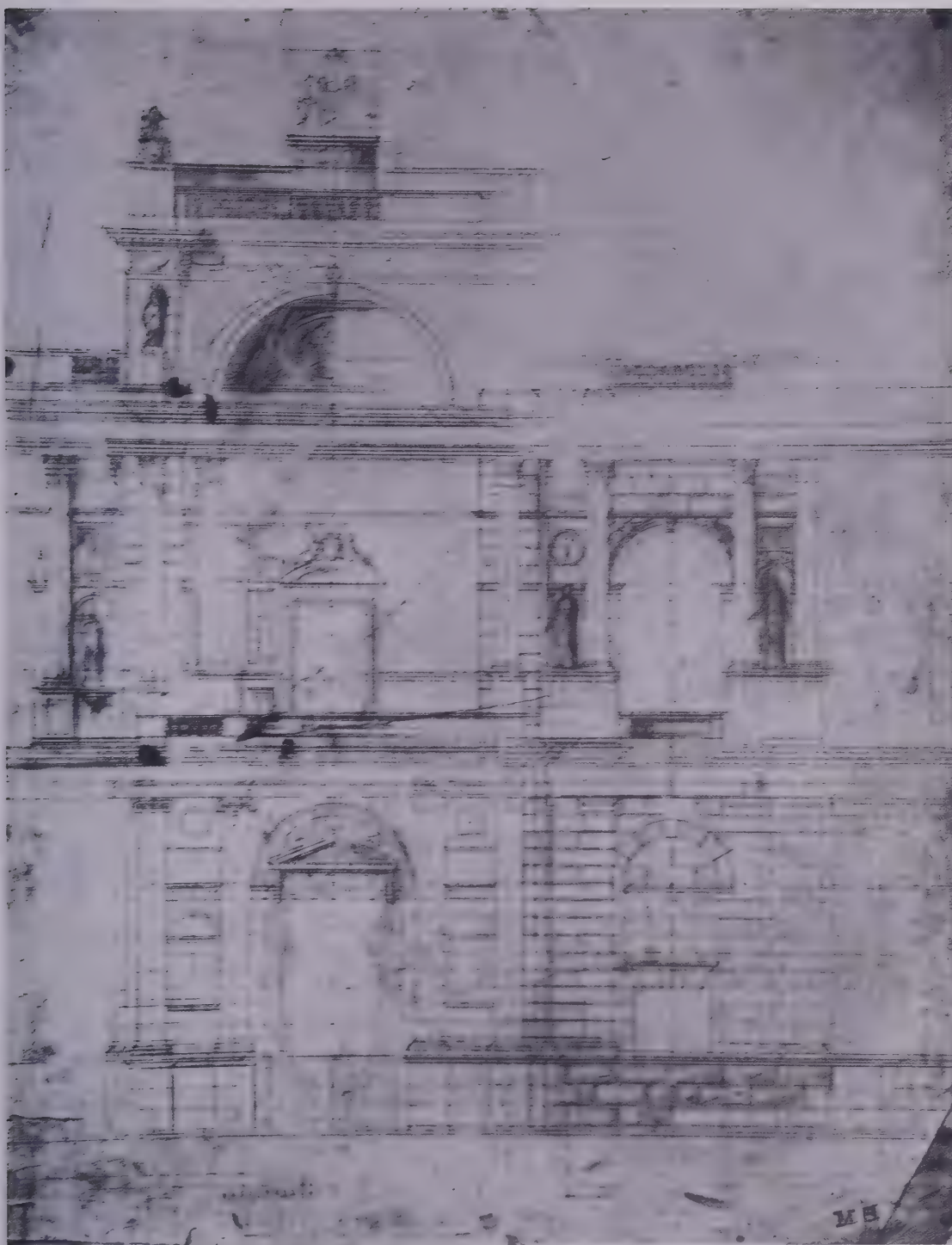
11. Festival Theater, site plan showing main floor, Project B, signed G Semper 1866.

Late in the same month, an elaborate model for the permanent theater was finally completed. On the thirty-first of December 1866, Wagner went with Cosima and Hans von Bülow and the conductor Hans Richter to see the model on display at the Polytechnikum in Zurich. All were duly impressed and Wagner wrote rhapsodic praises to the king, recommending that Semper be called to Munich to explain the project in detail. Never again was the provisional theater mentioned, but with the new year prospects for the permanent theater were as though reborn.



12. Festival Theater, plan,
southern half, signed G.
Semper 1867. Architektur-
sammlung der Technischen
Universität, Munich.

13. Festival Theater, middle
portion of the main façade,
Project A.





14. Four locations (indicated by ■) for the Festival Theater

The king summoned Semper to Munich, and offered him a long-awaited handshake and a verbal commitment to the project. He promised that the necessary land would be purchased for both the theater and the new street from the Hofgarten to the Isar heights. In addition, Semper was to be appointed as a court architect. He was asked to move immediately to Munich. Minister Lorenz von Dülflipp, Pfistermeister's successor, assured Semper that a written contract would be drafted immediately and sent on to Zurich. Soon thereafter von Bülow indicated to Semper that informed opinion viewed his *Renaissancestil* architecture as an appropriate and viable antidote to what had been built in Munich by the king's immediate predecessors.¹⁴ This was good news, of course, but no one could rest easily until a contract was signed.

At this point, with tensions high and tempers short, there was some bad blood between Semper and Wagner. Spitefully Wagner lashed out at his old friend, claiming to be insulted by a lack of attention and admitting his limited interest in the architectural aspects of the festival project.¹⁵ Semper must have been deeply wounded by Wagner's remarks, especially at a moment when, after so long, some celebration was in order. Despite his ill feeling, Semper wrote Wagner a long letter detailing what had occurred in his audience with the king.¹⁶

My dear Wagner!

Above all be assured that my silence since my return from Munich was not intentional, no 'maneuver', rather for the most part my negligence...

¹⁴ "Briefe von Cosima v. Bülow und König Ludwig über ein Münchener Richard Wagner-Theater," *Mitteilungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Literatur und Theater*, II, no.1 (Kiel: 1921), p. 2. Excerpted in Habel, p. 64; and in Manfred Semper, p. 63.

¹⁵ Letter from Wagner to Semper, early February 1867. Manfred Semper, p. 67ff; Strobel, V, p. 156ff; Habel p. 66f.

¹⁶ Letter dated February 3, 1867. Strobel, V, p. 58ff; Habel p. 67ff.

My sojourn in Munich lasted 10 days. H. Majesty had already had the model unpacked for my arrival [:] it was set out in one of the largest salles on the ground floor wing facing north toward the Hofgarten. I troubled them for a better setting and lighting. On the 2nd day I received an order to wait for his majesty in the aforementioned salle. The audience was a long one. For two long hours the king patiently received the explanation of the model and the plans in full detail. H. M. seemed satisfied and was altogether very gracious and friendly to me. I answered to the royal question of whether I wanted to undertake the execution of this work, I answered that I naturally felt very graced by the honor of such a royal commission and with my modest means [wished] to be of service to the vision of H. Majesty by carrying through His most high and noble plans, etc. On the next day at the same time I had the honor to participate in a second audience that lasted almost as long and wherein he went through with me in detail the of the choice of the plaza and of the street alignment. His Highness seemed to decide for such a plan that (according to your first idea) in the extension of the Briennerstrasse, proceeded through the Anna district from the Hofgarten and along the north side of the Residenz, then connected both banks of the Isar with a bridge, and finally culminated with the festival building on the eastern high bank of the other side of the Isar. I add that to the question put to me by the king about the duration of construction, I answered that it would be advisable for various reasons not to hurry the building itself, but, in order to gain time for it, not to hesitate to begin. According to my unauthoritative opinion, I calculate that, from beginning to completion, the building would require 6 years.

... Now this was only a personal and preliminary discussion. Herr Döfflipp has no written mandate from the king yet and prior to that cannot attend to any official transactions. My commission is no more definite until I receive the official mandate from Döfflipp on my end. So things stand, and I await now with some tension the next communication from Döfflipp that will be decisive....

You see that my tone does not sound high-spirited & is lowered further when you describe the immediate prospects of the work as endangered...

The magnificent can fail and fails often because of the inadequacy of means available for its conception and realization, and further because of the inadequacy of the imagination of those to whom it is directed. I believe now that your works are of a kind that *ought* to unfold with nothing other than what is thoroughly worthy and complete, in the fullest outfitting, supported by all the arts. They are too great and rich for illegitimate stages and wooden sheds. In so far as I was able to serve you through my art I sought my task and pursued it with love.

Semper's remarks here cut to the quick. Fundamental differences had surfaced between the two men, especially with regard to architecture's status in a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art. This is what the festival of music-drama was meant to be, a total work of art. But the aesthetic term, which Wagner had coined back in Dresden, was broader in theory than was realistic in practice. Semper and Wagner had divergent notions of hierarchy in the arts, a divergence which made integration impossible. Whatever they did now to smoothe things over, these differences would not be fully resolved.

External problems plagued the project as well. With the winds of politics and popular opinion turning once more against the project, Döfflipp delayed and delayed. His excuses for not drafting Semper's contract centered this time around the property purchase. Semper began to despair at ever receiving word from Munich. Finally, in October, Wagner made a passionate plea to King Ludwig, insisting that he call both Semper and Franz Liszt into court service.¹⁷

How is it possible that my king cannot for once see clearly in such a very minor sphere? God! Think of King Ludwig I. What would he have accomplished, if he were troubled by such considerations[?] . . . I assert that if the king of Bavaria in spite of everything and everyone, called *Semper* today in order to give him a great position, if he called *Liszt* today, selecting an appropriate meaningful position for him in music (primarily in the church) in order that he then be fixed in Munich—then the people would have respect and the gossips would hold their tongues. The entire realm, Germany, Europe would understand this: then these names would belong to the whole world. My king, heed this well! These two are the last truly great and important men in their fields that belong, not only to our, but to all time.

In November, after further negotiation, Semper's son Manfred was dispatched to Munich to attend to the business of the contract. He brought with him a detailed building description of the permanent festival theater and a revised cost estimate.¹⁸ At a conference that took place on the third of December, Manfred was firmly assured that a contract would be sent on to Zurich and that Semper would be appointed as *Oberbaurat und Intendant aller von der königlichen Civilliste ressortirenden Bauten* (Chief building advisor and superintendent of all buildings on the royal civil list). This promise, like so many that Semper had received from the Bavarian court, proved chimerical. Even by late December, no contract had materialized in Zurich. Back in Munich, von Bülow, in her role as self-appointed advisor to the king, took matters into her own hands. She decried how appalling it was for a man of Semper's stature to be treated in such a manner by a royal house. Döfflipp was called to task to provide a full explanation. Semper finally received a very long letter from him dated January 25, 1868.¹⁹ Döfflipp's excuses were lame and his tone eely, but his description of the situation in Bavaria vis-à-vis Wagner was quite accurate. One can appreciate, at least, what was for him a very difficult political situation. Clearly it would not behoove Semper to pursue the matter further.

Most honored Herr Professor!

As I begin these lines a bitter feeling overtakes me, with regard to you, for whom all along I had the fullest respect. I find myself in a situation, through a confluence of circumstances, that forces me, as it were, to offer justification and vindication. I want, however, to undergo this thing because I am sure that you will recognize in my words the pure truth, and that you will not calculate a burden for which I am not guilty. To the matter at hand.

¹⁷ Letter dated October 25, 1867. Strobel, II, p. 197ff. Excerpted in Habel, p. 74.

¹⁸ Gottfried Semper, "Königlicher Festbau in München (1867)." Reprinted in Habel p. 629–640.

¹⁹ Habel p. 78ff. mentioned in Manfred Semper p. 82f.

Before I go into these special circumstances more closely, allow me to recapitulate the discussions with your son, as I already did in my my letter of the 8th December, and as I deem necessary to do yet again, since I know that the aforementioned letter did not arrive into your hands.—

Our discussions comprised two principal points, namely:

1. the theater building and
2. the possibility of your being called to Munich.—

I will deal with these matters in the order that they are mentioned and thus will speak first about the theater building. Your son Manfred has handed me a building description and the respective cost estimate, according to which the building will call for an expenditure of 2,568,299 fl [florins] 6 kr [kroner], approximately 600,000 fl more than was stated by you in January 1867.— This is a very significant cost difference that truly startled me, but which I must acknowledge and take into account on the basis of the detailed calculations, recognizing that the earlier estimate was only approximate. But the costs of the property purchase must be added hereto, because the site on which the theater would stand still belongs, for the most part, to private individuals from whom a future purchase cannot yet be accomplished....

Dividing the total cost of the building over 10 years, I arrive at 250,000 fl per year, which is absolutely impossible to procure with circumstances as they are... I cannot give an all-round account without illuminating the matter of the building from yet another side that ought not to seem any less worthy of attention, and that is the political. Your model of the building enjoys the applause and the wonderment of all those who have the opportunity to view it. Alone, the building itself will not be recognized as a necessity and will only be sanctioned and prefaced by Wagner's friends. That is a bad thing, doubly bad in a time of agitation and political transformation such as ours. Previously King Ludwig I had an easy game with his buildings. Then, the state's savings stood at his disposal; now the civil list, already burdened enough, is supposed to carry everything. The budget lies now before the chambers of the land for deliberation and I fear that in the upcoming debates the civil list as well will be subject to many a malicious comment. Under our present conditions I hold the desire to secure money for a loan for the building completely objectionable.

You see from this, most honorable Herr Professor, that best intentions in this matter have thus far brought nothing whatsoever, and that now the solution is called "patience." All that I can do, limited by the provision, is to put a sum of approximately 150,000 fl into the budget of the royal treasury for the year 1868 and so, at least theoretically, to make a beginning....

... to move on the second point, regarding your being called.

... I must confess, it did not seem at all believable to me that you would wish to be called to Munich, in that your circumstances in Zurich seemed to me in all respects enviable. However, I seized the idea with a kind of satisfaction in that you would come to know and judge our indigenous conditions....

It was on New Year's Day at the New Year's Court, that many gentlemen—higher state and court officials—gave me to understand in conversation that



they knew of your being called to Munich and that it must be my duty to make the king aware that this act would not receive the sanction of public opinion; that although, indeed, everyone has the highest regard for you, the world-famous architect, no one could wish that the local supporters of Herr Richard Wagner would be strengthened just now by a personality of such importance....

Believe me at my word, there lives in Munich certainly not a soul who means better for and believes more sincerely in Richard Wagner than I; there lives in Munich certainly no person who more ardently wishes that Wagner could complete gloriously the great work that he began to build for the glory of the German fatherland....

Your truly devoted Döfflipp, Court Secretary.
Munich, 25 January 1868.

Semper's last words on the subject appeared in a letter to Manfred:²⁰

Base is the lie that the cabinet's communiqué was placed in a mailbox and lost, the whole business is base! I am also disgusted and hold out no more hope—not even for payment.

After enlisting the services of a lawyer and many months of struggle, Semper did finally secure some payment. Although never built, the Munich festival theater became an important prototype especially for opera houses in Central Europe, and a symbolic association with Wagnerian aesthetics always remained. Twice in his own career Semper had the opportunity to see his Munich ideas built. In Vienna he collaborated with Carl von Hasenauer to design the Burgtheater on the Ringstrasse, and in Dresden he reconstructed the Royal Hoftheater which had burned to the ground in 1869.

In the years that followed the Munich fiasco, King Ludwig II was intermittent in his support of Wagner's festival project. Indeed, by the late 1870s, Ludwig's obsession with building fantasy castles had sorely depleted the royal store. His prodigality and eccentricity gave way to insanity. Wagner, however, persevered and in 1878 finally had the opportunity to see his "wooden shed" built by a local architect in northern Bavaria. The Bayreuth Festspielhaus, to this day the pilgrim destination for Wagner devotees, also follows Semper's model—albeit in a crude and rudimentary form.

15. Semper with Carl von Hasenauer, Burgtheater on the Ringstrasse, Vienna, 1873-88. Destroyed during World War II, the theater was reconstructed in the 1950s.

16. Semper, Manfred Semper, executant architect. Second Hoftheater, Dresden, 1871-78. Designed to replace the theater that had burned to the ground in 1869. Destroyed during World War II, it has recently reopened.

²⁰ Letter dated January 28, 1868; excerpted in Manfred Semper, p. 83; and Habel, p. 80.

1. Odeum at Augusta Praetoria, Aosta, Italy; remains of the exterior walls with holes that supported roof trusses.

The Ancient Roman Roofed Theater

George Izenour

Until now, artistic perception and the usual academic views of the architecture and building technology of the ancient theater have been based primarily on the study of the great, outdoor, earth-bermed and hillside-supported Greek festival theaters and the great, outdoor, vault-supported theaters built by the Romans.

Although the roofed theaters of antiquity have been known for two hundred years, these so called *odea* have received, both individually and collectively, insufficient study, technical analysis, and restoration. They have been too narrowly construed in modern times as music halls and little else. It is my contention that the Roman *odeum* was a multiple use theater and that its use can be extrapolated most reasonably from its architectural remains and their technical implications. This method is likely to reveal a truer picture of the individual buildings and their functions than studies limited to literary and iconographic sources.

My first encounter with the archaeological remains of a Roman roofed theater took place in 1966 in the northern Italian town of Aosta at the foot of the Little Saint Bernard Pass. In the twenty-odd years since then, I have traveled from the Rhone valley in France to the Taurus Mountains in Turkey, visiting and photographing archaeological sites to study the remains of these roofed theaters. These visits have enabled me to understand better the structural implications raised in making restoration drawings of these theaters.

All plans and orthographic sections are reproduced at 1/60 inch equals one foot. All perspective sections are reproduced at 1/30 inch equals one foot.





In the years between the decline of the Greco-Hellenistic city state and the institution of the Pax Romana, the aim of drama changed from the theological to the merely entertaining. Two distinctly different, empire-wide architectural manifestations of this change paralleled the shift in style and substance in literature for the stage. In light of an ever increasing body of archaeological evidence, I am persuaded that the change in theater design was part of the logical reaction to this change in overall artistic purpose. During this time the artistic aim of theater became divided into a steadily degraded popular theater performed outdoors and a more modest elite theater art performed on a much reduced scale indoors.

These indoor theaters were more technically demanding in their structure, lighting, ventilation, seating, and acoustics. At the same time the massive architectural and structural problems of the huge outdoor theaters, dictated by social and political need, required empire-wide attention and financing. Built throughout the empire, these large public facilities included the great, elliptical outdoor amphitheatres seating tens of thousands, and the outdoor, elongated, horseshoe-shaped circuses seating as many as a hundred thousand.

At the same time the pragmatic and cost-conscious Roman bureaucrats set about remodeling the three-quarter round Greco-Hellenistic outdoor theaters into the more intimate half-round Roman outdoor theaters. As a result, the physical relationship between the performer and the audience was changed profoundly from the enveloping to the confrontational. This extensive remodeling program, one of the most ambitious ever undertaken, was carried out in the first century B.C.E. and the first and second centuries C.E. The first phase of this architectural remodeling program converted the orchestra of the Greco-Hellenistic theater into the seated orchestra of the Roman theater. A shallow raised stage, now the only playing area intended for the actors without a chorus, was backed by an elaborate one-, two-, or sometimes three-story permanent architectural setting. This arrangement created a more confrontational relationship between the actors and that part of the audience now seated in the orchestra. Following closely on the heels of the first phase of this architectural remodeling, the second phase partially restored the enveloping form, but to another purpose. This final modification incorporated the "Roman barrier," a low stone wall topped by an inward curving and sharply barbed metal grillage surrounding the orchestra. This fence was installed for protection of the audience now confined to the risers. It allowed the orchestra to be turned into a half-round arena for bloody gladiatorial contests and gory animal-baiting spectacles. This practice was particularly frequent in small and medium-sized cities in the outlying provinces that did not have elliptical amphitheatres.

The design and building of smaller roofed theaters devoted to the presentation of high dramatic art was also gaining momentum throughout the empire. In my view it was within these smaller, more sophisticated, confrontational roofed theaters (*odea*) that the more traditional, refined theatrical performances took place. These included Latinized versions of Greek tragedy and comedy, odic declamations, and poetry and

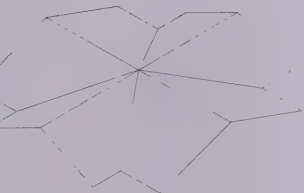
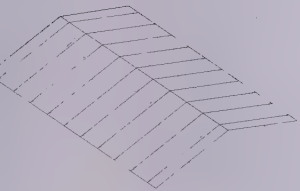
musical recitals. These performances required the intimacy of a smaller auditorium where the subtleties of stage speech and the nuances of dramatic expression could be conveyed. With the development of the *odea* the performance of the higher forms of drama and music came indoors.

I firmly believe that these *odea* were a Roman success of spectacular proportions and that they represent a high point in architectural design and building technology. The four roofed theaters that I examine here are those at Augusta Praetoria, Athens, Buthrotum, and Aphrodisias.

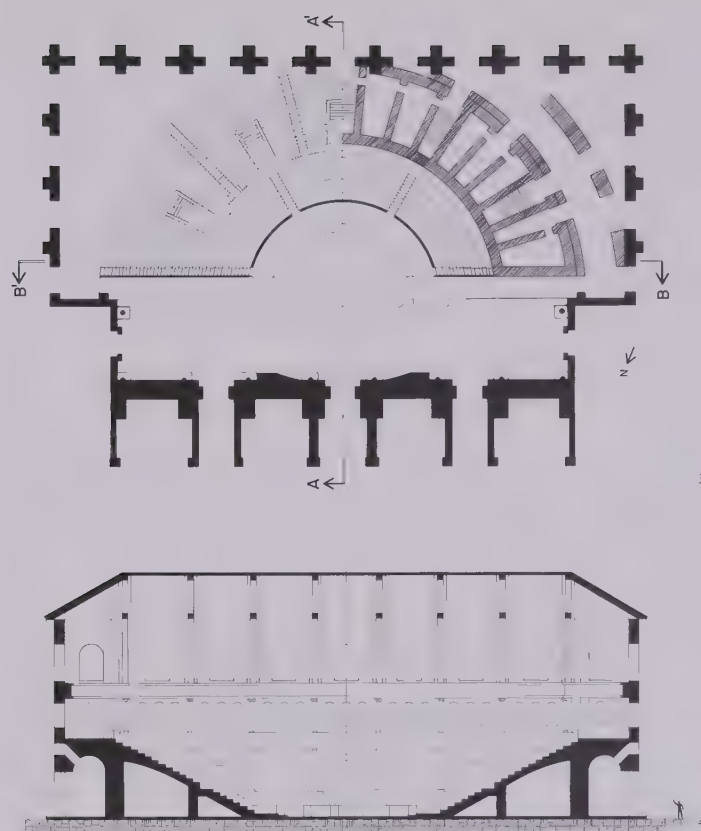
The graphic restorations are based on the archaeological data: (a) the radii and the number of seating rows, (b) the height of the seating system and its support, and (c) the dimensions of the stage. Taken together, these architectural features determine the true linear dimensions for each building. Remaining walls, wall openings, routes of ingress and egress, and methods of construction are taken into consideration in each case. To establish the volumes of the theaters, the crucial dimension was, of course, height. This is the primary matter of judgment in the restorations, and I have accepted as a basis the height of the still standing wall at Augusta Praetoria and Thompson's prior restoration of the Odeum of Agrippa at Athens. Thompson's treatment of the walls, particularly the double walls to the south at Athens, together with the three-story window openings in the one remaining wall at Augusta Praetoria were the prime determinants for reconstructing the lighting schemes at Aphrodisias and Buthrotum. In this context I must remind the reader that the window openings that let light in also let sound out. It was only in this way that the over reverberance caused by a relatively high ratio of volume to seated area (absorption) was ameliorated.

The Roman military garrison town of Augusta Praetoria is now the modern town of Aosta in the Italian province of Piedmont at the foot of the Little Saint Bernard Pass. With one virtually complete wall still standing at full height, this site is one of the best preserved examples of a building that has been positively identified as a Roman roofed theater. Located off the beaten path, this, the largest fully-roofed public theater of Roman antiquity, is not described in contemporary literature. The unbroken sweep of the seating is founded on fill and vaulting. It is accessed at the crossover level by means of *vomitoria* that are in turn connected by stairways into a vaulted passageway beneath the seating. The stage, accessed by three entrances penetrating the rear wall and one from each side, is exceptionally wide and deep. There can be no doubt that both lighting and ventilation were achieved here by regularly placed, arched window openings in each bay.

Due to the great size of the auditorium, the most outstanding feature of the theater at Augusta Praetoria must have been a superb timber-truss roofing system. Because the piers behind the auditorium and those behind the stage were perfectly aligned, there was no question whatever that a timber-truss system for support of the roof was called for. My initial attempts at graphic restoration of a timber-truss system for

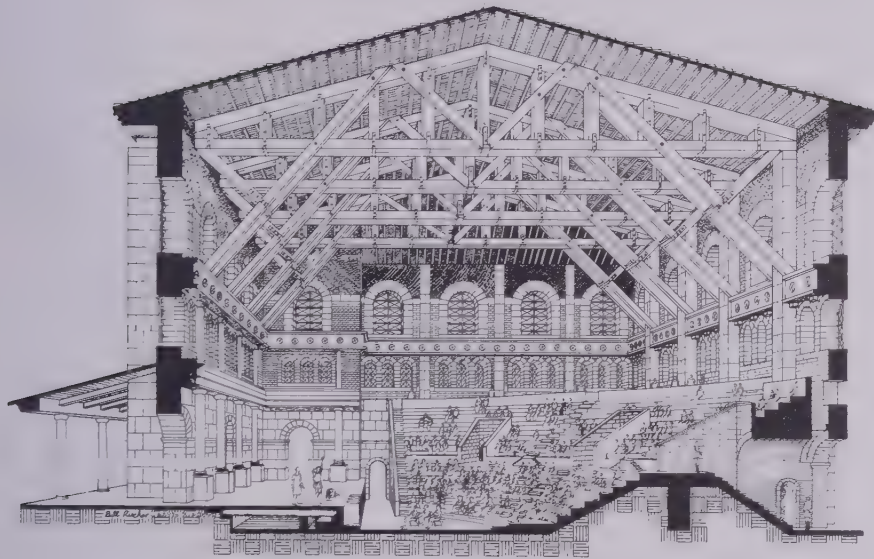


2. Diagrams of roof trusses:
Odeum at Augusta Praetoria
Odeum of Agrippa at Athens
Odeum at Buthrotum
Odeum at Aphrodisias



a gabled roof posed serious problems of span. The dimension between piers, over the auditorium and stage, was excessive for timber trusses without intermediate support. Only after I had visited the site on three separate occasions and had studied the walls with the aid of binoculars, did I conclude that the only logical solution to the problem was the double knee-braced truss system. The knee braces were fitted into a series of holes in a straight line equidistant between the second and third stories on the inside of the transverse walls, adjacent to the piers. While not unlike a line of putlog holes used as supports for scaffolding during the construction of ancient buildings, I believe in this instance they must have been placed there for the purpose of taking load in shear. Knee braces footed at the line of these holes reinforced the trusses and transferred a large portion of the roof load further down the walls. I have extrapolated from the knee brace support system a heavy timbered entablature on the longer transverse walls and extended it to the shorter longitudinal walls. This entablature provided a continuous bearing surface for the even distribution of load transferred by the knee braces to the walls, and its extension around the room contributed an additional architectural element that lent linear continuity to the stage and auditorium. All signs in the existing limestone masonry are indicative of serious fire damage to the building. The roof must have been a highly sophisticated

3. Odeum at Augusta Praetoria,
plan.
4. Odeum at Augusta Praetoria,
transverse section.
5. Odeum at Augusta Praetoria,
longitudinal section.



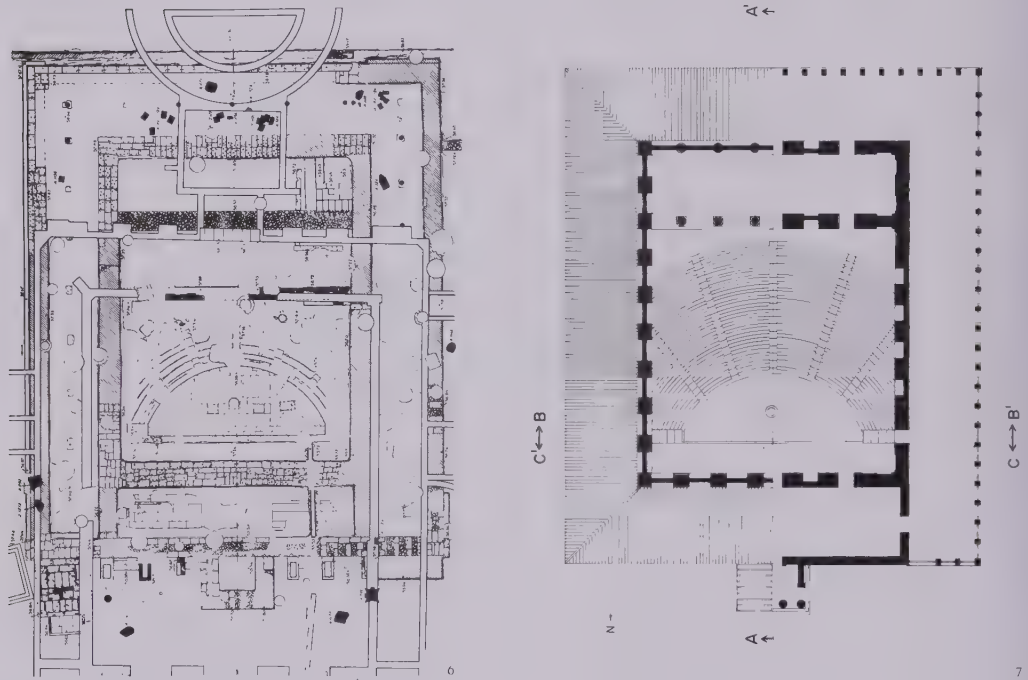
structural system consisting of eight double-knee, heavy, laminated, king-post and queen-post timber trusses with intermediate purlins, which I conjecture were terminated in a raftered hip at each end.

Geographic location quite obviously contributed to the decision to build an indoor instead of an outdoor theater in Augusta Praetoria. The chilly alpine air accompanied by frequent rain and snow undoubtedly required that most public entertainments and meetings take place indoors. Certainly the large size of the stage would have provided sufficient space for performances of every kind. The auditorium's seating and standing areas could have easily accommodated well over three thousand persons. Because the town also had a large elliptical amphitheater located on its outskirts for popular gladiatorial contests and wild animal-baiting entertainments, this *theatrum tectum* did not have to be used for events other than those for which it was specifically designed.

In Roman times the city of Athens was the principal cultural and educational center of the classical world. Athens was the recipient of much public financial largess and considerable private philanthropy as well. Much of this munificence is evident in public architecture.

The Odeum of Agrippa in the Athenian agora, the result of Roman government philanthropy, was built on the site of the ancient orchestra where the earliest dramatic performances took place before an audience seated on temporary wooden seats. This *odeum* was named for Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, son-in-law and civil administrator of the emperor Augustus.¹

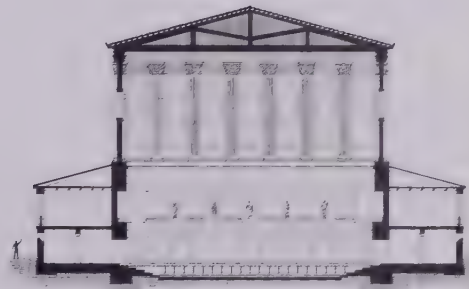
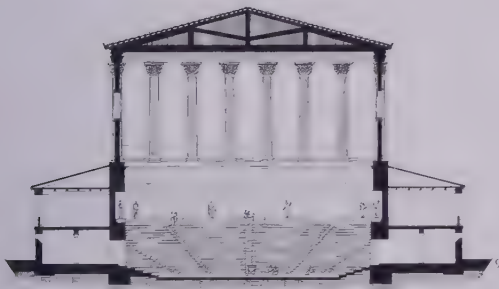
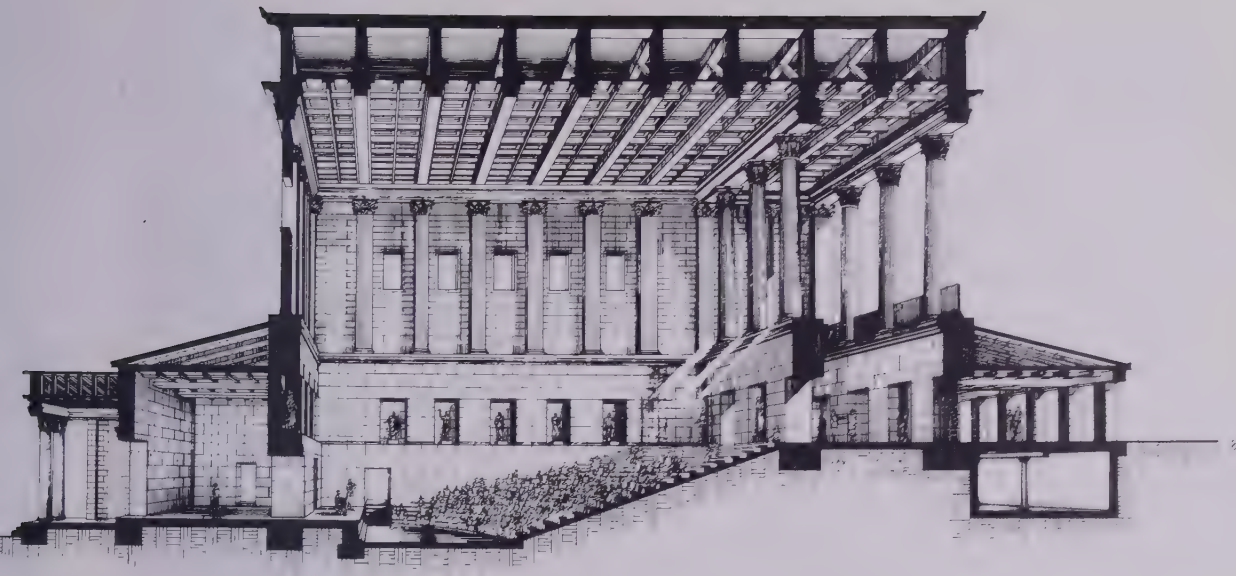
The walls and seating system were of finely dressed marbles from the same quarries as that of the buildings on the Acropolis. The seating system, supported on fill, accommodated about 1200 persons, with an additional one hundred or so seated in the orchestra. An even progression of long, radii-generated rows rose from a flat orchestra, with the whole truncated to fit a rectangular room.²



The few remaining elements testify to the elegant interior finishes and appointments of the auditorium and stage. The Corinthian pilasters above the second story divided the east and west sidewalls into nine bays, five of which were possibly penetrated by

¹ For my restoration of the Odeum at Agrippa I am indebted to Homer Thompson, Professor of Classical Archaeology at The Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N. J. Professor Thompson directed the excavation of the entire agora under the aegis of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens.

² The radial seating system was derived directly from the enveloping orchestra of the Greek outdoor theater. However, the longer radii of the seating system in this *theatrum tectum* placed the audience in a more confrontational relationship with the stage.



6. Odeum of Agrippa, in the Athenian Agora, 27 B.C. E.; plan of archaeological remains.

7. Odeum of Agrippa, plan.

8. Odeum of Agrippa, longitudinal section.

9. Odeum of Agrippa, transverse section looking toward entrance.

10. Odeum of Agrippa, transverse section looking toward stage.

clerestory openings for light and ventilation. The north wall probably had similar openings. A most striking as well as utilitarian feature of the building, as restored by Thompson, was the two parallel rows of massive Corinthian columns at its southern end. The open intercolumniation allowed for lighting and ventilation. Because the building faced south, it yielded an auditorium design that incorporated what was very likely the first system for direct front lighting of a theater stage.

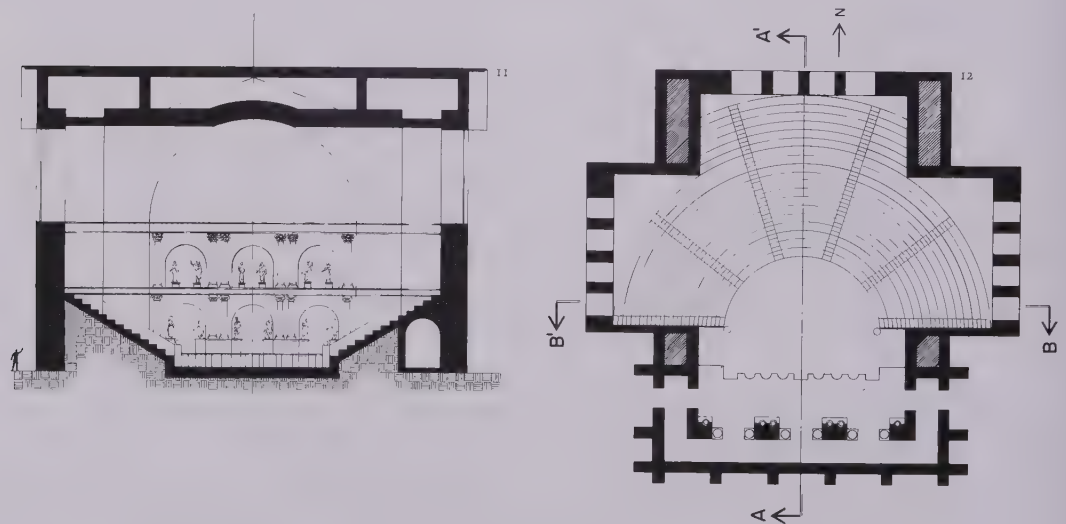
The auditorium was accessed from the rear through a monumental loggia which led onto the columned portico of the south stoa. The architect certainly would have included a deep, wooden-coffered ceiling, articulated by the bottom chords of the trusses. The structural system of the roof was made up of nine massive, laminated, king-post and queen-post trusses with intermediate purlins.

Located on a small inlet on the east shore of the Ionian Sea, almost within sight of the island of Corcyra (Corfu) was the provincial community of Buthrotum. On a steep slope leading up to the local acropolis are the archaeological remains of what appears to be a most unusually structured Roman *odeum*.

Four unusual features suggest that this theater was roofed by a cross vault: (a) the cruciform plan; (b) two pairs of heavy double walls symmetrically disposed about the longitudinal axis, properly spaced and of sufficient mass to take the outward thrust of a vault; (c) two pairs of heavy stub walls similarly disposed about the transverse axis, of the proper spacing and mass to take the outward thrust of a second vault perpendicular to the first one; and (d) spans of about 43 feet and 56 feet, within the capabilities of contemporary Roman technology.

The large, vertically-reinforced, arched openings located in the three end walls made possible the development of a unique lighting and ventilation scheme. The contemporary basilica and thermae incorporated similar structural schemes for ventilation and lighting.

Nothing remains of the roof: if it were in fact a cross vault, it very probably could have been structured of brick and concrete in the Roman manner, its inside surface finished with deep coffering executed in plaster. The walls seem to have been constructed of heavy stone masonry. Three arched openings flanked by consoles penetrated the two-story, rear stage wall. Side openings led from the stage into small anterooms between the double walls which supported the stage end of the longitudinal vault. The seating built into the hillside plus the few rows of movable seats in the orchestra accommodated about twelve hundred persons.

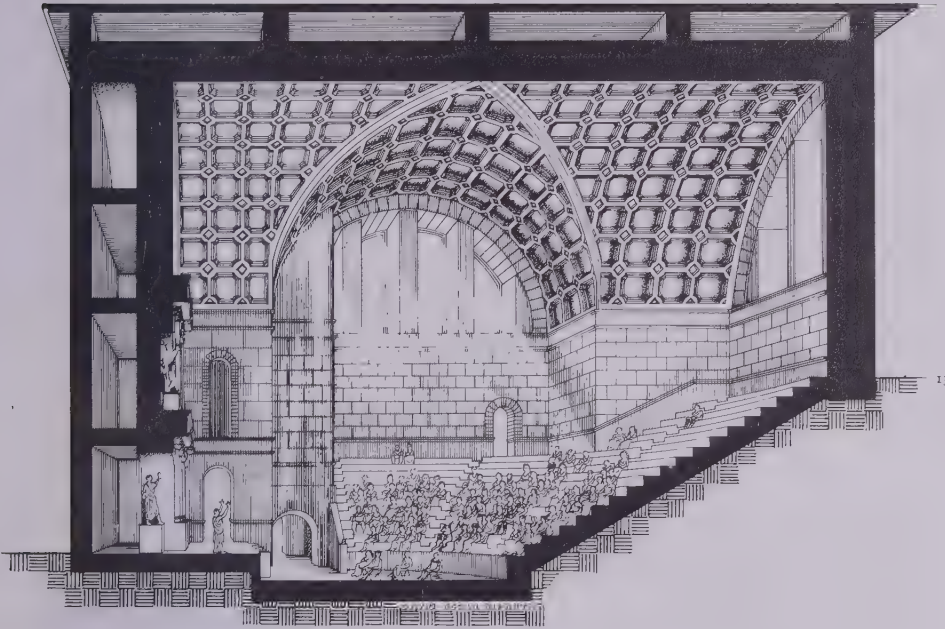


11. Odeum at Buthrotum,
Albania, transverse section
looking toward stage.

12. Odeum at Buthrotum, plan.

13. Odeum at Buthrotum,
longitudinal section.

14. Remains of the Odeum at
Buthrotum.





15

The theater at Aphrodisias in the province of Caria in modern Turkey was a miniature roofed copy of the baroque outdoor Roman theater typical of the first and second centuries C. E.³

Erected on a level site, the seating was supported on a dual half-round concentric vaulted passageway intersected by nineteen radial cross vaults. Divided into two parts separated by a crossover, the auditorium was accessed from grade. It seated about 1800 persons who faced an architecturally extravagant, three-story stage wall of consoles, entablatures, columns and pediments.

The auditorium was accessed from grade through openings in the rear wall. The audience then proceeded into a half-round vaulted passageway via four staircases and *vomitoria* that led directly up to the crossover. A shallow passageway behind the stage leads onto a portico extending across the rear of the building.

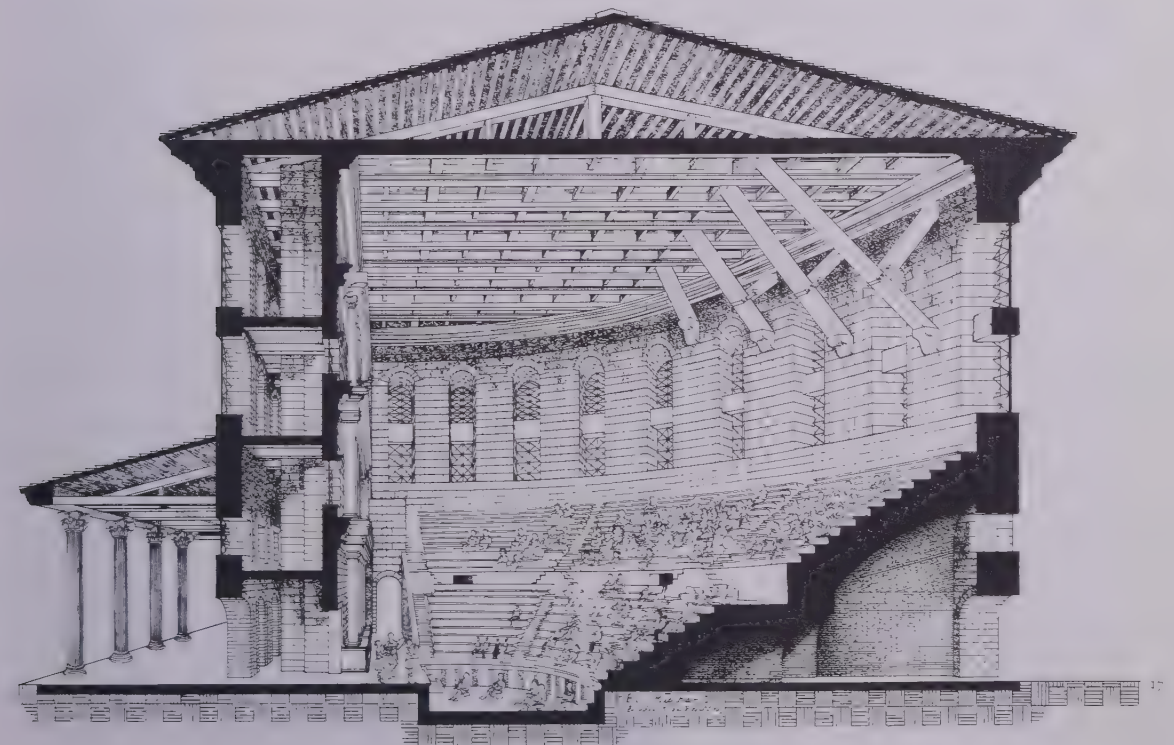
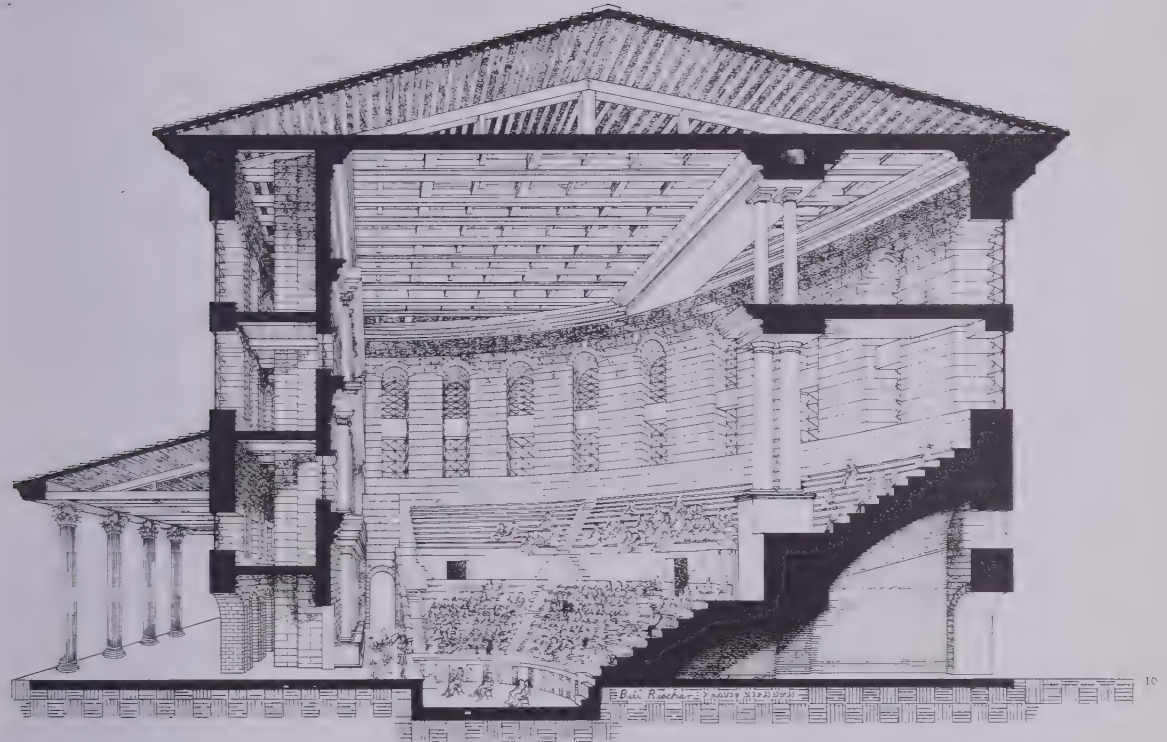
Excavation of the site revealed a building that is virtually intact, up to and including the crossover in the auditorium and the first story of the rear stage wall. The remains yield sufficient clues to enable a reasonably accurate and complete graphic restoration. Reconstruction of a satisfactory roofing system posed problems of a very different order. While the theaters at Augusta Praetoria and Athens were both greater in span than Aphrodisias, their plans were rectilinear and therefore more straightforward. The varying lengths of span of Aphrodisias presented difficult combinations of rectilinear and curvilinear geometries. Eight parallel, equally-spaced (non-radial) massive stone piers engaging the exterior of the auditorium's curved wall lined up exactly with their counterparts at the rear of the stage. These piers must have been intended to transfer the roof load to the ground. Pairs of trusses

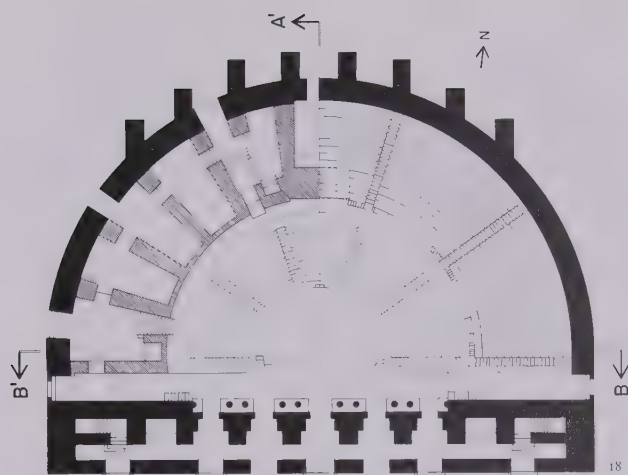
³ The theater at Aphrodisias was excavated some twenty-odd years ago by Professor Kenan Erim of the Department of Classical Archeology of New York University.

15. Remains of Aphrodisias, Caria,
Turkey, circa 40 C.E.

16. Odeum of Aphrodisias,
longitudinal section; version with
central pier supporting roof trusses.

17. Odeum of Aphrodisias,
longitudinal section; version with
knee braced trusses.

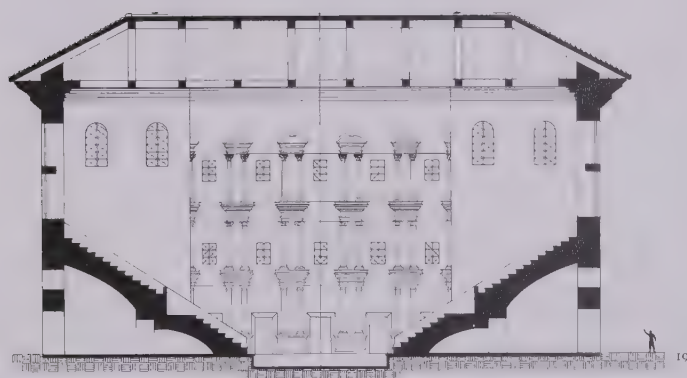




18. Odeum of Aphrodisias, plan.

19. Odeum of Aphrodisias, transverse section looking toward stage.

20. Odeum of Aphrodisias, cavea.



symmetrically disposed about the longitudinal axis were required to span varying distances. This unequal loading led me to search for a possible interior support near the center of the auditorium. The location of a particularly massive central pier, as part of the vaulting beneath the center of the crossover appeared massive enough to take this additional gravity load.

I finally became convinced, however, that the architect for a building of this elegance and sophistication would not have blocked the view from the best seats in the house with an awkwardly placed column. Since I had solved the Augusta Praetoria roofing problem with knee-braced trusses, it occurred to me to try knee braces here. This more satisfactory solution yields a structural scheme where the varying loads of the unequally proportioned trusses (in each case directly dependent on truss length) are transferred through heavy-timbered knee braces to stone corbels set at varying heights on the rear wall, integral with the exterior piers. The exterior piers divide the auditorium wall into a system of graduated bays in which I have placed double-height arched windows for lighting and ventilation.

The architect certainly would not have intended the roof beams and trusses to be exposed. I therefore include a deep wooden coffered ceiling integral to the bottom chords of the roof trusses.

While it exhibits solutions to the problems of sightlines, roof span, and acoustics analogous to the earlier Hellenistic Bouleterion and Eccleasterion, the Roman odeum is of a different order of complexity. The Roman version of the classical *theatrum tectum*, unlike its Hellenistic prototype, incorporated a raised stage.

The nineteen buildings I have studied in detail, when compared to the overly large and acoustically unwieldy outdoor theaters, both Greco-Hellenistic and Roman, were certainly better suited to a variety of theatrical, musical, and forensic presentations. The sheer size of the audience in the outdoor theaters precluded much in the way of subtle variations in either dynamic range or style of delivery. It is reasonable to suggest that orators, declaimers, and actors alike were quick to react to the changed acoustical environment of an enclosed theater by becoming increasingly sensitive to the possibilities of extended range and more subtle modulations of stage speech. The nuances of intonation and variations of volume determined by the range in vocal power were bound to evoke a very different artistic attitude in the performer, as well as a more varied response from the audience.

The ever-increasing archaeological evidence, illustrated here by graphic restorations, demands a comprehensive reinterpretation of the entire history, both ancient and modern, of theater design. In my view, theater and architectural historians need to reconcile their disciplines with a more technologically informed view of classical theater architecture. It is long overdue that the professionally trained theater designer/engineer/acoustician bring his unique expertise and vision to the writing of theater history. As it is not possible to accurately detail the development of modern architecture by neglecting modern building technology, it is likewise not possible to accurately detail the development of theater design while ignoring the technical requirements of the theater.



The Supreme Court Building, Israel

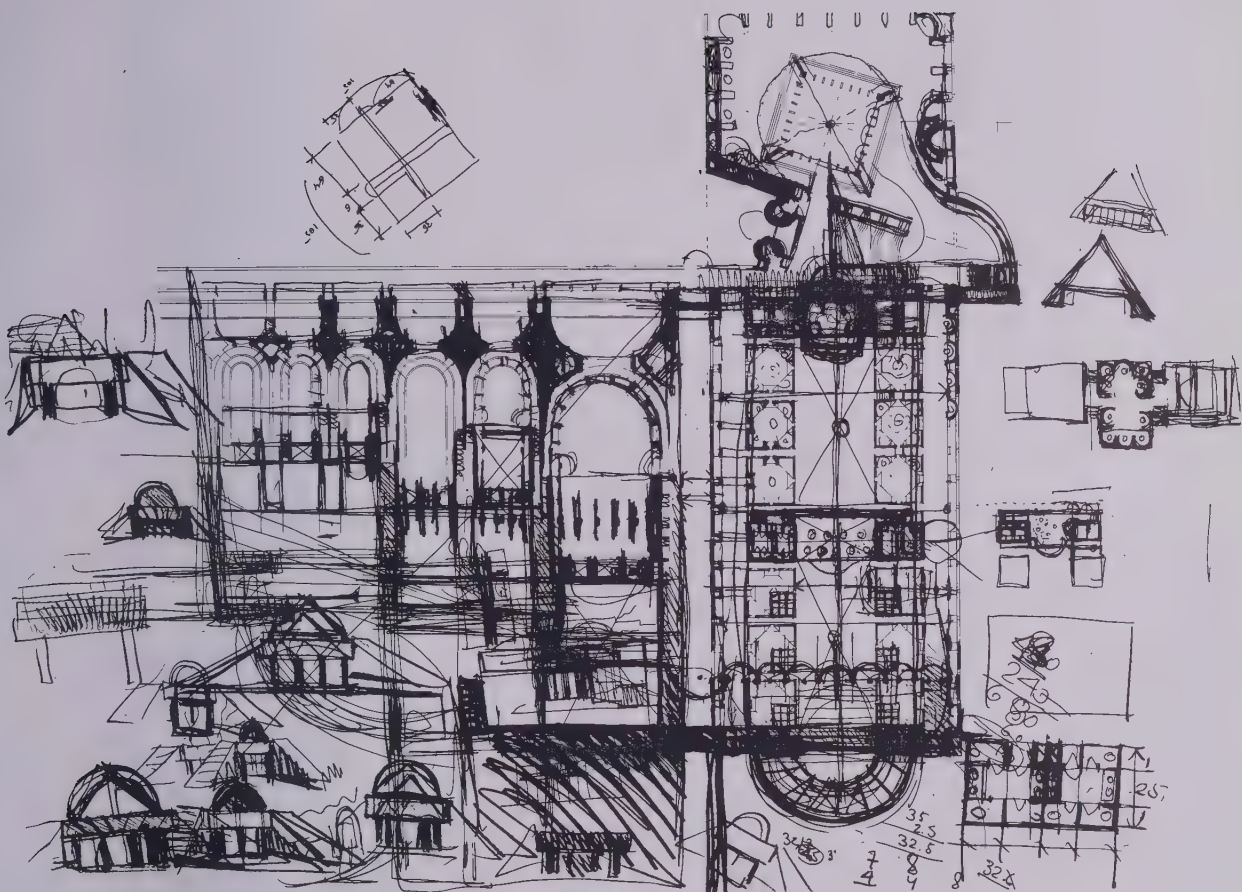
Ada Karmi-Melamede

Three broad themes inform the future Supreme Court building of Israel. The first is location and site: its location in Jerusalem commands the urban fabric of the city, and its site mediates between the Judean desert to the east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Secondly, the building reflects its unique historical and cultural significance in modern Israel, and represents the basic values of law, justice, truth, mercy and compassion. Finally, its character also evolves from Biblical images which portray the theatricality inherent in the tradition of Hebrew law.

Jerusalem is a city of the desert surrounded by mountains, a city of stone possessed by light and obsessed with its past. Elsewhere, building in a historical setting is primarily a matter of adaptation; in Jerusalem, it has been primarily self-assertion. Each new wave of conquerors, carried away by victory and intoxicated by myth,

has destroyed the city and built over its ruins. It is a city layered by conquests, built in a plurality of styles where none prevails, unified only by the language of stone. Like the earth beneath it, Jerusalem is stratified by distinct historical layers accumulated through time. A city of gates and walls, Jerusalem is a dense labyrinth of seemingly disconnected places. It is devoid of vistas, relying on its alleys for communication, on the sky for orientation, and on the ground for the recovery of its buried past. Its monuments reach to the sky and rarely reveal how they touch the ground. Thus, their true size is not comprehended and their scale remains forever merely imagined. In Jerusalem monumentality is not associated with power, but with mystery.

Ada Karmi-Melamede and Ram Karmi won an international competition with their design for the new Israel Supreme Court building. The building is presently under construction, and the illustrations for this article represent various stages in the ongoing design process.

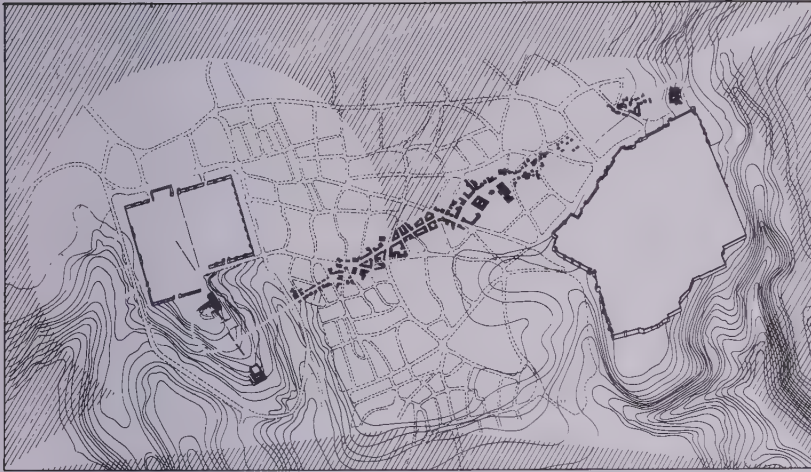


1. Early plan sketch.



The Old City of Jerusalem sits on a hill surrounded by mountains, forming the stage of a natural amphitheater, visually commanding the entire basin. From the mountains, its texture blends into the landscape like a fragment of a larger tapestry. As one descends toward the Old City, it changes into an autonomous object. It is an urban island contained by a wall that seems to grow from the earth as an organic extension of the hilly terrain. At its gates, the Old City seems to be a monolithic object. But within its walls, it is all texture, transformed by light, constantly changing in mass, color, and mood. It is a volumetric collage of three, interconnected patterns of movement: waterways below grade, winding pedestrian routes at grade, and panoramic roof-top trails above, all forming an interchangeable system.





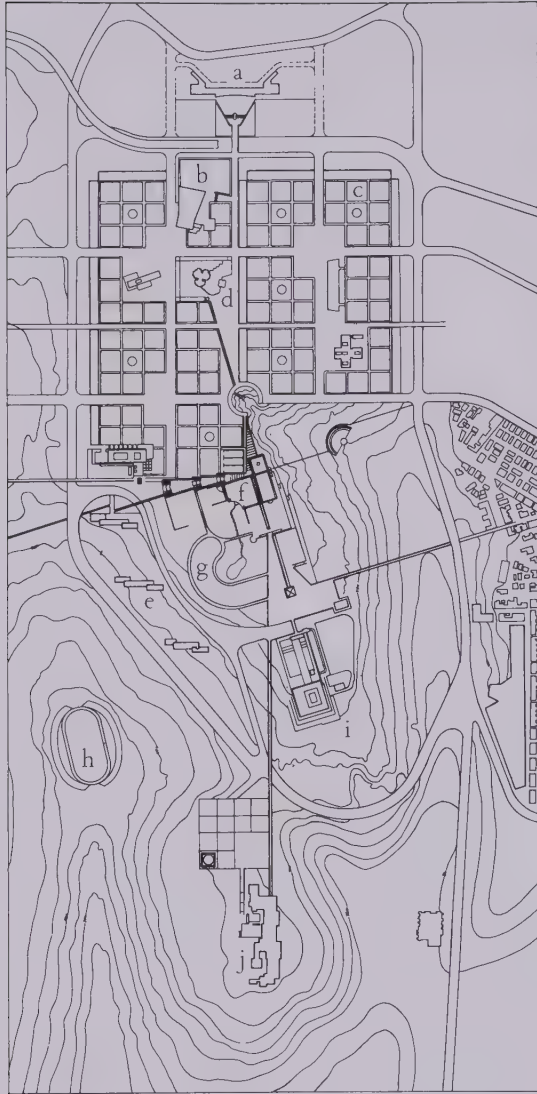
2. Jerusalem, view toward the Dome of the Rock.

3. Jerusalem alley.

4. Site plan showing relationship of the Old City and Government Hill.

5. Site, aerial view.





6. Site plan showing relationship of three axes.

- a. Bus station.
- b. Binyanei Ha'uma
- c. Proposed expansion of Government Hill.
- d. Hilton Hotel.
- e. Executive buildings.
- f. Supreme Court.
- g. Rose Garden
- h. University campus.
- i. Knesset.
- j. Israel Museum.

7. Site plan.

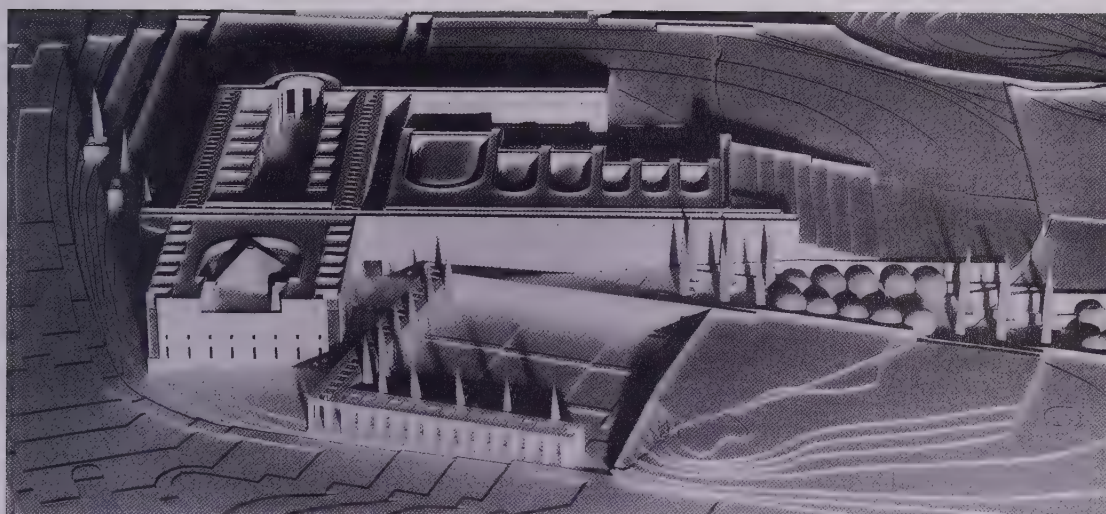
8. View of model from the north.



The Supreme Court building will occupy the geographical center of Government Hill, which forms the stage of a second natural amphitheater in western Jerusalem. It is surrounded by government ministries and the Knesset (Parliament House), each of these buildings being isolated from one another by security zones and parking areas. Spreading like the fingers of a hand around Jerusalem's Rose Garden, the buildings are linked only by an asphalt loop road, the only tangible symbol of their functional unity.

The building will be situated at the intersection of three axes:

1. The north-south axis runs along the ridge connecting the Central Bus Station (the city gate), the Binyanei Ha'uma Convention Center and Concert Hall, the Hilton Hotel, the Knesset, and the Israel Museum. This axis, the most formal of the three, serves as the major public approach to the government complex.
2. The "green" east-west axis connects Sacker Park, the Wohl Rose Garden and Givat-Ram (the Hebrew University campus). This informal axis attracts public activity after working hours.
3. An emerging axis, already evident in the urban fabric, extends between the Old City and Government Hill. It eventually will connect the



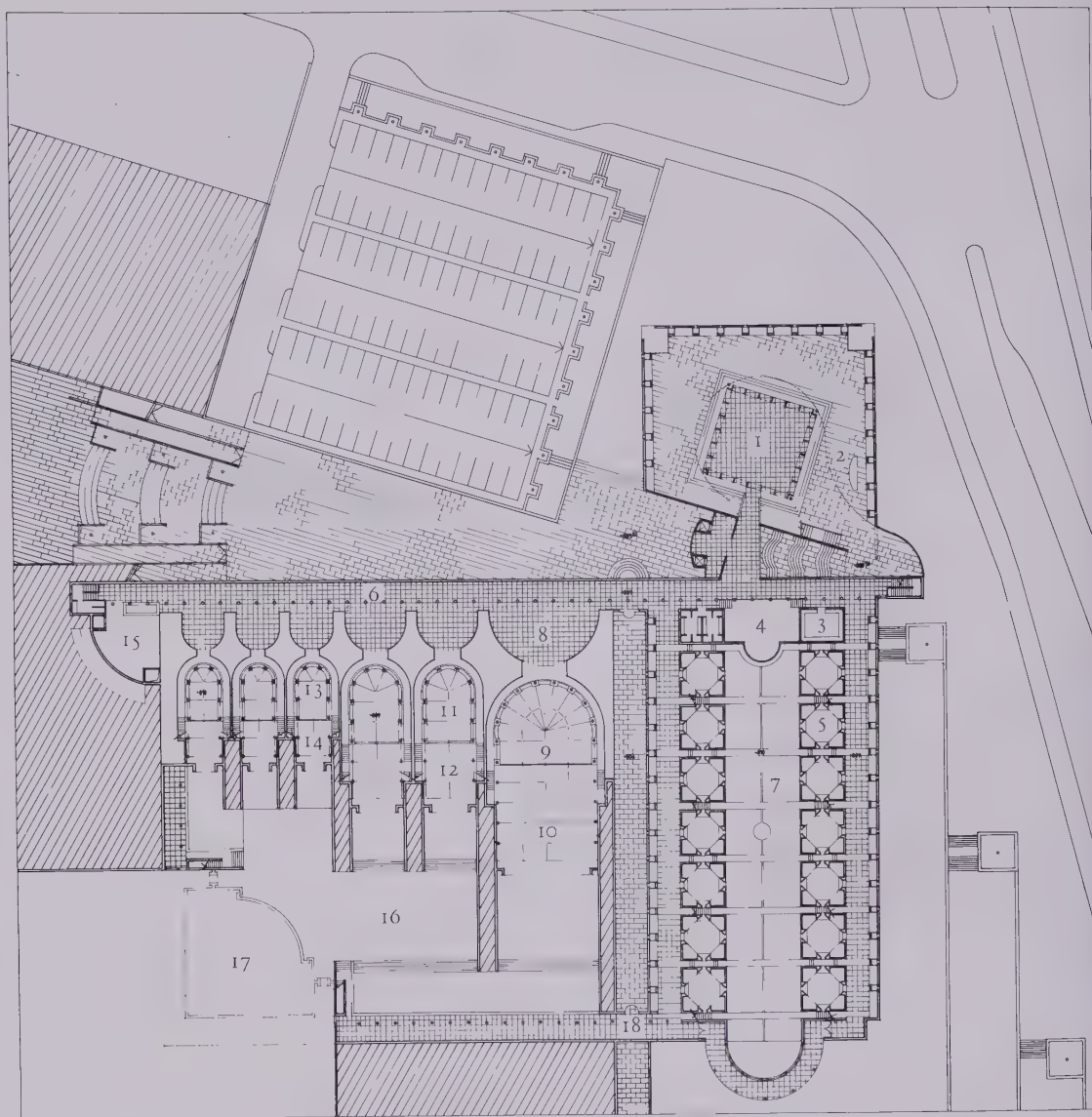
Rockefeller Museum to the Rose Garden, stringing together many important public places: the Damascus Gate, the Russian Compound, Zion Square, Ben Yehuda Mall, and the future Supreme Court building. This axis extends farther east to Mount Scopus and farther west to the National Library and Mount Herzl. Once this axis is formally articulated, it will strengthen not only the ties between the old and new parts of the city, but also those between its spiritual and secular institutions.

The Court building is intended to become the keystone between the city and the complex, and to reinforce the relationship between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches by defining the critical edge of the Rose Garden, the single public space common to all three. Given its dominant location, the Supreme Court building cannot be viewed simply as a free-standing object, but must be seen as relating to both its immediate environment and to its larger urban context.

The approach to the building reveals the juxtaposition of two grids. The inclined angle of the parking area responds to the city grid, while the orientation of the building responds to the Knesset axis. People arriving by public or private transportation move along a covered pedestrian path which "equalizes" everyone before the law. This route rises toward the gate, a free-standing

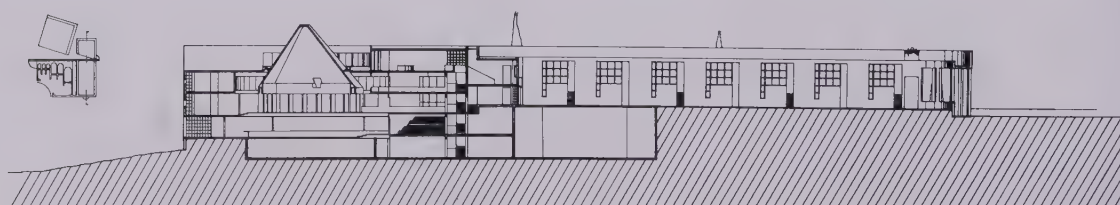
element set in a protected forecourt. The forecourt forms an extended threshold, allowing a gradual transition between outside and inside.

Those who wish only to conduct routine business with the Court or to obtain information remain at this level (806), where the Court's administrative and bureaucratic functions are located. All others move on to higher levels. From level 806 one ascends a familiar "Jerusalem stone alley" towards a window through which a panoramic view of the city is revealed. This window acts as a turning point from which one takes leave of the city and the world outside, reaching the true entrance hall to the building. This hall is reminiscent of Absalom's Tomb, a free-standing, ancient monument that has withstood the test of time and that is meant to symbolize the constancy of the rule of law. Its pure pyramidal form, which is also intended to evoke a tent, tapers towards its apex, allowing a column of light to penetrate its volume. The height of this space links three levels: the public level (809), the library level (812), and the Chief Justice's level (815). Though elevated above ground, this level is the true gate-house to the Supreme Court building. It forms a static and serene space, a stage where the only actor is light.

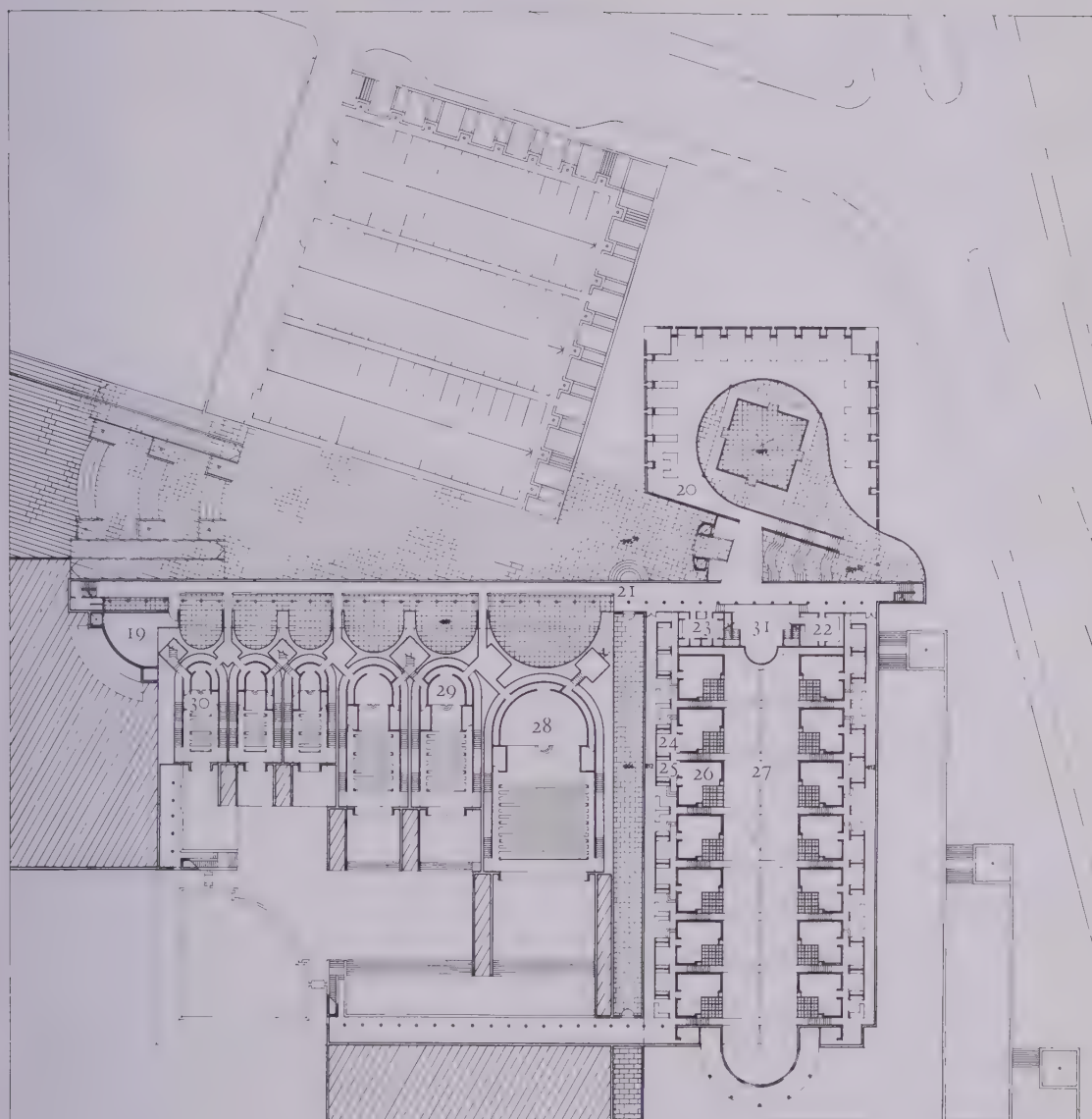


First Floor Plan (level 809)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Public waiting room | 7. Judges' courtyard | 13. Waiting area for small courtrooms |
| 2. Information | 8. Entrance to courtrooms | 14. Patio of small courtrooms |
| 3. Kitchenette | 9. Waiting area for grand courtroom | 15. Attorneys' room |
| 4. Buffet | 10. Patio of grand courtroom | 16. Walled garden |
| 5. Exhibit area | 11. Waiting area for intermediary courtrooms | 17. Pool |
| 6. Public passage | 12. Patio of intermediary courtrooms | 18. Passage from exhibit area to garden |

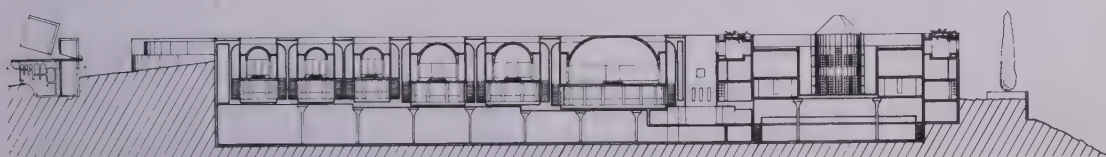


Section through entrance hall, Chief Justice section, and Judges' courtyard.

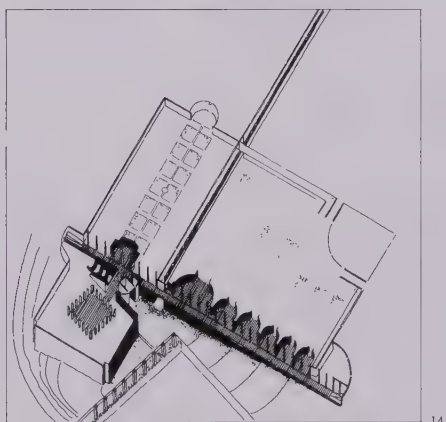
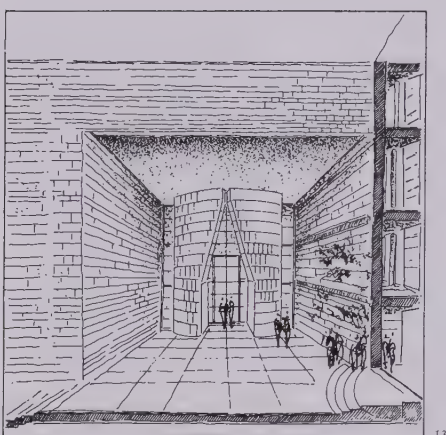
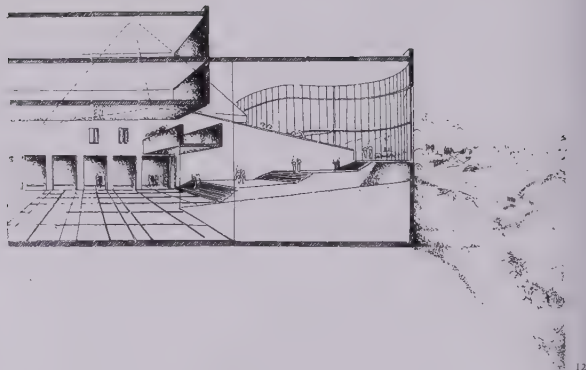
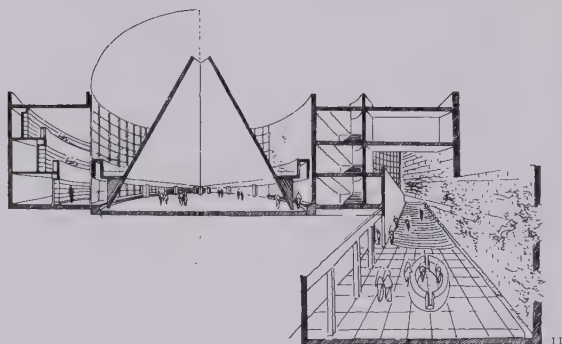


Second Floor Plan (level 812)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 19. Attorneys' room | 25. Judges' secretary's room | 31. Judges' consultation room |
| 20. Catalogue and librarians' work areas | 26. Judges' chambers | |
| 21. Judges' passage | 27. Open to below | |
| 22. Kitchenette | 28. Grand courtroom | |
| 23. Judges' club | 29. Medium courtroom | |
| 24. Articled clerks' room | 30. Small courtroom | |



Section through courtrooms and Judges' courtyard.

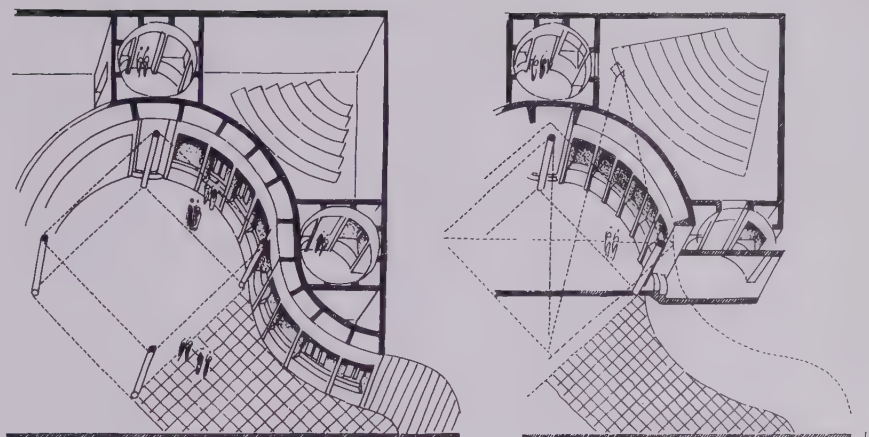


Defined by a curved facade, the library embraces the gate-house. As the memory of judicial tradition, this library holds centuries of legal records which encompass the principles of social justice and preserve moral values. The prominent position of the library, as well as its specific relationship to the gate-house express the centrality of these principles and the unique role of the Book in the Jewish tradition.

Level 809 serves the non-programmatic functions of the building and is designed for the public, to enrich their experience with ceremony and dignity. This level offers a variety of different moods—places of waiting, strolling, learning, of repose and expectation.

The judges' section is linked to the library by a bridge that crosses over the "Jerusalem stone alley" through which one enters the building. The judges' courtyard is formed by two parallel rows of chambers surrounded by a stone wall. A single axial opening, looking south towards the Knesset, offers a visual connection with the outside landscape. Each judge's chamber is elevated from the courtyard level and has a distinct spatial character. Each chamber opens onto the courtyard through a private patio and small windows. The sequence of vertical layers invites privacy and introspection and diffuses the sunlight through the greenery of individual patios.

11. Entry sequence and library.
12. Public ramp up to curved window.
13. Entry gate.
14. Diagram showing public circulation on level 809.
15. Studies of library's curved facade.



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Made exclusively of stone, the courtyard is bisected by a narrow channel of water along its central axis. It is a courtyard of motionless silence. The stone quarried from the earth and the water reflecting the sky symbolize truth and justice.

"Justice reflects from the sky and Truth grows out of the earth." (Psalms 85: 12).

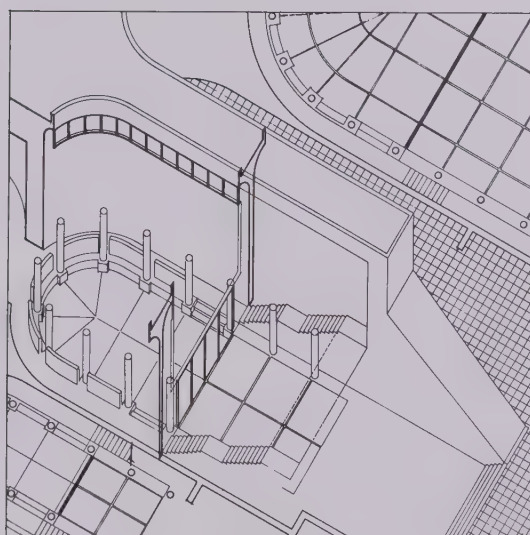
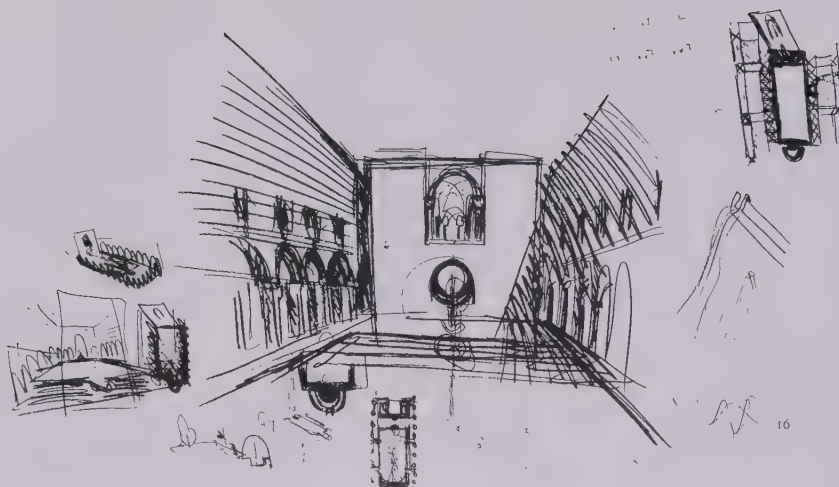
The spirit of the Judean desert and of Jerusalem is hewn in stone which is harsh and uncompromising in its stark beauty.

The courtrooms are separated from the judges' section in order to create a large distance between the place of public hearing and judgment and the place of contemplation and deliberation. These courtrooms are raised above ground (812), and intimate waiting areas underneath them (809) lead off to the walled garden. The judges enter the courtrooms from level 812, the public ascends to them from level 809, and the prisoners descend from level 815. The courtrooms are carved out of the hill, reflecting the involvement of the people with their land and the perception that tradition and landscape are inseparable. These rooms appear to be set in niches formed by the natural terrain and are faced with smooth marble, in contrast to the rough stone of the retaining walls. The spaces contained between these walls and the use of different materials both help to accen-

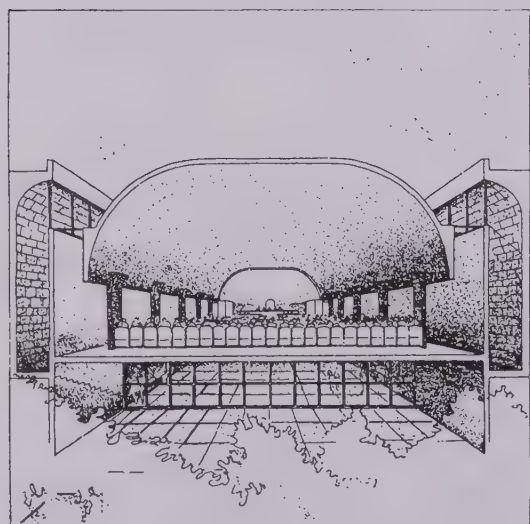
tuate the independence of the courtrooms nestling in the hill. In contrast to the brilliant light of the judges' courtyard, the reflected light in the courtroom area is soft and tranquil. Indirect light washes down between the retaining wall and the courtrooms to the waiting areas below, creating a serene area of green and shade.

For the courtrooms we developed "basilica" type spaces, identical in plan and in section. For each courtroom the plan offers a clear axis; a distinct separation of movement and sitting space; use of the apse as a stage that commands the entire volume; and a spatial sequence in which beginning, middle and end are articulated. The design in section clearly separates the outer room from the inner shell. Natural light of varying intensity filters down between these two layers. The cavity evokes the idea of a room within a room and recalls the Old City walls which permit movement within. By concentrating light, load, and movement along the outer aisles, the room becomes completely free of its container. Light washes over the white surfaces and reflects into the courtrooms.

Historically, courts of Hebrew law sat at the city gates. The Old Testament instructs: "Judges and officers shalt thou appoint in all your gates... and they shall judge the people with a just judgment" (Deut. 16: 18). Judges were charged to protect



society by exercising their discretion at the gates of the city: justice must be seen to be done. At this primary level, the exercise of the law seemed closest to public drama. One imagines a theater of public gathering and debate where the individual is offered the forum to express his ideas and has access to the public ear; a place where the public was called to bear witness to the judicial process "to observe in awe." These historical antecedents suggest a stage-like setting which is fundamentally different in spirit and image from the monumental structures generally associated with court buildings in the western world. They suggest reasoned discourse, familiarity rather than alienation; and call for a dignified setting that minimizes the apprehension felt in the face of official power.



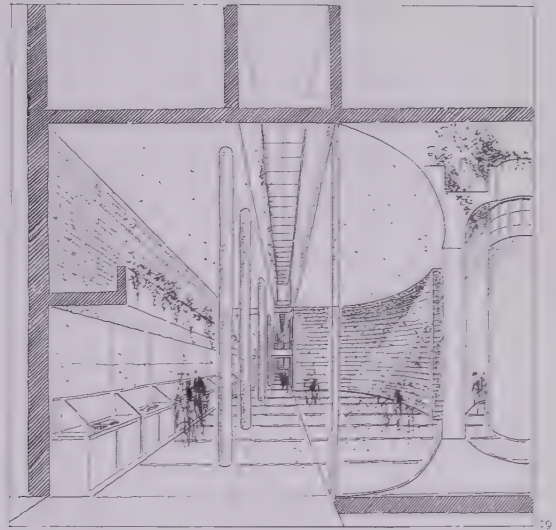
In the Biblical scriptures, justice is figuratively described as a circle. It is common to find the term "justice" in the company of "mercy" and "compassion" — not lesser values, but ones often incompatible with the former. In the Hebrew tradition, justice is an absolute value to be forever pursued and never attained. By contrast, "law" or "truth" are described as a line, and viewed as man-made concepts, relative values, subject to man's changing perceptions of the world. This tension between the line and the circle is accompanied by the tension, already referred to

16. Studies of judges' courtyard.

17. Axonometric of waiting area below courtroom.

18. Study of courtroom.

19. Study of circulation spine with public gallery.



above, between the earth (truth) and the sky (justice). Thus, truth is relative and law is forever changing:

We live in a world of change. If a body of law were in existence, adequate for the civilization of today, it could not meet the demands of the civilization of tomorrow. Society is inconstant. So long as it is inconstant, and to the extent of such inconstancy, there can be no constancy in the law. . . . Law defines a relation not always between fixed points, but often, most often, between points of varying position. The acts and situations to be regulated have a motion of their own. There is change whether we will it or not.

Judge Cardozo, *The Paradoxes of Legal Science* (1928)

The unresolved conflict between the relative and the absolute, the temporal and the eternal, the line and the circle are conceptual design themes of this building.

The Supreme Court building can be seen simultaneously as a microcosm and as an integral part of the Old City. Stone perimeter walls will envelope the building just as the great stone wall now encloses the Old City. These walls are punctuated by the ceremonial spaces that protrude from this envelope, announcing their presence to the outside. Thus, like the Old City, the building is perceived externally as a static

object, while internally it is experienced as dynamic and fragmented. No attempt is made to resolve this contrast since, as noted above, the building is fundamentally about conflict, the same tension between stability and change that is found in the Old City.

The building has four distinct parts brought together by the collision of the two urban grids which converge at the entry level. This impact extends into the building in terms of movement, direction, and spatial sequence. The forces that emanate from the city at first "dislocate" the parking area, and then penetrate the building. Drawn from Biblical metaphors of circles and lines, the spatial sequence is inflected, rotated, and aligned. It becomes an elongated spine which gives order and rhythm to the circulation pattern. The linear spine of the building theoretically permits future expansion and acknowledges the open-ended nature of the system.

The spine, which itself reflects the duality of the building, is delineated by a heavy stone wall reminiscent of the wall of the Old City. Viewed as a fragment of the city wall, the spine relates to the scale of the city, whereas the spaces within its cavernous volume relate to the scale of the building. Access to individual sections of the building are carved out of the stone, and gates announce the presence of the courtrooms.

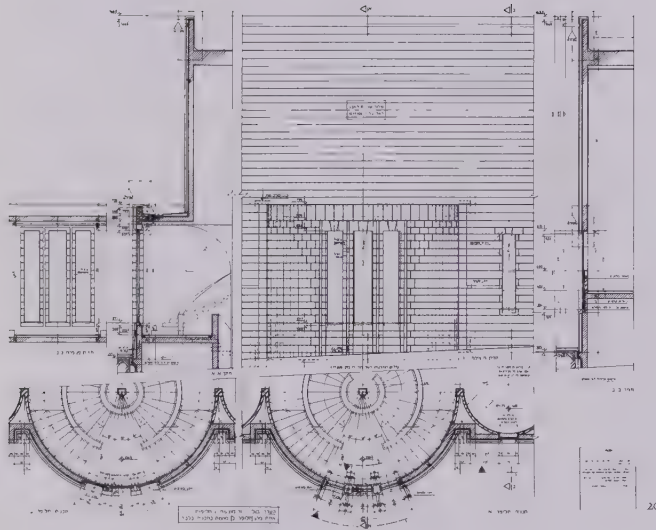
From within the spine, the building can be read as having two distinct parts: the gatehouse surrounded by the library in front; and the courtrooms and the judges' section in back. From outside, the building can be read as having four parts that are clearly defined and celebrated at the joints. Thus the spine is articulated and scaled as a space where the order of the building and the order of the city coexist.

Every performance space determines a specific relationship between observer and actor. The making of these spaces is largely dependent on the desired barrier between reality and illusion. This relationship is manipulated through the in-between zone: between stage and hall, via the introduction of stairs, levels, proscenium, curtain or light, all of which detach the background from what lies in front.

The drama of the theater lies in its ambiguity between illusion and reality and in the many layers of meaning which provoke public debate and which demand of the audience interpretation and evaluation. The theater is an instrument of expression.

The drama of the courtroom however, lies in the clarity it brings to reality, through the power of the law and the decisions made there. The courthouse forever aspires to resolve ambiguities and remove doubt. The courtroom is an instrument of action.

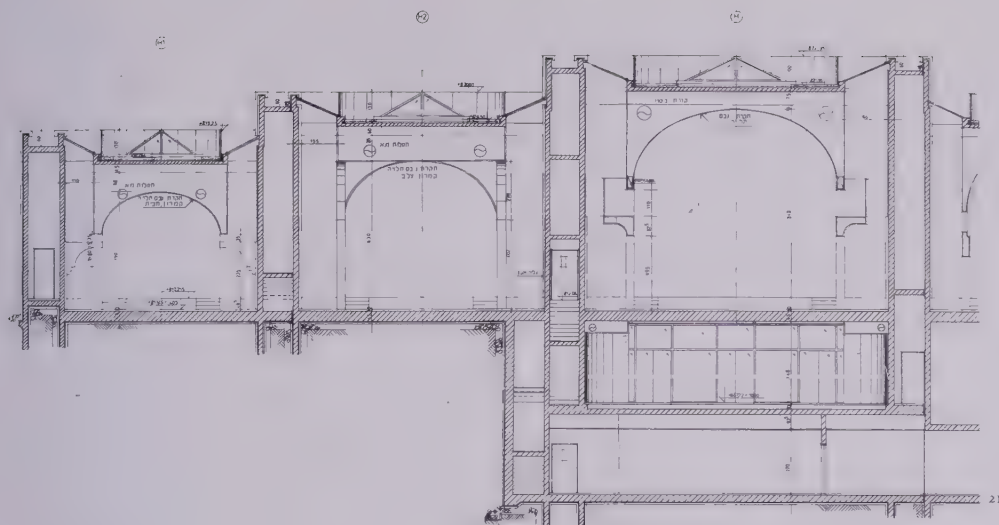
The courtroom attempts to define clearly the roles of actor and audience. The actors and the audience are involved a priori. Their lives are directly affected by the drama that unfolds. Thus it could be said that courts of law represent the ultimate theater. Avant-garde theater in this century has been characterized by an attempt to obscure and dissolve the magical frame separating audience and actors in order to move the spectators to participate and respond. This kind of theatrical event has a great deal in common with the ancient open-air theater/courtroom located at the city gate. It is somewhat ironic that the theater at its most avant-garde resembles the courtroom at its earliest stages.



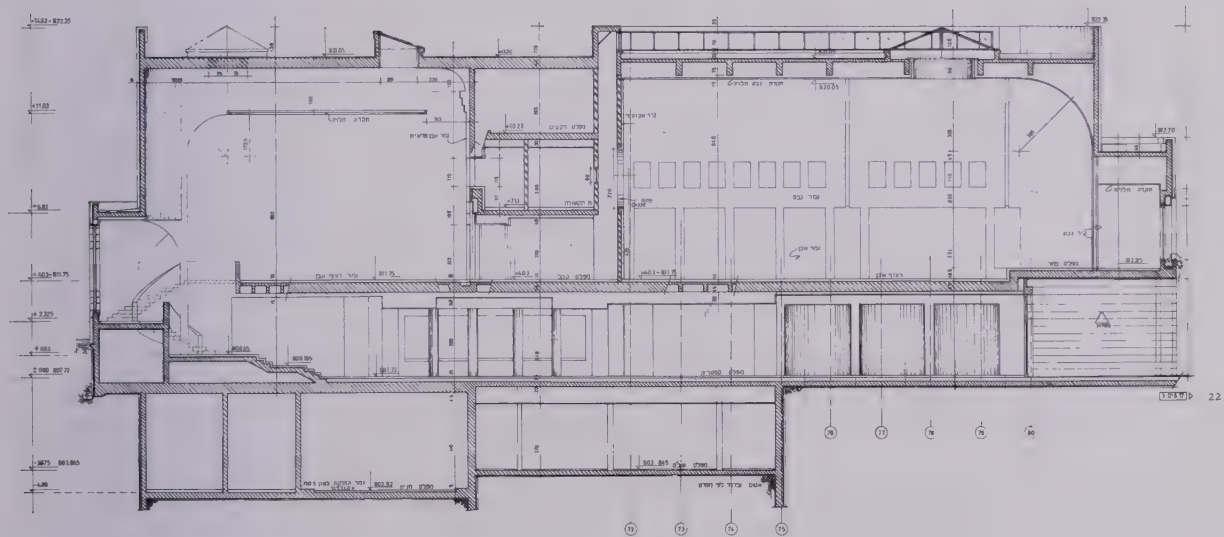
20. Section, plan, and elevation of cafeteria stair.

21. Transverse section through three courtrooms.

22. Longitudinal section through courtroom and waiting area.



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Behavior, Performance, and Performance Space

an interview with Richard Schechner

How do you define theater?

Let's start by saying that I think all definitions are bullshit because they deny the perceptual nature of a thing, especially theater. As soon as you define something, you are framing it. You are putting a finiteness on it, boxing it in, packaging it. I think theater is a set of perceptual transformations and elaborations on behavior; it is where we become aware of our behavior. Theater is also interactive.

I separate theater from other performance behaviors, and I definitely separate it from film. Film to me is in the domain of literature. Literature is a fixed text in relation to a floating text; the floating text is the audience. The fixed text is on the page. Film is also a fixed text. It happens to be on a spool of celluloid, but nothing is going to happen to it.

Theater consists of at least two floating texts. The actors are alive. They can be well rehearsed, but you can't guarantee their behaviors. A film can go up in flames, but the behaviors encoded there are not going to change. They can be destroyed, but they can't change. On the other hand, no matter how fixed a theatrical performance is, it changes with every enunciation of it. It's two shifting, floating, and therefore interactive and transformational events.

I think that the psychological relationship of an audience to a film is very different from its relationship to a theater piece. We can see almost anything on film; we can't

in theater. We can turn on the tube, basically a film image, and we can see killings. Even a slight degree of actual violence in the theater is very disturbing and would be interfered with. The temperature doesn't have to be quite so high in the theater to get the involvement. The living flesh, the body, is there.

It is also important to separate theater from the other performance worlds: rituals, sports, games, play, performance in everyday life. Dance is traditionally about movement. Theater, of course, uses movement, but it is not *about* movement. Ritual is about belief structures which incorporate narrative. In the Christian church, narrative is used to further a kind of ideological belief structure. Theater can also do this. They overlap, but theater basically is twice-behaved behavior, performed for pleasure, involving narrative.

Mimesis is a subcategory of twice-behaved behavior where the figure on stage is standing for something else. The mimetic theory of theater, which is based on Aristotle, says that theater is an imitation of an action of a certain magnitude with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It really allows us to participate in behavior which is not as finished as in a film or book, but which is not as raw as ordinary life. We can have a little more grasp on it, a little more experimental distance from it, a little bit more looseness and play than we can in ordinary life. Theater is a kind of in-between genre, and therefore dangerous. Theater can at any moment slip into life and, of course, it can be in danger of being fossilized.

I think we privilege depth over surface, but I don't think it's a privilege we should always grant. Surface is sometimes extremely important, especially in a sensuous art like theater. To a certain degree the theater is a play of surfaces. Surfaces can be very powerful, yet not mimetic.

The theater is appropriational. Theater can take something and play with it, either mimetically or through repetition. The very act of recuperation, of remembering, of putting back together what was dismembered, of twice-behaving distinguishes theater.

One of the reasons performance is such a powerful paradigm in the social sciences is that it is a model of an experimental mode. The controlled life action can be observed from the outside and thus repeated and tested. The difference between scientific inquiry and artistic play is not so much what's going on, but how you treat what's going on.

Do you require the presence of an audience?

To a certain degree an audience is required, but I wouldn't be strict about that. I have seen performances without audiences. I was the accidental audience. I remember one night in Arizona—I was studying the Yaqui Easter ceremonies. I was the only one there. You can say God was their audience. You could say they were their own audience. The notion of receivership is very important, whether or

not there is an active receiver. Sometimes spectatorship is necessary. For example, the home team advantage comes from the active participation of the spectators.

What is theater's role in society?

What is the role of a bagel at breakfast? I think that theater has a number of roles. Sports in a sense is much more ritualized. That's why we have records in sports—because in the performance of sports you have a kind of historical depth of nostalgia and an almost unchanging ritual of performance. The theater is a place to expose and play with behaviors, characters, and stories that not only fascinate us, but upset, disturb, shock, and change us. Almost all radical groups, whether they happen to be lesbian groups, black groups, anti-war groups, or whatever, practice theater either directly or indirectly as a way of exploring and presenting their value systems, and as a way of educating, or gaining solidarity with their own members, and of educating other people.

Sometimes theater is a way of criticizing the establishment. During World War II, in Germany, they were able to stage certain Shakespearean plays whose themes were very well known, but which couldn't be directly attacked, even by the Nazis. We have seen this in other totalitarian societies where theater is a way of sending a coded message. But it can be used in the opposite way of forming mainstream values as well. In both cases, theater is a form of presentation.

In modern western society theater provides a safe arena where the spectator can play with alternate behaviors. It is a place where—through behavior, which is much more powerful than simply reflective thought—one can follow a chain of action with its consequences to its end in a way not possible in real life.

Let's take a courtroom drama—it's not so safe there. Courtroom performance is close to theater in its techniques of uncovering secrets; in its narrative; even in its oppositional way of having lawyers play the roles of the defendant and prosecutor. The real protagonists are sitting apart, as spectators. There is a second line of spectators, the jury, and a third, the judge, as well as the other spectators, the public. You could make a nice theatrical analysis of western courtroom proceedings in this way. Compared to the theater, however, the irony is less obvious and the stakes are too immediate and too high to allow certain ideas to drive to the end. Very often, the overt courtroom drama is to get to the bottom of things, but the real drama is to cover up things, not out of venality, but to get someone off the hook.

Does theater have the ability to reverberate back into real life?

Well, it does reverberate. In the 1960s and 70s, of course, I worked for that. At one point I wanted theater to be very close to a direct political action. I am closer to another point now. I feel theater snuggles up to rituals. It can both reaffirm and criticize actions and beliefs. I also see theater as sheer entertainment, as sheer yielding of pleasure, erotic in the large sense, not the narrow, sexual sense of the word—recreational rather than procreational play. A performance is a marvelous

way to do that: although the actions are real, the emotions exceed the actions. Small actions yield large emotions.

Certainly in Asian Indian philosophy, the notion of Lila—play, sport, and drama—has a much more positive aspect to it than in Western culture. Illusion is also the power of creation. It is not assumed that the ultimate reality is material, deep, far away. The ultimate reality is relational. Theater is real. Theater deals with these relational modes, metaphors, paradigms. The anti-theatrical prejudice in the West is extremely strong—in the West we see this prejudice in aspects of the Jewish tradition, and in the Augustinian Catholic tradition; and in Islam, in the Koran. Those are philosophical systems that demand a kind of patriarchal possession of ultimate truth which does not reside in ordinary experience, certainly not in sensuous experience which can undercut and subvert it. Theater deals with tragedy. It also deals with comedy, irony, parody and travesty. Folks are not very comfortable with those things. Anybody who wants to guard a hegemonic set of values is not very happy with irony, travesty, and parody, because they are subversive.

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We are very interested in your writings about anthropological models. You give examples from places, like Bali, where traditional society does not establish boundaries between theater and life. There is a sort of continuum. Since we are not living in that kind of society, aren't we forced to make some boundaries?

Well, no. We agree to those boundaries' being imposed on us and continue to impose them on ourselves. In this society we increasingly have a formalized, building-bound theater, while in many other aspects of performance we've opened out. Not only in the obvious things like ballfields and church processions, local festivals, and so on, but most recently in restored villages, theme parks, Disneyworlds. These are really performance spaces which blow apart the notion that Western theater always takes place inside a theater building. These are probably the most active, certainly the most popular, theatrical events going on in this country. But our elitist theater for the production of dramas continues to be done inside fixed space theaters. The academic establishment tends to concentrate its attention on the elite theater. If you're going to define theater by where dramas are enacted, where stories are being told, where twice-behaved behavior occurs, then you have to include Colonial Williamsburg, Plymouth Plantation, Disneyland. We should realize that the Elizabethan theater was also a rough and ready place.

What should a theater for drama be?

I would start with certain functions. I'd like to have people eat in my theater as they often do in European theaters. I'd like to have focused areas, but I would also like to be able to have multiple areas of involvement so that we could have places where we need not use the stage or the classic black box. In my productions we used to re-design the space for each production, rather than use a locked-in cubic kind of space. I'd like an empty space and enough money to spend on each production to redo the interior. The interior has to be event specific. You decide on the particular group

of people, the particular performance, the particular text you either do or invent, and the architect or designer must work with you during the formative stages of the production. What I want to do is to provide for fifty years of experiments.

So in that sense it's not an architectural problem, it's a financial one?

Well, it is an architectural problem because architects work for people who want their names in stone, and architects also have their egos, which are basically Roman egos. What I want is process. I want access to the resources to do an idea I haven't had yet and *you* haven't had yet. So in a fundamental way I am opposed to theater architecture.

I would want the nondisposable aspects of this theater building to be as simple as possible, a simple kind of nest or shell, incorporating only an assembly place for an audience, acoustically controllable with access to food.

Your idea of having sufficient money to remake the theater sounds quite radical but isn't it actually quite conservative? Why have the shell at all? Why not start over completely each time?

That's economic madness. You couldn't buy land each time. I do want to keep the rain off people's heads. I would like to have control over lights. I would like to be able to open the roof up to perform in daylight, to lay the walls down, and have the walls come back up and the roof come back on.

Would this fact that part of the structure would remain from performance to performance be an asset?

To me it is a positive thing to develop a space with your own traditions, like mine for the Performing Garage. Use makes tradition. By the time you are forty-five, the lines on your face tell something about your life experiences. The other approach is to take an old building and use it. Peter Brook likes to do this—to take a found space and negotiate with it. I like that, too. The spaces I like least are the spaces that have been built specifically to be theaters and to have solved future problems. They usually don't solve the future problems and they lock you in.

I would empty the room each time so that one would have to think of the whole cubic volume of space. I would like to work with an architect as my designer or with designers who are architecturally aware, because I like to work in three-dimensional space. The architect would have to want to experiment with me in building disposable spaces within a shell.

I think of space as a metaphor for action or action as creating space. When I did *Oedipus* I saw it as a round Roman arena. We built an arena with slanted seats. You were really thrown forward—audiences weren't expecting this. For *Mother Courage*, the theater was stripped to the wall with ropes defining spaces. Ropes are easily moved so we had shifting arrangements and spaces. *Oedipus* was fixed because to a certain degree it is about a destiny that is fixed. For *Mother Courage*, the notion was that she could have made other choices. She chose what she chose. That's the nature of the play. These plays have fundamentally different kinds of spatial suggestions.

Where should theater be located in the city?

I like festival districts. I like entertainment districts. I think restaurants, sex, and theater all belong in the same district. I am very disturbed about Times Square, not so much that they are cleaning up the porn, but that what they are putting up is so massive. It's not going to simply clean it up, but clean it out, eviscerate it without achieving its so-called sanitizing social purpose. It will destroy a neighborhood that I think has a flavor, one of the few, and that's why so many people go. In fact, I think it's the biggest draw for good, clean-cut middle Americans because it's very active visually. It's what Disney knew. You build things $5/8$ human scale and people feel better. Entertainment districts should not be super-large scale; they're for human entertainment, human scale.

You have to make a distinction between a cultural center like Lincoln Center and a theater district. Lincoln Center isn't a festival center. Architecturally, it's a disaster. It's walled, it's separated, it looks at itself. It doesn't foster the kind of interaction I am talking about. Currently in New York we aren't doing too badly. We have P.S. 12, which is an old public school. We have the Performing Garage, the Times Square theater district, Lincoln Center (I don't like it but it's there), and Carnegie Hall. One of the dangers is of building too much at once. No matter how good an imagination one has, one person cannot substitute for an accumulation over time.

Do you consider the environments that people make for everyday life to be sets?

They are analogous to sets to a certain degree. A set is that which appears to be something but really functions as something else. In the kind of theater I do, environmental theater, I very often insist on not having a set. You can take a living space and use it as a set but it's very hard to take a set and use it as a living space. However, I think some people *do* live in sets. They design their living space in order to give an impression of something that it isn't.

When I direct a play, I like to use the ordinary things that people bring in. I always insist that the actors bring in their own costumes and that they have on them something of personal importance, so that some of their ordinary life is filtered into the performance.

I feel that the interior, visceral spaces of the body connect to architectural spaces. One can develop exercises to further these relationships. The designer should watch these exercises so that they can see the inside-outness of the performance before they fix the space. The space of the performer should be determined in rehearsal, not in a drawing studio. I have tried to extend the sensual nature of the skin into the performance space.

When we think of theatrical space we shouldn't think only of room space. I like planetariums because you lean back and suddenly have this vaulted space which gives the illusion of limitlessness.

1. Peter Behrens. Hamburg
Vestibule of the German
Section at the International
Exposition of Decorative
Arts, Turin, 1902.

103 Peter Behrens's Highest *Kultursymbol*, The Theater

Stanford Anderson

Friedrich Nietzsche's writings mounted a brilliant attack on the positivistic science and history which he saw as increasingly prominent in the entire fabric of nineteenth century Germany. When Nietzsche envisioned a better German society, he reckoned that the first generation of this new society would have to be brought up in the "mighty truth" that Germany could not build a culture on the basis of its positivistic education. In contrast to mere knowledge about culture (the German's desire "for the flower without the root or the stalk"), art and a genuine culture must spring from a natural ground:

Life itself is a kind of handicraft that must be learned thoroughly and industriously, and diligently practiced . . . "Give me life, and I will soon make you a culture out of it"—will be the cry of every man in this new generation, and they will know each other by this cry. But who will give them this life? No god and no man will give it—only their youth.¹

At the end of the nineteenth century, many young artists read Nietzsche; his influence and the search he encouraged were not restricted to Germany,² but interest

This essay is a slightly revised version of chapter 3 of my Ph. D. dissertation, "Peter Behrens and the New Architecture of Germany, 1900-1917," Columbia University, New York City, 1968.

¹ The material in this paragraph is drawn from "The Use and Abuse of History" which first appeared in 1874 in *Thoughts Out of Season* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1949), pp. 73-75.

² E.g. see Henry van de Velde, *Laienpredigten* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1902), p. 16 where the influence of Nietzsche in the revolutionary art movement in Belgium around 1890 is specifically mentioned. Van de Velde later (1903) designed the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar.



in his writings was especially strong there. The young enthusiasts of the new artistic movement appropriated Nietzsche's critique of what they felt was a fragmented, incoherent and artless civilization.³ They felt that these negative characteristics were revealed in a divorce of the artist from society and that the dominance of easel painting and independent sculpture, meant for isolated contemplation in a laboratory atmosphere of museums and salons, made the role of art submissive in western civilization. Aside from the grand murals and decorative painting of Puvis de Chavannes, even the most inventive artists of the latter nineteenth century could not provide models for the new culture.⁴ They felt that the work of art must now be removed from its esthetic, physical, and psychological isolation, even if this endangered the independence of the artist. Supplying the decoration that would create a pervasive and significant environment was considered a higher calling than producing individual works which have no social role. They felt that the artist might become an architect in order to control his environment, or that painting and sculpture should at least be made so as to play a part in a larger program. The effort to realize this end brought about an emphasis on decorative modes of working; the very words "decorative" and "ornamental" took on exalted meaning. Even as individuals, these artists turned from the culturally divisive fine arts and took up the decorative arts which were then acclaimed for contributing to the construction of a superior culture. For the artists of the new society, every grand historical paradigm (e.g., the Greek temple) was understood to have been unified with the life of its time. To emulate the great paradigms was considered a matter of cultural integration rather than mere formal imitation. For instance, the motto above the entrance of Joseph Olbrich's Secession Building in Vienna (1898-99; fig. 1) reads:

To each time, its art;
To art, its freedom.

³ Here Nietzsche is only a shorthand for the situation under discussion. At the time that Nietzsche's writings were becoming common intellectual property, a book appeared that was extraordinarily influential in the whole of German civilization and especially among artists: *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Leipzig, 1890), written by Julius Langbehn but published anonymously. Langbehn's thought, though certainly influenced by Nietzsche, could hardly compare with his brilliance. Nevertheless, in the decades around 1900 the thought, advocacy, and influence of these two men were confounded. The comparatively shallow and prosaic programmatic of Langbehn, urging the synthesis of an artistic culture that should resolve the antinomy of a lost age of faith and a spiritless age of science, could be more easily and purposively grasped than the writings of Nietzsche.

A book of related significance, influenced by Langbehn, urging an artistic education for all German children was Konrad Lange, *Die Künstlerische Erziehung der deutschen Jugend* (Darmstadt: Bergstrasser, 1893).

On the first page of his *Kultur und Kunst* (Jena: Diederichs, 1904, Hermann Muthesius mentions the work of both Langbehn and Lange. He goes on to cite the Darmstadt Künstler-Kolonie as a demonstration of the early fruition of these ideas. As late as 1911, Muthesius cited the generative influence of Langbehn's book in an address to the Deutscher Werkbund. See notes 26 and 54.

For an excellent consideration of Langbehn and other strongly nationalistic ideologists, see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961).

⁴ The work of other painters deemed worthy of admiration such as Van Gogh, Seurat, Emile Bernard, Maurice Denis, and Ferdinand Hodler, became known in Germany only during the course of the movement. The basic conservatism of the German situation is well illustrated by the fact that



2. Joseph Maria Olbrich.
Secession Building, Vienna,
1899.

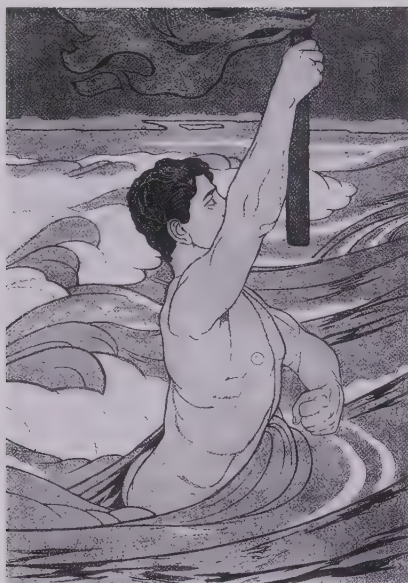
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The new culture, conceived as being the natural efflorescence of contemporary life and as exerting a reciprocal, uplifting effect on that life, placed art in a new position. Once again, art had to attain a universal cultural role. This essay examines the turn-of-the-century efforts of Peter Behrens, a young artist just then embracing architecture, to conceive the theater, as architecture and as cultural institution, as the apogee of that new, earnestly-sought culture.

The houses by Victor Horta in Brussels and the furniture of Henry van de Velde in Uccle were early, impressive, and unusual contributions to the realization of the new cultural program. Nonetheless, these artists of the turn-of-the-century often had to be content with more modest works which they might consider as steps towards an environmental art—the design of interiors, wallpaper, fabrics, linoleum, furniture, glassware, ceramics, silver, and stained glass. Other forms of acceptable artistic production were decorative carvings, murals, and even smaller paintings they made, through their decorative frames and insistence on surface, the greatest possible concessions to the walls upon which they were placed.

In terms of medium and strict adherence to the program, the late nineteenth century woodcuts by Peter Behrens (figs 3, 4) are an extreme extension of what was acknowledged to have environmental intent, but such prints could be understood in the prescribed manner. These works were referred to as “decorative woodcuts.” Their generous size (*Victory*, for example, is 86 x 61.5 cm.) and use of color were intended to insure them a place on a wall rather than in a portfolio. Yet the fact of their multiple production, and still more the conscious exploitation of surface design, were meant to distinguish these works from traditional easel painting. The art historian and critic Julius Meier-Graefe praised these woodcuts and described

the publication of a quite unprovocative lithograph by Toulouse-Lautrec in the avant-garde magazine *Pan*, 1 (1895), opp. p. 196, caused an internal crisis which was only resolved by a reformulation of the board of editors.



3. Peter Behrens. *Victory*, color woodcut, 1896-97.

4. Behrens. *Storm, or Eagle*, color woodcut, 1896-97.

the power of their easily recognized images as resulting from *Reflexerscheinungen* (empathetic phenomena) caused by the great lines that control their surfaces: what is conveyed, he noted, is a bold expression of movement which has no real visual counterpart.⁵ But beyond this attempt at the portrayal of cosmic movement, there is also a related iconography. Though this woodcut has been referred to as *Victory*, it seems obvious that it portrays Prometheus—he “who foresees,” the creator of man, he who stole for man the holy fire from the forge of Hephaestus on the island of Lemnos, and who gave man all the arts and sciences. Prometheus had appeared on the title page of the first edition of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this formulation of an esthetic metaphysics, Nietzsche extols Prometheus, “the great philanthropist,” for his “Titan-like love for man,” and suggests that the myth of Prometheus “has the same characteristic significance for the Aryan race that the myth of the fall of man has for the Semitic, that there is a relationship between the two myths like that of a brother and sister.”⁶ This great figure of the “unseasonable” Greek mythology, so appropriately related to the birth of a new culture unifying life and art, had been envisioned by Behrens with a non-naturalistic line intended to express the cosmic energy of the story, yet achieve a flat, decorative quality uniting the image with its immediate architectural surroundings. The technique which Behrens chose, woodcut printed from broad surfaces of the blocks, enhanced the desired play of line on a flat surface.

⁵ *Dekorative Kunst*, II (1898), pp. 70ff.

⁶ *The Birth of Tragedy* (Levy, ed., London: Foulis, 1909), pp. 35, 40 and 77-78. Prometheus was a popular figure with the poets and artists of the Neuromantik. As far as I know, Behrens’s wood-cut is not a precise illustration of any literary version of Prometheus. In addition to Nietzsche, however, one might mention Carl Spitteler’s epic, *Prometheus und Epimetheus* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1881), where the imagery is suggestive of some of Behrens’s other works. For example, the austere and beautiful goddess whom Prometheus serves in Spitteler’s work is suggestive for the meaning of the female figure who dominates the young, nude, sleeping artist in Behrens’s decorative painting *Der Traum*. This *Dream* is the painting which held the most prominent position in Behrens’s homes in both Darmstadt and Neubabelsberg from 1901 through most of his productive career.



Another woodcut, variously called *Storm and Eagle* (fig. 4), fulfilled Meier-Graefe's idea of Behrens's formal intent even more completely. With suggestive imagery, Zarathustra, the spokesman for Nietzsche's theory, exhorts the higher men to be like the storm-wind under which the seas tremble and leap. And "The Seventh Seal" begins:

If ever I spread out a still sky above myself and flew
with my own wings into my own sky;
if, playing, I have swum into deep light-
distance and bird-wisdom came to my freedom;
but thus speaks bird-wisdom: 'Behold,
there is no above, no below! fling yourself about, out,
back, weightless bird! Sing! speak no more!
'are not all words made for the heavy? Do
not all words lie to the light? Sing! speak no more!'⁷

Behrens, who had been a founding member of the Munich Secession, may well have been inspired by Zarathustra's words:

Watch and listen you solitaires! From the future come
winds with a stealthy flapping of wings; and good
tidings go out to delicate ears.

You solitaires of today, you who have seceded
from society, you shall one day be a people: from you,
who have chosen out yourselves, shall a chosen people
spring—and from this chosen people, the Superman.⁸

⁷ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (trans. R. J. Hollindale, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), pp. 306, 247. Again on p. 334, Zarathustra says: "My eagle is awake and, like me, does honor to the sun. With eagle's claws it reaches out for the new light. You are my rightful animals: I love you. But I still lack my rightful men!"

⁸ *Zarathustra*, pp. 102-103.

Thus Nietzsche's Superman is announced; this together with the passage quoted above may have suggested Behrens's theme for *Eagle*. The influential cultural entrepreneur, Karl Scheffler, in discussing Behrens's first architectural work, his own house at Darmstadt (fig. 6), wrote that Behrens's "grandest wish is to create a uniform, high standard, a *Kulturmilieu* in which he could move naturally like a bird in the air."⁹

It was this concerted, "unseasonable" desire not just to grasp life, but through doing so to create a new *Kultur*—a totally integrated culture as one imagined it to have been exemplified in ancient Greece—that set the *Secessionstil* and what I would term the "idealist faction" of Jugendstil apart from contemporary developments elsewhere. It was the culture of Greece that was to serve as a model, not the particular Greek forms; nevertheless, it was tempting to use certain classical motifs or concepts as crutches. For instance, such a programmatic work as the exhibition building for the Vienna Secession (fig. 2) was organized around a strict longitudinal axis, and its individual masses and volumes are clear geometric forms. Greek vase painting found a recurrent echo in Secessionist painting. The very insistence on *line* was a classicizing program. Later, when the formal ingenuity of the Jugendstil became vulgarized and suspect, the ground had been prepared for a retreat to a safer and more conventional neo-classicism.

The idea of making the visual arts part of a creative new life suddenly came to public prominence in Germany in 1897. The established magazine of crafts, *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, shows a complete change of content beginning with the volume from 1897–98. The annual exhibition at Munich's Glaspalast contained for the first time a section devoted to crafts, and Dresden's great exhibition introduced the work of van de Velde to Germany. Several new journals devoted to the decorative arts were founded, including H. Bruckmann's *Dekorative Kunst* (Decorative art) in Munich and Alexander Koch's *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (German art and decoration) in Darmstadt. Nevertheless, to realize more than isolated, overstudied interiors was rare for an artist, and the entire movement stood in danger of falling into a shallow formalism without having had the chance to attempt to reach its goals.

In July 1899, Peter Behrens's friend and advocate, Julius Meier-Graefe, the acute art critic and Parisian editor of *Dekorative Kunst*, published the following assessment of the international situation in the decorative arts. The England of William Morris was dead. The new movement in France had come to naught. Even the great promise of Belgium had been reduced to van de Velde, who was then making his foothold in Germany rather than Belgium. Meier-Graefe concluded; "Germany is in the happy situation not yet to have shown its strength . . . Here it is indeed the early morning that we experience. Perhaps the mid-day can bestow beautiful things upon us."¹⁰

In thus paraphrasing the closing lines of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Meier-Graefe was proclaiming the impending triumph of the German artistic movement

⁹ K. Scheffler, "Das Haus Behrens," *Dekorative Kunst*, IX (Oct. 1901): pp. 1–48.

¹⁰ J. Meier-Graefe, "Epigonen," *Dekorative Kunst*, IV (July 1899): pp. 129–131.

of the 1890's. One of the sources of Meier-Graefe's immediate enthusiasm was the announcement of established support for this new artistic movement in Germany. The searchers for a new *Kultur* needed either a god or a man to help give them life. The giver may at first appear to have been a rather unlikely sort: the patron of this apparent challenge to existing values, the Künstler-Kolonie at Darmstadt with which this article is principally concerned, was the Grand Duke of Hessen, Ernst Ludwig. The prince was determined to make his Residenz the center from which would radiate a new life formed in the image of the revitalized visual arts.

Born in the 1860s (as were most of the other participants in this story), Ernst Ludwig had commissioned two residential interiors to be built according to the designs of the noted English architect, M. H. Baillie Scott.¹¹ With the contemporary awakening of the applied arts in Germany, the Duke took an increasing interest in the potential of this development. With the advice and encouragement of the publisher, Alexander Koch, and the writer, Georg Fuchs, a plan was established to make Darmstadt a prominent center of the new movement before the established "art-cities" could take it up. As Fuchs wrote in a pretentious volume memorializing the Künstler-Kolonie, it is a matter of consequence that it should have been a prince of an ancient ducal house who was the first to devote his power and his person to the realization of "the great thought of our time . . . the complete union of life and art."¹² That Ernst Ludwig became the patron and apologist for a new cultural program was claimed by Fuchs to be a logical parallel to what Kaiser Wilhelm was achieving in the realm of national material productivity and well-being. It was also claimed that a creative group gathered at the Residenz would be the stimulus for a revitalization of handicraft industries throughout Hessen. Actually the principals had greater cultural ambitions than either of these arguments would indicate.

The Grand Duke called seven painters, sculptors, and architects to Darmstadt during the latter half of 1899. The two best-known members of the art colony were the architect Joseph Maria Olbrich, designer of the Secession Building in Vienna and a former student of Otto Wagner, and the artist Peter Behrens, who had already received favorable attention, especially in the pages of *Dekorative Kunst*. The first concerted task of the colony was a bold, inventive project, conceived to explore the desired union of art and life. The artists were to design, build, and furnish their own permanent quarters in a fine, hilly park, the Mathildenhöhe, on the edge of Darmstadt. These quarters, a common studio building and a number of private dwellings, were to form the first exhibition of the work of the colony. Thus an entire small community, formed according to artistic principles—from the site plan to the silverware—would be exhibited programmatically to the nation in the spring of 1901 under the imposing title "A Document of German Art."

¹¹ Illustrated in *Zeitschrift für Innendekoration*, X (1899): pp. 1-8.

¹² A. Koch, ed., *Die Ausstellung der Darmstädter Künstler-Kolonie* (Darmstadt: Alexander Koch, 1901), p. 20. Information obtained in Darmstadt and transmitted by Robert Clark indicates that the archive of the Künstler-Kolonie was destroyed by fire on 11-12 September 1944. Police registration records in Darmstadt show Peter Behrens resident in that city from 1 November 1899 to 28 March 1903.

[illegible]

¹³ The principal publications on Behrens's house are W. Schaefer, "Das Haus Peter Behrens," *Die Rheinlande*, I (Aug. 1901): pp. 27-31, 48-49; Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens," in A. Koch, ed., *Die Ausstellung*: pp. 342-347; K. Scheffler, *Dekorative Kunst*, IX (Oct. 1901): pp. 1-48; and W. Fred, "The Artists' Colony at Darmstadt," *Studio*, XXIV (Oct. 1901): pp. 430-452. Alfred Lichtwark in a letter from Darmstadt dated 14 June 1901 reported that Behrens's house cost 200,000 Mark. By comparison, Olbrich's house was expensive at 75,000 Mark (*Briefe an die Kommission für die Verwaltung der Kunststhalles*, ed. G. Pauli, vol. 1. [Hamburg: G. Westermann, 1923], p. 456).

5. Olbrich. Darmstadt
Künstler-Kolonie, site plan,
1899.

6. Behrens. Behrens House,
Darmstadt Künstler-Kolonie,
1899-1901.

7. Monastic building, Taufers,
Tirol.

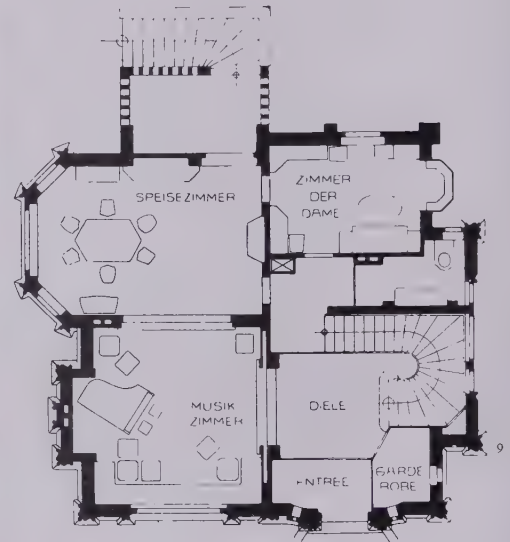


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7

the formal power of line, manifest in his graphics as in the literature of the time, is evidenced here in three dimensions. The Gothic profiles of the bricks that make up the lines of the house indicate the source of this architectural use of line, namely the brick Gothic of northern and central Europe.¹⁴ Both this source and Behrens's use of the profiled bricks emphasize the line as an active rib which provides the formal structure of the building; the white stucco walls are treated as an infill. This is, of course, not an exposition of the actual physical structure, which is simply a masonry box, but rather a stylization, an uplifting, of that simple material structure and of anonymous building types (fig. 7).¹⁵



¹⁴ E.g., see Otto Stiehl, *Backsteinbauten in Nordeutschland und Dänemark* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann, 1923), p. 55 and passim. A specific building that employs a similar network of hard, dark bricks with plaster infill is the fifteenth century cathedral of Stendal (especially the interior, but certain of the exterior details are comparable, too; H. and F. Möbius, *Medieval Churches in Germany* [Berlin: Union Verlag (Edition Leipzig), 1964], pls. 143–144). Fritz Hoeber, *Peter Behrens* (Munich: E. Rentsch, 1913), p. 1, uses the cathedral of Stendal to characterize both the architecture and the personality type of northern Germany; Behrens was very self-consciously a north German.

¹⁵ The Tyrolian cloister building illustrated is from M. Gerlach and J. A. Lux, *Völkstümliche Kunst* (Vienna: Gerlach und Schenk, 1904), p. 120. In the same collection, p. 60, see the “Kroneshaus” in Grinzing (the popular wine-producing suburb of Vienna), a house that appears suggestive both in the present case and perhaps even more for Olbrich’s houses at Darmstadt. Another group of prominent anonymous houses with high-pitched roofs, ogive-shaped gables, and rows of windows separated only by mullions is illustrated in H. E. von Berlepsch-Valendas, “Toggenburger Bauernhäuser,” *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, IX (1906), pp. 1–23.

8. Behrens House, Frau Behrens's receiving room.

9. Behrens House, plan of ground floor.

10. Behrens House, dining room.

11. Behrens House, music room.



10



11

In the main front of the house, and in the ogive gables, the lines are certainly more than boundaries; they have a force of their own in the sense of van de Velde. The dining room, too, indicates that Behrens was not closed at this point to the ideas of the Belgian (fig. 10), but neither the interiors nor the exterior consistently reflect this inclination. For example, at the rear of the house are brick piers that are simply the basic structure and are free of the vitalizing Gothic moldings. Again, the underlying prismatic form of the house, an occasional exterior molding, and some of the interiors (e.g., the "Zimmer der Dame," fig. 8) are experiments in forms that were alien to the "patheticist" advocacy of van de Velde. In this stage of Behrens's development, with its simultaneous and competing explorations, the clearest manifestation of his own thought is the music room (fig. 11), the only formal receiving room, which occupied the most prominent position in the moderately open plan of his house (fig. 9). It is best to approach this room after considering Behrens's contribution to the opening ceremonies of the artists' colony.



12. Behrens's production of the opening ceremony of the Darmstadt Künstler-Kolonie.

13. Behrens. *Ein Dokument Deutscher Kunst* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1901), frontispiece and first page.

14. Behrens House, music room, drapery.

15. Behrens. Lamp, 1901-02. Collection of Prinz Ludwig von Hessen, Wolfsgarten, Darmstadt.

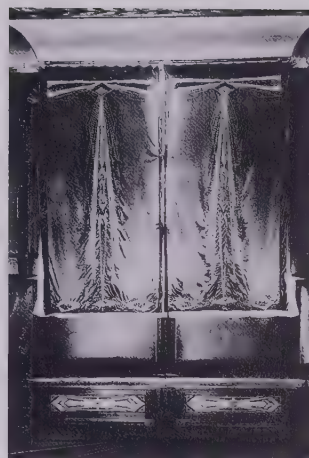
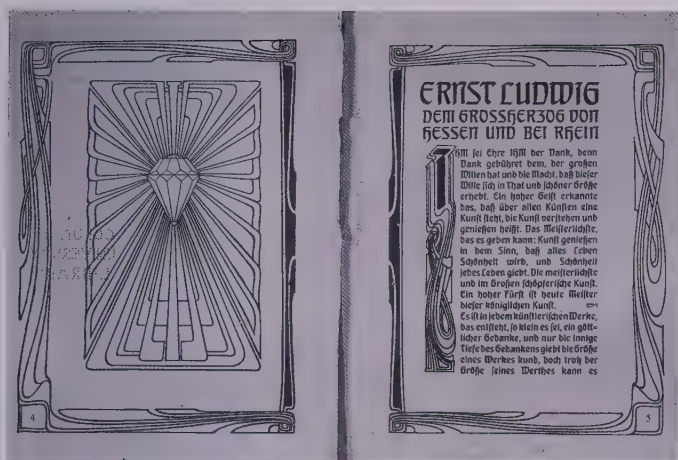
16. Behrens. Poster for the 1901 Exhibition of the Darmstadt Künstler-Kolonie

The Darmstadt Künstler-Kolonie was not only the artists' residence and place of work, but also an exhibition of the ideal life completely formed by art. Its opening ceremony held on May 15th, 1901, took place in the main mall of the colony, below the artists' studio building, both of which had been designed by Olbrich. The ceremony, written by Georg Fuchs and directed by Peter Behrens, was called "Das Zeichen" (The Sign).¹⁶ Figure 12 shows the moment at which the formerly un-known prophet has descended from the golden portal above and is about to reveal the shrouded sign—a great crystal. The symbolism of the crystal relies on a metaphorical relationship between transformations which take place at the micro- and macrocosmic levels; for example, just as mere carbon under intense conditions assumes a particular crystal structure and becomes the prized diamond,¹⁷ so the power of art may transform everyday life into a resplendent life filled with meaning.¹⁸

¹⁶ Text, music (by Willem de Haan), and description appear in Alexander Koch, ed., *Die Ausstellung der Darmstädter Künstler-Kolonie* (Darmstadt: A. Koch, 1901), pp. 56-77.

¹⁷ The noted French chemist Henri Moissan claimed to have achieved this feat in 1893. The claim is disputed, but the theory, which was older than Moissan, was finally demonstrated by F. B. Bunday of General Electric in 1954. See L. W. Marrison, *Crystals, Diamonds and Transistors* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp. 60-62.

¹⁸ A similar concern with the idealization of earthly experience occurs in Leonardo: "Thou must show in thy treatise that the earth is a star, like the moon or resembling it, and thus prove the nobility of our world." Freud quotes this in chap. iii of his *Leonardo*, taking it from Marie Herzfeld, *Leonardo da Vinci* (2nd ed., Jena: Diederichs, 1906), p. 141. Both the publisher and the graphic designer (E. R. Weiss) for Herzfeld's book were associated with Behrens in these years.



The theme of the ceremony and the specific symbol were chosen by Behrens, who used precious stones as the *leitmotif* of his work at the colony.¹⁹ A meticulously drafted diamond forms the frontispiece of the *Festschrift* (fig. 13) that Behrens wrote and designed for the exhibition.²⁰ A priestess of the new cult of life as art, who also reappears as a lamp that Behrens designed in 1901 (fig. 15), holds aloft a gem on Behrens's poster for the exhibition (fig. 16).

Returning to the music room of Behrens's house (fig. 11), we find the crystal obsessively present. The symbol generates the decoration of the floor and the ceiling; it is present in the candelabra, music stand, and specially designed piano; ritual figures bearing crystals appear in the inlay of the walls; even the window blinds are perforated to pattern rays of natural light from crystalline shapes (fig. 14). With its red and gray marble walls, its blue mirrors, parquet flooring of seven different woods, its gilded ceiling, and doors of aluminum-bronze, this room was indeed the great space and the symbolic culmination of Behrens's earnest and hieratic household which, at an everyday and domestic level, was a microcosm of the envisioned community.²¹

Just as the house had to find its culmination in a sober ceremonial room, so Behrens proposed that the colony—and implicitly, any community—should have as its climactic experience solemn festival celebrations of noble, rhythmic total-art works performed in austere, symbolic temple-theaters on dominant sites. The stage was seen as a sanctuary, not a mere place of entertainment. None of this came to be realized at Darmstadt. Yet the opening ceremony of the colony evokes the rites that were to have been celebrated, and Behrens provided other documents in the advocacy of his hieratic theater.

¹⁹ W[ilhelm] Schäfer, "Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst," *Die Rheinlande*, I (June 1901), p. 39.

²⁰ P. Behrens, *Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst*, (Munich: Bruckmann, 1901).

²¹ Karl Scheffler suggested that the music room was like a small temple of Isis. See *Die fetten und die mageren Jahre* (Leipzig: Paul List, 1946), p. 37.

Even before his house or opening ceremony were known, Behrens sent forth from Darmstadt a program which combined his awakening interests in both architecture and theater. Theater became the subject of his three earliest publications. His booklet *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, written in June of 1900, presented his theories of theater, which were then exemplified in the publication of an essay on a proposed theater building and a program for the dramatic presentation of Richard Dehmel's poem, *Lebensmesse* (Mass of Life). Before attempting to indicate the manner in which Behrens's sense of the theater culminated and thereby dramatized the program of life as art, it is necessary to consider the state of the theater in his time.²²

The indictments against the perspectival and pictorial stage have been often heard; it is not necessary to dwell on the perceived faults of the illusionistic, "peep-show theater" composed of a deep perspective stage viewed by the spectators, often from disadvantageous positions, through a kind of picture frame.²³ The advocates of the naturalistic theater were harsh critics of the failings of the perspective stage; their ideal was a stage like a room with one wall missing, a simple box set behind the proscenium opening. By limiting the conditions they sought to simulate, the illusion was more successful; but the naturalistic stage, too, remained essentially a picture

²² For a general bibliography on the theater in Germany, see Franz Rapp, "Eine Handbibliothek zur deutschen Theatergeschichte," *Monatshefte für deutsche Unterricht* (Madison, Wis.), XXXIV (1942), pp. 183-191. See also note 23 below.

²³ The scene was usually created through painted coulisses at the sides, soffits above, and a backdrop at the rear of the stage. The spatial and scenic possibilities were limited; the proper perspective view was attainable from only one box, and even from this box the attempted illusion of a real world was foiled by the trembling of apparently massive walls and stout tree trunks. The desire that the theater should provide such an illusionistic picture required that the actors remain behind the proscenium arch. By the late nineteenth century, forestage acting had virtually disappeared—as had the forestage itself in order to provide more seating or orchestra space. This withdrawal of the actor brought him into juxtaposition with the perspective sets to which he could not always maintain the proper scale. A scenic mode which had been created as a backdrop for forestage acting had thus been completely frustrated by its unimaginative adaptation to a new staging program.

Stage designers and engineers attempted to correct these shortcomings. A more convincing corporeality was achieved by the addition of three-dimensional elements which gradually faded into the flats. This further increased the length of time for scene changes. The engineers countered this problem with triple stages which could be used alternatively, unit sets which could be rolled to the sides, elevator stages, and revolving stages. A more illusionistic closing of the stage vista was facilitated with half-round cycloramas or with a large half dome. All these devices strove to attain the original goal—the presentation on the stage of a convincing pictorial simulation of a real world.

Also in the late nineteenth century, stage lighting changed from candles or wick lamps to gas lamps and then to electric lighting. But the function of the light, except for occasional attempts at the illusion of natural light, remained essentially that of simple illumination. The weakness of candlelight had encouraged actors to come downstage for the recitation of great lines to the auditors. The glimmer of candles had concealed some of the faults of stage illusionism. Now along with the new naturalistic ideals, electric power kept the actors in the picture and at the same time cast a harsh light on the painted sets.

²⁴ The theater auditorium had received a significant new configuration through Richard Wagner's demands that every spectator should face directly toward the stage and be able to see into its full depth. This resulted, in the Wagnerian Festspielhaus at Bayreuth (1876), in a theater with a single, fan-shaped bank of seats which looked over a deep orchestra pit into a deep, framed stage. The modified antique seating arrangement immensely improved simple visual contact and became the prototype of most subsequent theater auditoriums. However, the concept of an illusionistic deep-stage behind the picture frame remained. The gulf between actor and viewer was made even more emphatic as a conscious device for the creation of mystic illusion.

of the real world. Besides the uncomfortable disparity between the reality of the canvas sets and the desired illusion, there remained unresolved an even more serious objection. Compared with the architectural, unchanging stages of antiquity and of Shakespeare, the pictorial scene within the frame of the proscenium arch represented a complete divorce of viewer from actor. This lack of contact minimized communication by the actor and sympathetic participation by the viewer. It denied the union of art and life that the artists of the new romantic movement sought through their program.²⁴

How, then, did Behrens plan to realize theater as the highest *Kultursymbol*? What were his motives? Who were his influences? As a painter and graphic artist during the 1890s, he had evolved from luminist-impressionist oil paintings to ever more linear, abstract designs, accomplished in the flat medium of woodcut or tempera paint, but still representing persons, landscapes, birds and butterflies. However, he increasingly considered nature unworthy of imitation. In his program, nature was to provide strong emotional stimuli, but the role of the artist, rather than to ape nature, was to raise experience to a new, higher, abstracted, harmonious, and rhythmic expression. Behrens's artistic battlefield was not set so much against any remaining over-reliance on historical precedent as it was against naturalism—a progressive attitude in European figurative and dramatic arts since the 1870s. In May 1900,

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The young Swiss music student turned stage designer, Adolphe Appia, found Wagner's staging instructions to be minimal and the visual aspect of Wagnerian productions to be merely "arbitrary scenic schemes." He considered such staging an ineffectual or even a decidedly disruptive element in what should be the formidable impact of music-drama. Appia had first presented his ideas in the small unillustrated volume, *La mise en scène du drame Wagnérien* (Paris: L. Chailley, 1895). After almost a decade of studies, Appia propounded and illustrated his ideas of theatrical production in *Die Musik und die Inszenierung* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1899), available in English as *Music and the Art of the Theatre* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1962). Appia wished to achieve a more intense and emotional contact with the audience through a clear exhibition of the movement of the actors, through a stage beheld as space rather than as a picture, and through an environmental and interpretive use of light. In words and pictures, Appia emphasized these factors at the expense of traditional flats, illusionistic painting, and the general elaborateness of the naturalistic stage. In the appendix to his book, Appia described his proposed staging of *Tristan und Isolde*. A specific example of Appia's analysis is revealing for the general intent of his reform. In the second act of *Tristan*: "Like the hero and heroine we experience nothing more except this ecstasy of being together. The passion that is burning in their souls seems to us as to them, much more real than their corporeal presences. And the rhythm of the music draws us deeper and deeper into the secret world in which their union is eternally consummated. Only one thing shocks us: we still see them. We become painfully aware that we are forced to see these two who no longer really exist. As the phantoms of the material world appear again to us at the same time that they become apparent once again to the two lovers, when these two, who have transcended the corporeal world, once again come into contact with it, we feel as though we had practiced a deception on them, and were part of a conspiracy. "How will the stage designer embody all this so that the spectator in the course of this act does not rationalize what has happened, does not analyse it intellectually, but is carried away by its inner emotional surge?"

"On the basis of this analysis let me indicate point by point the following method of staging: Picture of the stage at the rise of the first curtain ..." L. Simonson, *The Art of Scenic Design* (New York: Harper, 1950), p. 22.

Appia's actors remain on a traditional stage, but they perform on simplified platforms in an evocative light which provides both an envelopment and a heightened awareness of the actors' presence and movements. Despite the creation of an emphatically spatial stage, Appia still speaks of the "pictorial ensemble." The end is still the creation of an illusion, but not an illusion of reality. It is a mystic illusion that shall envelop the spectator and carry him away.

Behrens speaks specifically against naturalism in his earliest publication, "Die Dekoration der Bühne" (The decoration of the stage),²⁵ which was a preliminary formulation emphasizing the use of ornamental rather than illusionistic paintings for stage sets. His theater ideas were more fully and systematically presented in a booklet he wrote in June of 1900, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols* (Festivals of life and art: a consideration of the theater as the highest cultural symbol). Two men, the Darmstadt author and critic Georg Fuchs and the noted lyric poet Richard Dehmel were important influences on this work; like their friends of the Neuromantik,²⁶ both were strongly opposed to late nineteenth century naturalism in the theater and in the other arts. Dehmel, in theory and in poetic works, provided a virile quasi-philosophical basis for the exploitation of life as art. Fuchs's aristocratic ideals, and the implications of those ideals for the social role and physical form of the theater, directly shaped Behrens's proposal. Already in 1899 Fuchs had published an article entitled "Die Schaubühne—Ein Fest des Lebens" (the stage—a festival of life),²⁷ in which the ceremony of the theater; the importance of stylized, contemporary works; the site of the building; amphitheatrical seating, and an expression of "heimatlichen Geist" are all foreseen:

You see before you an edifice which already in its external forms reveals that it is the temple of a Mystery, of the ceremonial revelation of the *Good Life*, of its *Meaning*, and of its *Beauty*. We must erect the edifice itself as a witness of the vital, creative power of the German spirit.²⁸

In 1900, Fuchs admitted that Behrens was right in seeing that this concept of theater could not be realized by a mere reform of the existing theater. One must create a new stage and a new edifice.

²⁵ "Die Dekoration der Bühne," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, VI (May 1900), pp. 401-405. Olbrich, together with Hermann Bahr, was at the same time pursuing a similar interest under the name "Plakatstil." See H. Kindermann, ed., *Kritiken von Hermann Bahr. Theater der Jahrhundertwende* (Vienna: H. Bauer, 1963), pp. 254-262. Such programs, and specifically that of Behrens, were criticized by Max Martersteig, "Dekorationen," *Die Zukunft*, XXXII (1900), pp. 200-208. A sympathetic criticism is that offered by F. Blei, *Die Insel*, II (Jan. 1901), pp. 141-144.

²⁶ Diederichs considered himself the leading publisher of what was termed the Neuromantik. Under this term were grouped those artists, poets, essayists, historians, and philosophers who sought a comprehensive view of life such as the early nineteenth century Romantics had sought. Goethe may be mentioned as one of the great models, but there were others, too, and of other eras: e.g., Paracelsus and Dürer. Diederichs felt that this admirable desire for an adequate Naturphilosophie had been lost in the materialism, naturalism, and specialization of the latter nineteenth century. E.g., see Diederichs' program for his press in 1900 which is quoted near the end of this chapter and documented in note 54.

²⁷ *Wiener Rundschau* (Sept. 1, 1899), pp. 483-486. See also issues of May 15 and Sept. 15, 1899. It is interesting to note that the separate number of *Wiener Rundschau* with "Die Schaubühne—Ein Fest des Lebens," which is in the collection of the library of the Theaternuseum München, came from the library of the noted theater architect Max Littmann (article noted and marked; by Littmann?).

G. Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin/Leipzig: Schuster and Loeffler, 1905), is a definitive statement of what had become the Fuchs-Behrens theater program. Frontispiece and end vignettes in the book are those designed with theater motifs by Behrens and which he had published in his *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* article of 1900. The book also includes plans and a longitudinal section of a theater design by Max Littmann—thus a preliminary design to the Künstlertheater in Munich.

²⁸ Fuchs, "Die Schaubühne," *Wiener Rundschau*: p. 485.

In that summer, Dehmel, on returning from a Mediterranean trip, chose Heidelberg as a temporary residence. With Darmstadt nearby, the opportunity was at hand for Behrens and Dehmel to renew and deepen their acquaintance.²⁹ Soon two works on the theater appeared under Behrens's name: The book, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, and a magazine article containing a proposal for a theater and the staging of Dehmel's *Lebensmesse*.³⁰ We are certain of Dehmel's participation in these works as well as his acquiescence in their final form.³¹

²⁹ Five years older than Behrens, Dehmel established himself and his reknown in the last five years of the nineteenth century. In a letter of September 9, 1899 (*Ausgewählte Briefe*, vol. I, no. 266. [Berlin: S. Fischer, 1922]). Dehmel wrote from Munich to Harry Graf Kessler, a fellow member of the *Pan* editorial staff, requesting that *Pan* give generous coverage to Behrens's exhibition at Keller und Reiner in Berlin.

Behrens's campaign against naturalism was no doubt reinforced by Dehmel. In 1892, Dehmel had published in the Munich journal *Gesellschaft* his lengthy criticism of naturalism. The article was entitled "Die neue deutsche Alltagstragödie" and evolved from a criticism of Gerhart Hauptmann's play *Vor Sonnenaufgang*. (The critique, written in 1890, had been stimulated by the 1889 Berlin presentation of *Vor Sonnenaufgang* by the great German naturalist-realist producer, Otto Brahm.)

³⁰ Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* (Leipzig: Diederichs, 1900), hereafter cited as *Feste*. Behrens, "Die Lebensmesse von Richard Dehmel als festliches Spiel," *Die Rheinlande*, I (Jan. 1901), pp. 28-40, hereafter cited as *Rheinlande*. "Eine Lebensmesse-Dichtung für Musik" first appeared in the second edition of Dehmel's book *Erlösungen* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1898). See also Jutta Boeke, "Theater und Jugendstil—Feste des Lebens und der Kunst," pp. 143-158 in Gerhard Bott, ed., *Von Morris zum Bauhaus. Eine Kunst gegründet auf Einfachheit* (Hanau: Hans Peters, 1977). Boeke's companion essay, "'Darmstädter Spiele 1901'. Das Theater der Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie," pp. 159-181 in Bott, begins with reference to Behrens, but mainly concerns Olbrich.

³¹ Early in the month in which *Feste* was written, Behrens sought Dehmel's participation in the creation of a theater that should be a "temple of art."

"Unser Theaterplan nimmt neue, festere Formen an. Ich glaube jetzt der Sache näher zu kommen. Natürlich nicht mehr auf dem Hoftheater mit einem Stabe von 'Literaten' und Direktoren. Wir werden selbst der Kunst einem Tempel bauen, dadrinne soll es heilig sein. Ich denke jetzt fast nur an das und wollte ich konnte mich mit dir darüber aussprechen, ich weiss du würdest zu mir stehen. Schreibe mir bald auch wann ich dich wieder einmal sehen kann . . . N.B. Ist die Lebensmesse eigentlich in Musik gesetzt?" [Letter B287, dated "Darmstadt, 10. Juni 1900," in the Dehmel Archiv of the Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, Hamburg.]

Dehmel's involvement in Behrens's program is revealed in a letter to Gustav Kuhl: "In den letzten 14 Tagen habe ich mehrfach lebhaft an Sie gedacht, wie Ihnen die beifolgenden, schon lange auf Ihre Adresse lauernden Drucksachen beweisen mögen (2 Kreuzbände [note by the editor of the letters: "Peter Behrens: Feste des Lebens und der Kunst"] von Peter Behrens, in denen Sie wol stellenweise meine Hinterhand entdecken werden). Schade, dass Sie grade jetzt formtüssten; in Darmstadt scheint sich wirklich eine Art Oase aus dem gräulichen Fugsand der 'modernen' Stilmacherei zu heben. Aus den beiden Schriften werden Sie aber auch von fern herausmerken dass Behrens unter Kultur und Stil etwas anderes versteht als die Wiener Parfumeure und die Inselgigerln etc. . . ." (Dehmel, *Aus. Briefe*, vol. I, no. 302 [Feb. 2, 1901]).

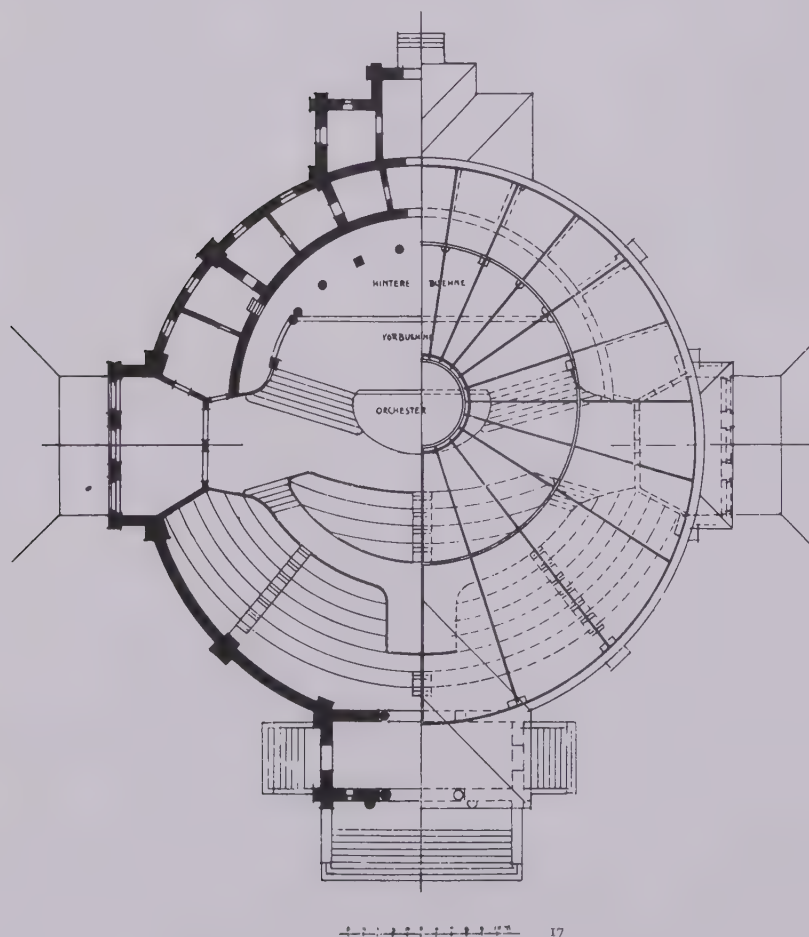
Further, in a letter to R. de Campagnolle, Dehmel wrote: "... the treatment by Behrens relies on my own intentions; I truly imagined a drama of the simplest Style" (*ibid.*, no. 304, [Feb. 27, 1901]).

Dehmel's *Lucifer. Ein Tanz- und Glanzspiel* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1899) reveals that Dehmel had already essayed the literary and choreographic manner adopted by Behrens for "Lebensmesse." At that point, Dehmel's ideas about staging are no more developed than those expressed by Behrens in his approximately contemporary first article; that is, painted flats are modified by the adoption of more abstract and decorative compositions.

According to the perceptive Julius Bab in *Richard Dehmel* (Leipzig: H. Haessel, 1926), pp. 240-241, the current of influence also ran from Behrens to Dehmel, citing: Behrens's passion for symmetrical organization as increasing a certain pedantic instinct for order in Dehmel.

Behrens treasured the idea that the entire forming of life must be the highest measure of value for the art of a people and a time. Like Dehmel, the members of the Künstler-Kolonie strove to manifest the beauty and the power of the whole of life—and none of them with more fury and determination than Behrens. Consequently, when Behrens gave himself to the expression of these attitudes and to the proclamation of his belief that a ceremonial theater is the apex and union of life and art, he elevated and stylized the whole of that expression. Behrens's grandiose proclamation, his *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, appeared on fine paper, in an elegant format with type-face, multicolor ornamentation, and binding all designed by Behrens himself.³²

Behrens's theater, this place holy to the *gesamten Kunst*, "symbol of our surfeit of vigor," dedicated to the "celebration of our culture," was not built, and we have only a plan published by Behrens in *Die Rheinlande* (fig. 17). But with this plan and the descriptions in *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* and in *Die Rheinlande* we can fully picture Behrens's ceremonial theater for the "cult of the beautiful life."³³



17. Behrens. Plan for a theater, unbuilt, 1900.

³² Illustrated in F. Ahlers-Hestermann, *Stilwende*, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin: Mann, 1956), p. 72. Behrens's pretentious prose is also consonant with the character of the enterprise. An adequate translation of Behrens's prose would be difficult at best, and might even strain the credulity of the reader.

³³ *Rheinlande*, I, p. 28.

The theater was to be situated on a commanding site overlooking a valley, its walls brilliant with color, its columns ringed with garlands, and long, white banners were to flutter from seven masts. The centralized plan, a symbol of the oneness of actors and viewers, was easily observable from within and without. The great main entrance, the "Portal of the Sun," faced south; its decoration, although mysterious, was to divulge the arts of an abundant land. Although smaller, the east and west entrances—portals of the morning-star and of the evening-star—similarly served to welcome the partakers who would both offer and receive at the *Fest*. Through the north portal, whose architectural decoration designated it as the Portal of the Moon, the personnel of the theater could gain access to the backstage rooms. The cupola over the great circular chamber was pierced with windows. High above, trumpeters would stand in glowing raiment sounding their call far over the land and forests below.

One would enter the festival building by a ramp under the highest of the seats, coming into the high space of the theater where the color range would be deeper. The seating was approximately that of an antique theater. Each participant had clear, easy, and direct contact with the broad and shallow simple stage. A small orchestra was to be centered in front of the stage and between the two broad ranks of low marble steps which allowed passage between the stage and a processional area on the cross-axis. This processional area would serve both the movements of the actors and the arrival and departure of the congregation. It formed a symbolic merging of the two parts of the theater. The forestage, the most important part of the stage for Behrens, was architecturally united with the auditorium, for Behrens believed that "we do not want to separate ourselves from our art."³⁴ The breadth of the stage served the relief-like ordering and movements of the figures and processions. Relief was for Behrens the most striking, and most concentrated expression of line and movement.³⁵ Chamber and stage were one space, and this was emphasized by the harmonious architectural and decorative handling of the whole. The marble floor of the stage echoed the pattern of the ceiling vault. By day the stage was lit by the natural light from the cupola windows and balanced by artificial lighting. At night an even, diffuse illumination revealed the overall cooperation of the arts while being itself consistent with that ideal. There were neither coulisses nor soffits to provide naturalistic illusion or to slur the sound. Beyond the slightly elevated rear stage, the vista was closed first with a colonnade and then by a wall that was semi-circular in plan and permanent. The locale and time of the poetry were to be evoked in the viewers' imagination, not represented in naturalistic sets. Yet, the mood of the piece was to be emphasized and underscored through manipulation of the background. Great tapestries, which might bear symbolic motifs, could be hung between the columns. If one tapestry were omitted, a portal would open onto the wall beyond which would then form a second, undifferentiated background. The curving space between the colonnade and the wall would be either darker or

³⁴ *Feste*, p. 19; the following material is paraphrased from pp. 19–21.

³⁵ This suggests Behrens's reliance on the ideas about relief propounded in Adolf Hildebrand, *Problem der Form* (Strassburg: Heitz, 1893).

brighter than the stage, and although its color could be changed with wall hangings, Behrens preferred in most cases a pure gold ground. For figural relief, the brighter foreground would be used. To emphasize the moving line, a dark silhouette would be used on a bright ground, in which case all tapestries would be omitted and a brilliant golden ground would ascend to the vaulting without interruption. This space must also serve the entrances and exits of the performers, "the priests of the word, of the beautiful gesture, and of the dance; for this, in one person, is what the actor would be."³⁶

Behrens claimed that mime and dance were the origin of the theater, and again must become its basis. The pure form of the figure and the movement of the dance would be enhanced if only white, or at the most a single color, were used for the costumes. Music should be held equal in this collaboration of the arts, even though there are emotions which only music can express.³⁷ It is through these self-imposed limitations that each art would come to full expression and together the arts would attain a harmonious total effect. Faithfulness to real or historical conditions and the unlimited juxtaposition of colors and light, "so artful as [this] may be, is in principle naturalism; that is, non-art."³⁸ Naturalism had displaced decadent styles, yet was not able to renew art. In theater, for example, the actor's purpose is greater than merely presenting observations of nature. His every word, his every movement should be stylized and beautiful, until all is "*Pathos und Pose*," until all conforms to the actor's own strong form, his ideal of beauty, his style. "The artistry begins at the point where a phenomenon simplifies itself to the sovereign form that can be the inclusive symbol for all related phenomena."³⁹

Behrens called for free and beautiful spaces for communion among the participants during intermissions. These, however, were not accommodated in his project. Perhaps the plan was so idealized that a subsidiary function could not be allowed to disturb the absolute centralization.⁴⁰ To imagine most clearly what the physical appearance of Behrens's theater edifice might have been, we can refer to his only public work of this time, the vestibule for the German section at the first International Exposition of Decorative Arts at Turin in 1902 (fig. 1).

In addition to describing his reconstitution of the theater, Behrens also set out his ideas on the role of theater in society.⁴¹ High on the hill, in the festival hall, everything was to be organized to satisfy the spiritual needs of the participants. The bold forms, the organ, the victorious trumpets, all would cause one to put aside all secondary matters and prepare for the great art of the *Weltanschauung*. There would be a play of life in which all participants would take part. Behrens claimed that poetic and spiritually uplifting dramatic pieces were at hand for his theater; he

³⁶ *Rheinlande*, I, p. 29.

³⁷ This contrasts with Appia's interest in a word-tone drama where the dramatic line carried by the music held the dominant position in the artistic hierarchy. As the original stimulus of Wagnerian opera gave way to a more universal interest in the stage, Appia's position on this point approached that of Behrens.

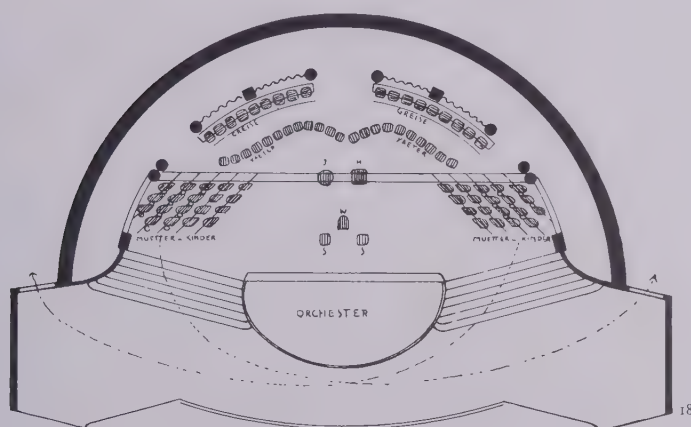
³⁸ *Rheinlande*, I, p. 29.

³⁹ *Feste*, pp. 23-24.

already had in mind Richard Dehmel's "ethical cantata,"⁴² *Eine Lebensmesse—Dichtung für Musik* (A mass of life—poem for music). The cantata was to be staged in an extraordinarily ceremonial fashion. The "priests" of the poetic word, universalizations of human types, revealed the mass of life in noble processions and earnest declamation. Symmetry reigned in both the visual and temporal ordering of the performance; Behrens's stage diagram (fig. 18) hinted at the aura of solemn and pathetic celebration. This solemnity was more clearly expressed, however, in the opening ceremony of the colony (fig. 12), discussed above. The appreciation of symbolic ceremony appears again in Behrens's summation of his plan for staging the *Lebensmesse*:

Dehmel's *Lebensmesse*, through its liturgical quality, is a work which appears peculiarly predestined for presentation in such a new Bühnenstil. Since the poet wrote with this intuition, the work actually inaugurates the new style. If drama has derived from religious cults, then I see a great sign for the evolving theater style in the fact that again poets live who can give us and our times the forms for a Cult of Life. We will build the house from its foundation. Dehmel's *Lebensmesse* is a cornerstone, most solemnly formed.⁴³

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18. Behrens. Diagram for the staging of Richard Dehmel's *Lebensmesse* in the theater projected by Behrens.

⁴⁰ However, the plans of the Royal Albert Hall in London and the Trocadero in Paris suggest that the realization of Behrens's scheme was quite conceivable. It appears that Behrens had his attention directed to these buildings, and to certain acoustic principles to which his design conforms, through the convenient *Handbuch der Architektur*, Part 4, vol. I, *Die architektonische Composition*, (2nd ed., Darmstadt: Diehl, 1893), pp. 275ff.

⁴¹ *Feste*, pp. 12-17.

⁴² This descriptive term I have taken from Julius Bab, *Richard Dehmel* (1926), p. 211. Bab's comparative musical image is the last movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony.

⁴³ *Rheinlande*, I, p. 40. Behrens hoped that his theater proposal would be fulfilled as part of the exhibition "Ein Document deutscher Kunst" at Darmstadt in 1901. At the last minute it was decided that pressing this program into the atmosphere of a summer exhibition was not possible, and that such an attempt would have resulted in more damage than benefit. See G. Fuchs, "Aus der Vorgeschichte des Künstlertheaters," *Der Spiegel: Blätter für Literatur, Musik und Bühne*, I (June 15, 1908), pp. 141-150. The proposed stage presentations for the "Darmstädter Spiele 1901" are given in *Die Rheinlande*, I (April 1901), pp. 45-46. Production of modern plays met with total public apathy and Olbrich's summer theater had to be used for lighter entertainment and concerts. This is anonymously reported in A. Koch, ed., *Die Ausstellung der Darmstädter*, pp. 238-239. In the same volume, see also the anonymous [G. Fuchs?] article, "Ideen zu einer festlichen Schau-Bühne," pp. 300-319.

Certainly much of the Fuchs-Behrens-Dehmel theater—with its anti-naturalism and anti-democracy, its idea of an elite, poetic stylization, the elementary expressiveness of the dance, and above all the reckless grasp on life as its own creator of philosophical and moral criteria—echoes Nietzsche, despite the fact that one can hardly imagine Nietzsche caught up in the naïveté of parts of the Cult of the Beautiful Life.⁴⁴ He would nevertheless have understood the endeavors of the Cult:

And Zarathustra began to speak once more. “O my friends,” he said, “you strange men, you Higher Men, how well you please me now,

“since you have become joyful again! Truly, you have all blossomed forth: for such flowers as you, I think *new festivals* are needed.

“A little brave nonsense, some divine service and ass festival, some joyful old Zarathustra-fool, a blustering wind to blow your souls bright.

“Do not forget this night and this ass festival, you Higher Men! You devised *that* at my home, I take that as a good omen—only convalescents devise such things!

“And if you celebrate it again, this ass festival, do it for love of yourselves, do it also for love of me! And in remembrance of me!”

Thus spoke Zarathustra.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In Karl Scheffler's study of Behrens's house at Darmstadt, *Dekorative Kunst*, IX (1901), he first states that Behrens's art and his world-view are inseparable. He proceeds to discuss Behrens's natural aristocratic qualities: “He knows nothing of the social compassion that torments so many artists and mars both their lives and their works.” Behrens does not have affinity with Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Morris, but rather with Nietzsche. For Scheffler, Behrens's basic frame of mind is an optimistic egoism in the best sense (pp. 21–22). Following a warning of the possibility of a despot, Nietzsche wrote: “This, however, is the other danger and my other pity: He who is of the mob remembers back to his grandfather—with his grandfather, however, time stops. / Thus all that is past is handed over: for the mob could one day become master, and all time be drowned in shallow waters.” / Therefore, O my brothers, is a new nobility needed: to oppose all mob-rule and all despotism and to write anew upon law-tables the word: ‘Noble.’ / For many noblemen are needed, and noblemen of many kinds, *for nobility to exist!* Or, as I once said in a parable: ‘Precisely this is godliness, that there are gods but no God!’ [*Zarathustra*, p. 22.]

This anxious search for a revitalized aristocracy before the threat of a democratic deluge illuminates the motives of the Grand-Duke as well; the Artists' Colony was more a last minute attempt to fight fire with fire than a whole-hearted pursuit of modernity.

That Behrens, and therefore also the “Modern Movement,” has roots other than Morris has been obvious from the beginning. Complementary to the material discussed here, Friedrich Ahlers-Hestermann in *Stilwende* (p. 79) aptly introduced the term “Zarathustrastil” precisely in connection with his description of the splendor of the music-room in Behrens's Darmstadt house (1900–01). Behrens emphasized the symbolic importance of the two steps that led into this ceremonial room with its elaborate materials and prolific crystal symbology.

Rudolf G. Kohler, in Helmut Selig, ed., *Jugendstil. Der Weg ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg/Munich: Keyserische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), p. 426, extended the term “Zarathustrastil” to Behrens's prose in *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*.

⁴⁵ *Zarathustra*, pp. 325–26. Julius Bab, in *Richard Dehmel* (Berlin: Gose und Tetzlaff, 1902), pp. 1–2, saw the following verses as the leitmotif of Dehmel's life and poetry: “Und der Mensch will selig werden auf Erden—weisst Du noch, wie man das machen muss?” (And man wants to find bliss on earth—do you know how one should do that?)

In 1900, when Behrens wrote his *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, Adolphe Appia's proposals within the Wagnerian tradition were the revolutionary but unrealized new theories of stagecraft.⁴⁶ Although they urged a freedom of scenic creation, they bent toward an intensification of the dramatic line and an absorption of the actors and viewers into an illusion, and into an emotional, non-rational total experience. Behrens, too, claimed that his theater was to give an illusion. But viewed theatrically, rather than theorized metaphysically, Behrens's proposals, rather than illusionistic, were intended for a sensate immediacy between the actor and viewer. The shallow stage with the consequent emphasis on forestage acting, the proximity of seating and acting areas, the lack of definition between these areas and their inclusion in one architectonic space, the simplicity and architectural permanence of the stage background, the emphasis on dance and movement, and the simple illumination all served to establish that theatrical contact which became the prime interest of revolutionary twentieth century stage and theater designers. The telling difference is that with Behrens, although the "offering and receiving partaker" is presumed to dress and comport himself as a true *Mitkünstler* in the Cult of the Beautiful Life, he nevertheless participates without an emotional submission to the enacted work. In Behrens's theater, the increased contact serves to eliminate illusion and to provide clear presentation of the individual arts; Appia (and later Gordon Craig and most succeeding designers) availed himself of the various techniques for increasing contact with the audience, but to a different end. Appia sought, especially through elaborately controlled evocative lighting, to create a space for the actor and to immerse both the actor and the viewer in an *ambiance* and a mood. It is desirable that the viewer be a participant, but a participant in the presented work. There is a temporary submission of one's self to the emotional force of the piece. With Behrens, one freely and exaltedly participates in the high mass of the cult to which one is perpetually submitted.⁴⁷

We seek the harmony of our spirit with the *Urnatur*—reflecting Nietzsche, the overcoming of the little reason of our intellect by the great and powerful reason of our entire bodily existence (*Zarathustra*, p. 61). Bab uses "Die Lebensmesse" as the most potent example of Dehmel's central theme. We may note in passing that Zarathustra's "O Man! Attend!" forms the climax of Delius' "Mass of Life." Both Dehmel and Bab are anxious to point out the independence of Dehmel's thought and poetry from Nietzsche. Bab sees this distinction stemming from the "Germanentum" of Dehmel as contrasted to the "slavic-romanisch, humanistisch" spirit of Nietzsche (Bab, *Dehmel* [1902], p. 12). Nevertheless, Bab writes: "So Dehmel has become the standard-bearer in the progress of a new Renaissance, of a new planting of human culture in the colorful ground of this material world; the standard of his art quivers in the zephyr of a new era that more joyfully celebrates the arts, and his bold figure rises head-high above all his comrades. Only one other towers into the same proud heights, he who marches at the head of this host: Zarathustra-Nietzsche." Ibid., p. 10. See also *Zarathustra*, p. 111.

⁴⁶ In the article in *Rheinlande*, p. 28, Behrens criticized Wagnerian staging for its "plastic painting, painted architecture, illustrative music and similar devices which contrive to counterfeit nature or art in an anti-stylistic mixture." As these remarks are specifically directed against Bayreuth, it is not clear to what extent Behrens would have pressed his argument against Appia. That Behrens knew Appia's work is certified by E. Bruckmann-Cantacuzène, who published an article in her husband's journal on the necessity for an artistic reform of the theater (*Dekorative Kunst*, VIII [April 1901], pp. 271-78). She writes warmly of Appia's recently published book, and promises to publish Appia's designs plus a discussion of Behrens's theater proposals in one of the next numbers. Apparently this second article did not appear; but, considering Behrens's relationship with the Bruckmanns, we can be sure that he learned of Appia's book no later than April 1901—probably much earlier.

⁴⁷ For a brief account of related German initiatives in the theater see the Appendix.

Appia's statement quoted above makes clear his endeavor to adapt all visual means for the underscoring of the dramatic line.⁴⁸ The visual realization exists for the poetry; the word stands pre-eminent above the other arts. In contrast to this, one of the characteristics of the Jugendstil attempts to bring art to the whole of life was the disappearance of any hierarchy in the arts. The most worthless of texts could receive painstaking typographical and decorative treatment. The picture frame participated in the expression of the work that it enclosed, and often the whole was intended to be subservient to the decor of the room in which it was placed. Architecture could become a mere scaffolding for decoration. Behrens's theater proposal contained the germ of this same unordered, total beautifying. The *Lebensmesse* was clearly of great importance to Behrens. Nevertheless, his insistence on the independent beauty of each part of his total art form—of the space, the materials, the decor, the stage furniture, the costumes, the dance, the gestures, the declamation—could only imply a relative decrease in the importance of the word. Georg Fuchs repeatedly emphasized the importance of visual factors at the expense of the literary element; the goal of theater, as he saw it, was to achieve artistic effects, not literary effects.⁴⁹

In 1909, through the support of an avid patron of the arts, the banker, Karl Ernst Osthaus, Behrens received the opportunity to produce a theater work according to his principles. The production was to be part of a festival celebrating the opening of the Stadtgartenhalle in Hagen, in Westphalia. Behrens chose to stage *Diogenes*, an uncompleted verse comedy by his late friend Otto Erich Hartleben.⁵⁰ The play had not been staged previously, and it was an apt work for the Behrens program—at least in its thematic implications, if not in its dramatic possibilities. *Diogenes*, “the

⁴⁸ See note 24.

⁴⁹ Fuchs, “Aus der Vorgeschichte des Künstlertheaters,” cited above n. 43. Theater should not be a “Schankstätte für Literatur;” on the contrary, we should have theater that is nothing else but “Theater: l'art pour l'art, le théâtre pour le théâtre” (p. 147).

Behrens's friend, the poet and essayist Otto Julius Bierbaum, described the Neuromantik theater which both he and Behrens sought in this way: “We envision as the ideal a juxtaposition of the arts in which none of them holds a position of superiority.” O. J. Bierbaum, *Die vernarrte Prinzess: Ein Fabelspiel in drei Bildern, mit einer Vorrede über das musikalische Bühnenspiel* (Munich: Langen, 1904), p. xx.

On Dec. 28, 1901, Bierbaum had opened his Trianon-Theater in Berlin, an attempt at a lyric theater that did not survive the opening night. It may have been a symbolic as well as a physical fact that one of the elements contributing to the Trianon-fiasco was the punctuation of the verses of “the little Muse” by the rumbling of the elevated trains. Bierbaum presents the evening's program and makes his excuses in *Die Insel*, III (Jan. 1902), pp. 119ff.

In his article of 1907, Scheffler spoke of the danger of loss of hierarchy among the arts and placed the blame on Gordon Craig, who personified in stagecraft what Scheffler felt were the recognized dangers of the English cult of arts-and-crafts. Scheffler protests that for Craig the word is one with movement, line, color, and rhythm. “If this attitude wins the day, then the reform of the stage must necessarily end in superficial theatricalism.” (Scheffler, “Bühnenkunst,” cited in note 47 above, pp. 220–21). Scheffler's summary treatment of Craig is inadequate; I present it only because Scheffler's argument points up a relevant problem in a context which would have been known to Behrens.

⁵⁰ The first two scenes of *Diogenes* were written in 1896 and published in *Pan*, IV (Dec. 1896), pp. 223–232. Scenes 3, 4, and 5 were written at the same time; the first scene was reworked in 1898. The work was never completed but was published in its fragmentary state (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1905). The work was a free adaptation of *Diogenes* by Felix Pyat (Paris and Leipzig, 1846).

dog,” grasps life at its most elementary and sensual level and shocks the citizens of Athens with his rejection of all conventions and his shameless acts. The beautiful Aspasia, beloved by the nobles of Athens, is won from both her suitors and her superficial love of riches by the words and example of Diogenes. But Diogenes is not unaffected by Aspasia. While the resolution of the attraction of Diogenes and Aspasia for one another is not given in Hartleben’s fragment, the direction it would have taken is clear. One need not choose between the acceptance of life and the love of beauty—forward to the Cult of the Beautiful Life!

This production reflects the tone of Behrens’s 1907 statement rather than that of the *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*: the emphasis is specifically on the stage problems; the social implications are less present here than they were with Fuchs at the same time. Formally, Behrens pushes his “relief stage” to the limit. The photographs of the production show the tiny shelf on which the actors performed in a highly stylized manner. Here at last all is “*Pathos und Pose*” (figs. 19, 20). Yet this apparently unpromising production merits consideration.⁵¹

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Theodor Lessing’s critique in *Die Schaubühne* minimizes the artistic value of Hartleben’s comedy and suggests that Behrens chose a work of insufficient gravity and quality for a trial of his theater reform. It may be that Lessing’s personal commitment to the Symbolist theater (and the inadequacies of the Hagen experiment) blinded him to some potentially excellent qualities of Behrens’s program, but his criticism still appears quite sound. He makes light of Behrens’s exaggerated stylization and of the insistence on genuine objects and materials for props. He also criticizes the idea that the auditorium and stage are one space. He accuses Behrens, as a man from the visual arts, of considering staging merely as an end in itself. This visually-oriented staging results in a stage space which is not, according to Lessing, the space in which drama takes place. While we don’t want a naive illusion of nature in the theater, we must still differentiate between understanding the symbol as real and symbolically understanding reality. Whereas Behrens properly avoids the former, he improperly fails to achieve the latter. The result is an over-emphasis on visual factors at the expense of the drama.

Nevertheless, the severity of Behrens’s relief-stage production of *Diogenes* may reflect his consideration of the problem of the theatrical depreciation of the word. He wished to retain the beautiful word, yet he did not want to subject the other arts to a subservient theatricalism. Behrens’s resolution was to exercise his original

⁵¹ For contemporary descriptions and criticisms of this production, see: Ernst Schur, “Peter Behrens und die Reform der Bühne,” *Kunstgewerbeblatt*, N.F. XXII (Dec. 1910), pp. 41–44; *Leipziger Tageblatt* (June 30, 1909), pp. 10–11; Theodor Lessing, *Hannoverscher Kurier*, Beilage “Welt und Wissen,” (July 7, 1909); Lessing, *Düsseldorfer Generalanzeiger* (July 17, 1909); Lessing, *Die Schaubühne*, V (Aug. 1909), pp. 145–151; Wilhelm Schäfer, *Die Rheinlande*, IX (Aug. 1909), pp. 265, 267–271; A. Jolles, *Die neue Rundschau*, XX (Aug. 1909), pp. 1227–29. According to Jolles, the presentation did not fulfill the potential of either the drama or the stage theory. See also Kraft-Eike Wrede, *Karl Ernst Osthaus und das Theater. Peter Behrens’s Inszenierung des ‘Diogenes’ von Otto Erich Hartleben für die Hagener Sommerschauspiele (1909)* (Hagen: Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, 1984). With particular reference to Osthaus, but also with a facsimile of the Behrens-designed announcement for the “Diogenes” production, see § V, “Das Jahr des Theaters,” pp. 59–65, of Walter Erben, “Karl Ernst Osthaus, Lebensweg und Gedankengut,” in Herta Hesse-Frielinghaus, et al., *Karl Ernst Osthaus. Leben und Werk* (Recklinghausen: A. Bongers, 1971).



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program within the most rigid limits. In this way his beautiful production contracted until the whole performance became virtually a recitation in fine but simple surroundings, with rhythmic, expressive movements and gestures by the actors. For the audience and the performers there was a spatial immediacy; the physical impediments and the sensations of theatricalism were largely avoided; and with adequate actors, the dramatic and imaginative creation of the poet could be recreated in the auditor. This would be at least the potential of Behrens's endeavor. An austere production, however, at once stylized and yet simple enough to give the proper, unified emphasis to the poetry, relies on great literature for its effect. In 1907, Behrens had suggested that the classics be used for the initial trials of his program. Whether *Diogenes* was sufficiently monumental to succeed in fulfilling Behrens's program is doubtful; the Hagen experiment had no direct successors.⁵²

What then was Behrens's achievement? The contemporary critic, Benno Ruettenauer, wrote of the goals and the promise of the Darmstadt activity. Until now, he said, the new activity in the arts has concentrated too much on particulars and not enough on the whole. The new art is yet to be created as an entirety. It must manifest its vital power by influencing the whole of life, augmenting life through beauty and strength. A people and a time must finally be measured in terms of their total formation of life. Art would no longer be sought mainly in individual works, but rather in the beautiful harmony of all that is created. The

⁵² For the "dramatic" achievement of sheer recitation see the commentary on Karl Kraus' Theatre of Poetry (in Vienna, first decade of the 20th century) in Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957), pp. 242-243.

As indicated in his interesting final statement on theater ("Ber die Kunst auf der Bühne," *Frankfurter Zeitung* [March 20, 1910], pp. 1-3), Behrens had come to respect what could be achieved in recitation or in rehearsal. He insisted, however, that verse should be recited as verse, and with proper gestures; soon he was at the position discussed in the text: a desire for an architectonic structure of the several arts culminating in the unified rhythm of a production which did justice to the poetic word. Movement and gesture on a relief stage remained Behrens's principal theme.

Behrens specifically cited the admirable work of Jacques Dalcroze and his students in eurhythmics. It was at just this time that Heinrich Tessenow designed and built a theater and associated school and residential complex for Dalcroze. This institution was the elevated communal cultural center of Hellerau near Dresden, a garden city that was created and sustained by Karl Schmidt's Deutsche Werkstätten für Handwerkskunst—important contributors to the development of the Deutscher Werkbund.



19. Behrens. Production of Hartleben's *Diogenes* at the Stadtgartenhalle, Hagen, 26 June 1909; the Prologue.

20. Behrens. Production of Hartleben's *Diogenes*; scene I.

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time, encompassing its own art, will again have "style;" constituent parts will be found to be necessarily as they are, and the imitation of that which is foreign in time or space will be unthinkable. That is the ideal of the new art; that is what the new century must achieve.⁵³

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These endeavors pursued one possible course toward the goal of cultural integration. They were sufficiently general in their origins that the movement received its name "Jugendstil" only after its appearance and without a formal manifesto. The closest thing to a manifesto, to my knowledge, was the *Programm* issued in 1900 by the Eugen Diederichs publishing house, which had also accepted Behrens's *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* for publication. Diederichs proclaimed the following intentions:

As the leading publisher of the *Neuromantik*, I would like to emphasize that this movement is not to be confused with that of the decadents in literature. The new cultural direction does not favor primitivism, nor unrealistic dreams; rather, succeeding the age of specialization and one-sided intellectualization, it will to observe and enjoy the world as something whole. By once again conceiving the world intuitively, it overcomes the materialism and naturalism that have been the fruit of intellectualism. The Romantics of the early nineteenth century opposed the cold smoothness of antiquity and believed that they would find a more natural man in the Middle Ages, to which they returned in song and legend. We moderns, however, seek our ideals in the time when the energy of the people expressed itself in the unfragmented personalities of the humanistic age. My monographs on the history of German culture are intended to be a landmark on this course, and in a few years the era of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries will have its place not only in the minds of scholars, but also in those of the people. The old Romantics strove for much knowledge, for the universality of man; and inasmuch as they sought not only to think their ideals but also to live them, they gave life to their knowledge. The *Neuromantik* will follow the same course if it goes back to and continues the naturalness, the originality, the art, and the joy of existence common to the men of the age of Paracelsus and Dürer. The cultural

⁵³ B. Ruettenauer, *Kunst und Handwerk* (Strassburg, 1902), pp. 71-72, in the chapter "Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst," actually written prior to the 1901 exhibition.

philistine who merely decorated himself with patches of culture, and whom Nietzsche has rightly criticized, will be overcome, and the new movement will instruct him in the artistic culture of the twentieth century. The desire of the soul for something that will give meaning and content to life leads directly to the deepening of the individual. From this profundity man develops, as shown by Goethe, to harmony with his environment; the apperceptive life leads to the fulfillment of the latent energies and talents, to the healthy and joyous man whose life is an unconscious work of art. No longer dead knowledge, but art shall transform the soul and the feeling of man and lead him to practical activity. Only in this way did Ruskin lead English culture to its present influential position.⁵⁴

The times of Dürer and of Goethe, recalled by Diederichs, are the two *Blütezeiten*, the two “springs,” of German civilization, nourishing the flowering of culture in which the integration of life and art will find its origin in art. The course of the “Jugendstil” was to search for and envision an artful life without need to check artfulness against existence. The Künstler-Kolonie at Darmstadt was the most productive center for this endeavor; Behrens’s theater proposal, the most ambitious application of its principles. It makes overt what otherwise might have been only implicit.

Primitive acceptance of the symbol or image as reality itself, however important a role in life this attitude might give to the arts, seemed an obvious anachronism in the late nineteenth century. An alternative, the symbolic understanding of reality, placed too much emphasis on a reality which was judged not to deserve this primacy. Furthermore, symbolic understanding was thought too private in the case of the artist, too abstract in the case of the scientist. (The Neuromantik did not know Freud.) A remaining alternative was to make reality symbolic. The invention, energy, power, and self-consciousness of modern man could re-unite reality and symbolism by transforming life into art.

The endeavor to dramatize the world, to make the whole of life artistic, to make every act symbolic, was a high goal. But it was an endeavor in constant danger of destroying that which it most highly valued. All hierarchy threatened to disappear; the frame became as important as the picture. What was meant to be artful risked being only artificial. The step from everything achieving symbolic meaning to being “merely symbolic”⁵⁵ was discovered to be dangerously short. Heralded as the model of a new cultural era, the Darmstadt colony turned out to be a huge stage set. Houses were mere coulisses; monumental buildings and even people formed a backdrop before which danced the most artful creation of all, a Neo-romantic, modern *Zeitgeist*. Almost immediately the *sachlich* (“objective,” “matter-of-fact,” “down to earth”) reaction set in. Still another solution to the problem of cultural

⁵⁴ Eugen Diederichs, *Leben und Werk*, ed. Lulu von Strauss und Torney-Diederichs (Jena: Diederichs, 1936), pp. 52–53. Also quoted in E. Diederichs, *Aus meinem Leben* (2nd ed., Leipzig: Verlag Felix Mainer, 1938), pp. 27–28. A long series of statements by Diederichs and a full bibliography were edited by Walther G. Oschilewski and published as a *Beilage* inserted after p. 32 in *Imprimatur*, IX (1940). See also note 26 above.

⁵⁵ According to Nikolaus Pevsner in his *Pioneers of Modern Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp. 138–149, the English architect-designer C.F.A. Voysey in 1893 “declared realism to be unsuitable for decoration, he was inclined to admit plants and beasts in patterns on condition that they be ‘reduced to mere symbols.’”

integration, the endeavor to find the seeds of a new art within the problem situation of twentieth century life, now took the lead. So *Zarathustra*, the book that had been a book for everyone, became a book for no one.

Nietzsche had foreseen this condition:

The unhistorical [the power to forget] and the super-historical [art and religion] are the natural antidotes against the overpowering of life by history; they are the cures for the historical disease. We who are sick of the disease may suffer a little from the antidote. But this is no proof that the treatment we have chosen is wrong.

And here I see the mission of the youth that forms the first generation of fighters and dragon-slayers; it will bring a more beautiful and blessed humanity and culture, but will have itself no more than a glimpse of the promised land of happiness and wondrous beauty. This youth will suffer both from the malady and its antidotes; and yet it believes in strength and health and boasts a nature closer to the great Nature than its forebears, the cultured men and graybeards of the present. But its mission is to shake to their foundations the present conceptions of "health" and "culture," and erect hatred and scorn in the place of this rococo mass of ideas. And the clearest sign of its own strength and health is just the fact that it can use no idea, no party-cry from the present-day mint of words and ideas to symbolize its own existence; but only claims conviction from the power in it that acts and fights, breaks up and destroys; and from an ever heightened feeling of life when the hour strikes. You may deny this youth any culture—but how would youth count that a reproach?⁵⁶

Was Darmstadt, then, just the suffering of the first stage of convalescence? Could Nietzsche's treatment, with continued application, indeed be the cure? Perhaps; but I think it is worth indicating that the Nietzschean problem also suggests a quite different treatment. Nietzsche, and most of the men mentioned here, were aware of the limitations of nineteenth century science (*Wissenschaft*) which they saw as empirical and positivist. With Ranke had come also an empirical, positivist history (*Geschichtswissenschaft*). Now there was also such art history and theory (*Kunstwissenschaft*). These sciences have their material triumphs, it was acknowledged, but against this positivistic intellectual world one must assert the "unhistorical" and the "super-historical." History and art, and with them life, must be pulled away from the materialist grasp of positivism. New triumphs, it was hoped, would be achieved through this freedom from *Wissenschaft*. The hubris of the positivist was matched by that of the poet. The other treatment might have been a non-positivistic reinterpretation of *Wissenschaft*.

Failing any such re-interpretation of science, the Neuromantik-Jugendstil movement was no more able to come to terms with the increasingly important intellectual and social role of science than was the society against which these artists had rebelled. Consequently, the movement was never as far removed from its nineteenth century predecessors as it had sought to be.

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, essay cited in note 1, p. 77.

Appendix

The first years of the twentieth century saw a great activity in inventive theater ideas. (See the bibliography referred to in note 22 above.) From 1900 to 1903, Gordon Craig developed his highly abstract, virtually cubist, stage proposals in London before going to Germany where he associated with the avant-garde artistic group formed around Harry Graf Kessler in Berlin and Weimar. Through the good offices of Kessler, Craig was to produce *Das gerettete Venedig* (*Venice Preserved*), an adaptation by Hugo von Hofmannsthal of a tragedy by Otway, for Otto Brahm's Lessing-Theater. Craig soon fell into dispute with the famed German Naturalist producer, and *Venice Preserved* was not staged according to Craig's designs. However, a series of exhibitions of his theatrical designs, starting in Berlin in December 1904, made Craig and his work famous throughout the German-speaking world.

Martin Zickel, with others who included Max Reinhardt, had fostered anti-naturalism in Berlin, beginning with Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1898. However, their influence on staging was small, limited to the idea of more symbolic and decorative flats. In 1901, Max Reinhardt's small house "Schall und Rauch" opened in Berlin and then evolved from cabaret to theater—namely the Kleines Theater, which opened with Frank Wedekind's *Der Erdgeist* (*The Earth Spirit*) in December 1902. Also at the Kleines Theater, in January 1903, Maxim Gorki's *Nachtasyl* (*Na dyne; The Lower Depths*), a realist play, was staged with fresh fantasy by Richard Vallengin. Financially and popularly, this production might be considered the beginning of the new theater in Germany; it enjoyed five hundred performances in two years. In 1902 Isadora Duncan made her first sensation in Paris, and soon her dancing was famous throughout Europe. Max Reinhardt rose to world renown with his multifarious productions at the Neues Theater and, beginning on October 19, 1905, at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. (There is an extensive bibliography on Reinhardt. A special number of *Theatre Research*, V, no. 3 [1963], is devoted to Reinhardt's entire career.)

The foundation of the Schauspielhaus in Dusseldorf (opened with Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith* in October 1905) by Luise Dumont and Gustav Lindemann already pointed to the post-Jugendstil classical reaction in both its repertoire and its intentions. It was a dream of realizing Schiller's Nationaltheater, but it continued the search for imaginative theatrical production. Repeated requests addressed to the Dumont-Lindemann-Archiv in Dusseldorf have failed to bring any information on Behrens's relationship with the Schauspielhaus during the time of Behrens's directorship of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Dusseldorf (1903-07). W.F. Storck, *Dekorative Kunst*, XVI (1913), p. 308, says Behrens gave "instructions" for the *Hamlet* of the Schauspielhaus. Certainly all the individuals involved shared similar backgrounds, and their theoretical positions appear to have been congenial. Luise Dumont referred to the theater as the "Tempel und Tabernakel des Geistes" and used such phrases as "die Bühne als Höchste Kultstätte." See Kurt Loup, *Schönheit und Freiheit* (Dusseldorf: Stern, 1959), p. 179. For contemporary comments by the principal person involved, see L. Dumont, "Das Schauspielhaus in Dusseldorf," *Die Woche* (Oct. 7, 1905), pp. 1726-27. The "Hausordnung" of the theater was printed using the first type-face designed by Behrens (see plate between pp. 88 and 89 of Loup). One of the major stage designers for the Schauspielhaus was Eduard Sturm, who, according to information supplied to me by Dr. Walter Kordt of Dusseldorf, emphatically declared himself a "Behrens-Schüler." For six illustrations of Sturm stage designs see *Das Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf: Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Bühnenkunst*, published by the Freihochschulbund (Dusseldorf, 1930).

Craig's influential *The Art of the Theater* appeared in 1905 (also as *Die Kunst des Theaters*). Fritz Schumacher unsuccessfully strove to make the new theater, and especially Craig productions, a reality at the third Deutsche Kunstgewerbe Ausstellung in Dresden in 1906. See Schumacher's *Wandlungen im Bühnenbild* (Hamburg: Toth, 1948).

In 1907, Karl Scheffler wrote a lengthy article summing up the rapidly changed situation of the theater: "Bühnenkunst," *Kunst und Künstler*, V (March 1907), pp. 217-244. His dominant theme was an appreciation of Reinhardt. Scheffler gave Behrens the opportunity to express his theater ideas; the details remain the same as in 1900. What is significant is that Behrens's presentation is now strictly descriptive of the physical proposals for a relief-like stage—there is none of the pompous prose and none of the philosophical and sociological scaffolding of the earlier descriptions.

While Behrens was engrossed in teaching and in the beginnings of his architectural career at Dusseldorf, Georg Fuchs continued to pursue the ideas of stage and society which had evolved from the Darmstadt time. In 1905 Fuchs propagandized the relief stage in *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, a work which contained two plans and a section by Max Littmann for a proposed theater with the prescribed shallow stage.

In 1906, in the series *Flugblätter für künstlerischer Kultur*, no. 6, Fuchs described the role of the dance for a culture in which the whole of life is given form: *Der Tanz* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1906).

At this same time, under the patronage of Rupprecht, Prinz von Bayern, Fuchs created the Künstlertheater in Munich together with the stage designer Fritz Erler and the architect Max Littmann (1907-08). Littmann was an important theater architect of the time, who had built both the Prinzregententheater and the Schauspielhaus in Munich at the turn of the century. See G.J. Wolf, *Max Littmann. 1862-1931* [Munich, 1931]. The Künstlertheater, which was destroyed in the second World War, had opened with a production of Goethe's *Faust* on May 17, 1908. The theater was set above the Theresienwiese on a site in the exhibition park; along the paths which led the Bavarian nobility to the festival performance were rows of torches. The plan of the building was rectangular and there was a modified, broad, and simple proscenium opening. In other details, the theater reflected many of Behrens's principles. The direct view of the audience, the broad forestage reaching almost to the front seats, the slight terracing of the comparatively shallow stage (approx. 13' x 33'), the segmental background against which the actors appeared either in relief or silhouette (the background was here formed by one of four interchangeable, differently-colored cycloramas), are all familiar to us. The economy of sets and costuming approximates the demands of Behrens. Fuchs was, in fact, the one who carried on as the active advocate of the "relief stage" and the social principles that had been associated with it at Darmstadt. Nonetheless, the architect, Max Littmann, in his *Das Münchner Künstlertheater* (Munich: L. Werner, 1908), does not mention Behrens as he evokes extensive precedents in antiquity, the Orient, and throughout the nineteenth century with such figures as Goethe, Schinkel and Semper. To judge from the descriptions of the Künstlertheater production of *Faust*, it was mainly the evocative use of light that separated this staging from Behrens's and which related it to the main trends of twentieth century stagecraft. For an evaluation of this "first symbolist production of *Faust*," see M. Gorelik, *New Theatres for Old* (New York: Dobson, 1948), pp. 175-178. Gorelik also indicates the importance of the theater building (p. 289) and gives a brief account of Fuchs' monarchist political activities.

Gordon Craig's visit to the Künstlertheater in 1908 made him an ecstatic enthusiast of all aspects of this theater project. See Craig, *On the Art of the Theater* (London: Heinemann, 1911), and the first of his two letters to John Semar.

For an incisive study of the Künstlertheater and its influence see Walter Grohmann, *Das Münchner Künstler-theater in der Bewegung der Szenen und Theaterreform* (Berlin: Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1935). See also Lenz Prüttig, *Die Revolution des Theaters. Studien über Georg Fuchs*, Münchener Beiträge zur Theaterwissenschaft, vol. II (Munich, 1971).

Further: Fuchs, "Aus der Vorgeschichte des Künstlertheater" cited above, n. 43; G. Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters* (Munich/Leipzig, 1909), available in English as *Revolution in the Theatre*, "condensed and adapted" by C.C. Kuhn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959); Gertrude Rudloff-Hille in Seling, i, pp. 397ff.; E. Stern, *Bühnenbildner bei Max Reinhardt* (Berlin, 1955) pp. 92ff.; H.J. Birmstingl, "Modern Theater Design," *Architectural Review*, LII (1922): pp. 134-139.

What he sees as the first important exhibition of modern theater art (Mannheim, 1913) is reviewed by W.F. Storck, "Die neue Bühnenbildkunst," *Dekorative Kunst*, XVI (1913): pp. 297-312. Appia, Craig, and Behrens are seen as the principal initiators of the movement.

On Art for the Stage

Peter Behrens

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Introduction

In the summer of 1899, Ernst Ludwig, the Grand Duke of Hessen, called Peter Behrens to be one of the members of his ambitious Artists' Colony in Darmstadt. At that time, Behrens's most compelling credential for such an invitation was a series of decorative color woodcuts. Yet, in the preceding year, he had re-oriented his work to concentrate on graphics and the crafts—book design, glass, porcelain, jewelry, furniture and rugs. Behrens's forceful manner, reinforced by the enthusiastic context of the Artists' Colony, immediately led him to two new and larger interests: the theater and architecture. Though it is in architecture that Behrens was to distinguish himself, his interest in theater was deep and abiding. Behrens made a small but indelible mark in championing an anti-naturalistic theater where the viewer experienced an intense relation to the "relief stage," a shallow stage with simple backdrops that both forced and exalted the lateral movement of the actors, thus enhancing the perception of movement within a coherent visual structure.

Behrens's first three publications all concerned the theater. In "Die Dekoration der Bühne (The Decoration of the Stage)"[†] Behrens projected the theater as a total work of art. Paraphrasing him: When the curtain parts, we should experience an overpowering image of the greatest harmony, attained through the collaboration of all the fine arts. Visually, the emphasis should be on the background. The painting should be stylized—almost, or totally, dissolved into ornament.

[†] This essay was translated for *Perspecta 26* by Howard Fitzpatrick. It was first published as "Über die Kunst auf der Bühne," in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, LIV, 78 (March 20, 1910).

¹ Peter Behrens, "Die Dekoration der Bühne," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, VI (May 1900), pp. 401-405.

This invocation of ornament must be understood in its historical context and in relation to the theater. The opposite of decorative elaboration, it is rather a move toward abstraction and visually expressive but non-specific milieu. It is a rejection of naturalistic illusion, in the theater as elsewhere. This first essay offers a kernel of what is shortly to be Behrens's abiding theory of the theater. Indeed, it is a more coherent position on theater than Behrens could at that moment propose for architecture, if we are to judge by the derivative and inconsistent Jugendstil theater vignettes and a design for an art gallery that accompany this early text.

Within the same year, 1900, Behrens, in Nietzschean prose and with heightened graphic style of his own design, published his small treatise on the theater: *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols* (Festivals of life and art: a consideration of the theater as the highest cultural symbol).² Georg Fuchs, an author and critic resident in Darmstadt, and the noted lyric poet Richard Dehmel were important influences on this work. It was in a proposal for the ceremonial performance of Dehmel's poem, *Lebensmesse* (Mass of life) that Behrens exemplified his theories of theater, both in the staging of the mass and in the plan and verbal description of a proposed theater building that would serve Behrens's envisioned festivals.³ The essay on Behrens and the theater, also in this issue of *Perspecta*, gives an account of this moment of Behrens's most significant contribution to the theater.

Fuchs' *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (The stage of the future) of 1905 is a definitive statement of what had become the Fuchs-Behrens theater program.⁴ Through Fuchs, the advocacy of the relief stage made a significant contribution to the important Künstler-Theater in Munich in the last years of the decade. In this same period, Behrens found the opportunity to test, not completely successfully, his ideas in a staging of Otto Erich Hartleben's *Diogenes* at the Stadtgartenhalle in Hagen in 1909.⁵

It is in a short contribution of 1907⁶ and in the 1910 essay translated here⁷ that Behrens reviews his advocacy for the theater—emphasizing the theatrical potentials of the relief stage with a minimum of the exaggerated prose that previously had served his larger philosophical and sociological ambitions.⁸

—Stanford Anderson

² Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst. Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols* (Leipzig: Diederichs, 1900).

³ Behrens, "Die 'Lebensmesse' von Richard Dehmel als festliches Spiel," *Die Rheinlande*, I (Jan. 1901), pp. 28-40.

⁴ G. Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin/Leipzig: Schuster and Loeffler, [1905]).

⁵ Kraft-Eike Wrede, Karl Ernst Osthaus und das Theater, *Peter Behrens' Inszenierung des 'Diogenes' von Otto Erich Hartleben für die Hagener Sommerschauspiele* (1909) (Hagen: Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, 1984).

⁶ Behrens, a statement on the theater in Karl Scheffler, "Bühnenkunst," *Kunst und Künstler*, V (March 1907).

⁷ Behrens, "Über die Kunst auf der Bühne, *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

⁸ However Behrens never ceases to frame his considerations about art in an opposition to civilization—the perceived dominance, that is, of intellect and science over intuition and art—as in a piece close in time to that translated here: Behrens' response to a set theme on the future of our culture, "Die Zukunft unserer Kultur," *Frankfurter Zeitung* (April 14, 1909), pp. 1-2.

Today, when conversation turns to the theater, the various conflicting opinions expressed betray more than a casual interest in the subject. The alternating praise for and dissatisfaction with particular performances and the diverse preferences and criticisms voiced show, however, that there is no agreement as to the essential nature of the art which has its place on the stage. One would like to see more artistic spirit brought to the stage, but one is uncertain whether the fine arts should play a greater role, or whether the cure lies in restraint, such as in the avoidance of the decorative shortcomings which have traditionally prevailed. Reinhardt's serious and commendable direction and the 1908 Munich Künstlertheater—the best that our age has yet produced—displayed both naturalistically plastic sets, reinforced by highly refined lighting, but also often the avoidance of means by which to artistically invoke a specific locality. Only walls or curtains provided a spatial enclosure to the stage. Reinhardt's achievement is beyond doubt. Still, it seems to me, even his current work is not yet the final fulfillment of all our hopes. It may have satisfied us for a time to see, in place of the workmanlike sets of the scene painter, the touch of an artist, whether in rich elaboration or simplification. And, even though his directing also has added extraordinary freshness, originality, and genuineness, we still believe in greater possibilities. What we unconsciously hope for is not an expansion and refinement of decorative principles; rather it is more, perhaps the beginning of a style unique to the stage.

I have heard thoughtful people deny that our age can achieve a style, particularly when the concept of style is applied to the theater. Style requires a commonality of aesthetic sensibility among people, or at least a large class of people, regardless of whether that sensibility is "high" or "low." I agree that this commonality does not exist. But style is, further, the combined effect of particular elements of form joined in a common expression: unity in all aspects and in the innermost essence of the work. This unity is not imposed from without, but is governed by an internal rule structure. This unity lies in the hands of the artist and the question is whether some of these preconditions can be fulfilled in order for us to establish a new style. I think this is possible.

In terms of its resources, the art of the theater is the most manifold art. It is not a matter, as is the case with painting, of communicating a mental impression to the viewer through the rhythmic ordering of forms and colors; or of communicating to the ear via the more abstract art of music, based on the laws of harmony. Not one sense alone should be affected, since the art of the theater encompasses the full sensuousness of real life. We perceive the world and experience life only through the combination and changing perceptions of all the senses; they complement, define, and verify one another. If it were possible (which it is not) for a person to be totally without the senses except sight, he would experience the world as an incomprehensible kaleidoscope. He would not comprehend the physicality of objects, despite being able to see them, for he would not have learned their forms by touching them. He could not nourish himself, for the aroma of food would not entice him,

and his palate could not distinguish the edible from the inedible. No noise or sound could warn him, communicate with him or stir his recollection. The existence of such an individual is inconceivable. Through the sensuous diversity of its forms of expression, the art of the theater, then, has incomparably greater evocative power than any other art form, provided that it affects us through artistic means and does not have as its goal the imitation of nature. Wagner also took this view, and combined poetry, music, and painting into a simultaneous performance; he unified several art forms into a simultaneous pleasure. If one considers that even a single art form requires particular receptivity in the perceiver, how much more impossible seems the complete comprehension of several arts at once! For this reason, the theater cannot be the forum for the most varied arts, but must, despite its sensuous diversity, present only one art, namely the art of the theater.

The theatrical art cannot be understood as other than the multi-sensory performance of a poetic work by actors. These actors are the actual medium of the production; it is they who transform the poetry, who make it physically and visibly manifest—they and only they are artist and medium in one. Sets, properties, and all the resources of the modern theater are useful only insofar as they accentuate the personal artistry of the actors. A play is perfectly understandable without them, and the artistic content of the script can also be conveyed on an undecorated stage without these resources, if the actors do nothing more than act. Anyone who has had the opportunity to see a rehearsal can attest to this. One can often gain even more serious insights into the theatrical art from rehearsals, without the props, sets, and costumes so reminiscent of masquerade and diorama. It is the same as when musicians take more authentic artistic pleasure in a score or a concert than in an opera. This experience is not at all in opposition to the full sensory effect which should be achieved on the stage. It seems in bad taste to want to display several art forms at once, but the theatrical art should hardly dispense with its diversity of expressive possibilities for this reason. Just as the sound of the human voice is indispensable, so should harmony of colors between costumes and background, or the sculptural forms of the figures on stage, be indispensable.

It is just this which comprises the value of the theatrical art and the requisite sensory effect: that the vigorous presence of the figures on stage, enhanced by artistic consideration and the creative will, is heightened to a unified work, complete in itself. To be sure, the producer of such a performance must be talented in various artistic fields, and the director, whether he conceives his production alone or in consultation with other artists, must possess numerous gifts. Above all, he must have the ability, which is akin to architectural talent, to oversee the totality of the work. It is said that architecture is the basis of all art. This holds true when by the architectonic, we understand also creative, order. Among many other things, this includes the proper and balanced distribution of materials. It is on this balance—the weighing of individual factors within the plenitude of artistic fantasy to the goal of a living, organic work—that the theatrical style depends. An era in

which a pronounced intellectualism dominates will certainly find satisfaction in a performance of the written word which is underscored by language, perhaps augmented by gesture and expression. This pleasure will be little diminished by tastelessly painted flats, for such pictorial representations will not be seen as important, and will be of no interest. Or perhaps interest in the sets is aroused intentionally, and they become excessively dominant, details are invested with meaning out of the intellectual need to show historical or naturalistic authenticity. An era with a predominantly intellectual bias will otherwise not bear the stamp of a style—it will favor civilization over culture.

With regard to the question of a true theatrical style, no single form of artistic expression will be permitted to dominate. The art of the theater is not simply recitation, it is visual communication: a play must be seen. But neither is it simply pantomime, even less set design. Here, architectonic sensibility and a feeling for the proper relationship between elements is decisive. And just as the artistic in architecture is not expressed through ornament but through proportion, a careful balance according to a perceived rule structure is critical here also. And further, the human capacity to perceive momentary phenomena has definite limits. In other disciplines such as painting, the principle of the clarifying overview obtains. There are pictures which contain so much varied detail that they could easily be split into several sections, each of which would still have overabundant content. In these pictures, the essence of artistic composition is ignored. Regardless of its size, a painting is considered grand in scope and concept when it simplifies and gives order, allowing immediate comprehension of its elements.

Poetry is the foundation of theater. This we can acknowledge, but not that theater is as it were a reproduction of poetry, with the addition of appropriate gestures and locale. In its totality, it is something independent and new, a new artistic creation in its own domain. It hardly needs to be said that poetry may not be arbitrarily altered—it remains inviolable. But there is a difference between reading a play as poetry and reading it to conceive a stage production. In the latter case, a creative act comes into play, which goes far beyond the instructions of the stage directions—an act of concentration and intuition which the creation of every work of art requires. The playwright's stage directions should be seen as an aid to understanding the poetry when one is reading the work. Aesthetically they can be seen as belonging to the dramatic art form. For the performance they are without productive importance. Georg Simmel expresses very similar thoughts, ingeniously, in his essay "On the Actor": "The dramatic figure, as it appears in the script, is not a whole person, but rather only a complex of the aspects of a person which can be grasped in literature." And further: "The content of a play is projected as a poetic work to that level of the intellect whose unique nature finds its physical symbol in writing and reading. The actor conveys this existing content to the level of the visible and audible, or, if you like, from the one-dimensionality of a purely intellectual process into the three-dimensionality of full sensuousness." The play wants to transform

poetry into real life as the audience watches and listens, it wants to create a believable illusion. This intention is thoroughly valid, the question is one of how we are to define “real” and “life”; whether thereby we want to recognize a faithful likeness of our own milieu and our experiences, or whether we perceive rather another reality, which is the fulfillment of an artistic intuition. This reality, through the organic combination of its contents, gives a new beauty to another new life.

Life [in this higher sense] is movement as artistic expression: that is, it is rhythm. All art is subject to rhythm in both the narrower and broader senses. The harmonic confluence of all facets of a theatrical work to a grand, simple line is the essence of theatrical style. Only when—as required above—the performance is conceived as a single, complete work of art and one is not conscious of various art forms, and only when clarity and immediate comprehensibility are preserved, can the rhythm achieve its full effect. Thus it is necessary, as with every work of art, to simplify what occurs in the theater, to minimize, even suppress, the insignificant in order to accentuate the significant all the more strongly.

Let us keep in mind that the actor is the key. His speech should capture the rhythm of the poetry; he must speak the verses as verses, and not make them prose in order to render the content more understandable. The corruption of verse form into prose does in fact bring us closer to life, but not to poetry and even less to the essence of the work of theatrical art. The actor has an additional, artistically significant means of expressing poetry; that of gesture, in its broader meaning of action. It is likewise not simply an elaboration of the spoken word; it is art. Consider the method of Jacques Dalcroze, with which he attempts to achieve a rhythmic unity of gesture and music. Anyone who has seen performances by his pupils will recall what a psychic impression was left by the simplest movement of the limbs. Here also it is compelling structural order which unconsciously affects us so deeply. Each and every movement should be studied not for its convincing naturalness but for its sculptural value. But even more importantly, the movements of the various actors on stage should be calculated for the total effect. This is not completely within the power of the individual actors; it is the business of the director. He is the organizer and shaper, but he will only be able to carry out an idea if his actors share his conception and can submit their individual talents to his direction. The director will have created in his mind a compositional idea, a plastic concept as it were, for the structure and development of the piece. It will be a logical sequence of relief ideas which, while beautiful in themselves, above all relate closely to the poetry. If they are to make a strong impression, all movements on stage must be essentially lateral, for movement which occurs in the direction of the audience is, optically speaking, without effect. All theater depends by its very nature on this relief effect. This principle has proved its validity since the days of the Greek theater, though the tendency to employ movement in depth has at times prevailed. The intrinsic optical element of theater remains relief. In this connection I have previously espoused the relief stage.⁹

⁹ Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*.

The relief stage has a relatively shallow extension to the rear, thus its primary action takes place from side to side. In front of it is an even shallower forestage, one or two steps lower. It is unimportant whether this is called a proscenium or something else. It forms as it were the mediating transition from the house to the stage. It seems to me important in the construction of a new theater that the architectonic relationship of the proscenium to the house be expressed. The theater should be in all cases a building, an architecturally articulated whole whose center is likewise the architecturally emphasized stage. Today it is not so: the stage is a hole, a void, in which something foreign is played out, something inconsistent with the sense of space created in the house. The stage ought not to be anything but the rostrum of the house, for use by lecturers or by actors. The sides, as well as the rear wall, of the stage require an articulation which signifies an enclosed space. We do not wish to forget that we are in a building, that everything is play, image; we want to experience an illusion through art, but not a hoax; we want to be transported, but not deceived. For this reason the side and rear walls should be as architectonically evident as possible. Where the locale of the plot requires the openness of a natural setting, indicating it through an opening will suffice. One should not forget that when the focus of the artistic effect is on the arrangement of a relief this certainly requires a background with which it can achieve unity; only a space-articulating architectonic background will suffice. The surroundings of the actors are not in themselves significant, rather all interest is focused on the actors. The setting serves to sculpturally and coloristically heighten the scenes, but does not itself play a central role in the work. The side and rear enclosures no longer serve to help illustrate the content of the script in an intellectual sense, but are there only for the purely perceptual function of allowing the rhythm of the play to emerge. The same holds true for the props. The important thing about a chair is not its period or its style, but the opportunity it provides a particular character to perform the desired beautiful movement of sitting down or resting. Therefore it is better that the chair, bench, or whatever be appropriate to this purpose in that each is also a simple object, indifferent with regard to period or place of origin, yet in direct relation to the architectonic order. Then it will also be advisable in many cases to raise the stage with steps, or, when appropriate, to introduce ramps or terraces, to afford the actors the opportunity to invest their movements with symbolic value. Can there be a deeper or more palpable symbolic meaning, or one more naturally and simply expressed, than the act of ascending or descending at a certain point, or separating two characters by a barrier? Neither should costumes be selected only for style or authenticity, which in themselves are not objectionable, but they should be carefully chosen to heighten the pictorial effect of the colored relief. If the costumes are designed and arranged with this in mind, they will not have the appearance of a masquerade, but will read as necessary and harmonious parts of the whole. This is why, also with costumes, it is less the detail and more the larger picture which must be considered, and how the design of costumes can lend visual support to the movement of the figures. Most important, though, is contrast in value, as well as

in color, since the scenes must be articulated in themselves. Furthermore the color value of the costumes should on the one hand serve to differentiate the figure, and on the other hand allow the figures to form groups. The enclosure of the stage, the properties, and costumes all work together to give the artistic concept its compelling effect. When, as with Wagner's operas, the discrete effects of various art forms are not intended to be perceived, but the audience's interest is captivated by a single, rhythmically self-contained art, the experienced director has no reason to spare any means in achieving his effects. We aspire to a lively art, and it is achieved not by a reduction in expressive means, but by an intensification thereof. Even in the theater, it is not the negative but the positive which prevails, and as in all art the fruitlessness of negation is beyond doubt. Attempts which have been made, in the face of rampant tastelessness in today's theater, to outwardly simplify all means of affecting our senses, have always seemed to me especially amateurish. A stage set can only achieve a dynamic effect, in artistic terms, through creative spirit, not through crudely realistic means, such as the harsh sidelighting or downlighting of a spotlight. This currently popular contrivance of one-sided illumination is in poor taste. To be sure, it intensifies the sculptural quality of the figures, but at the same time it destroys the integrity of the image. The concentrated light from one side creates the impression that it is coming from a large space of unknown dimensions next to the stage, in a troubling contradiction to the desired spatial enclosure of the stage. The only light appropriate to the relief style is a diffuse light, whose rays parallel the viewers' line of sight.

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I consider the concept of the relief style the most important precondition for re-establishing an art for the stage. Only relief offers the possibility for rhythm, the primal element of all art, to achieve its full and palpable effect. The vehicle of all rhythmic potency on the stage is the actor. Everything in the theater must be calculated to display, to support and to heighten his art. If in the relief style we can create a stage realm for the actor, a realm which represents but does not reproduce the world, he will not hesitate to explore the widest ranges of his creativity, and we will have come nearer to a style for the theater.

1. Heinrich Tessenow, the Dalcroze Institute of Rhythmic Gymnastics at Hellerau. Institute building as seen from the plaza.

Modernity and Reform, Heinrich Tessenow and the Institut Dalcroze at Hellerau

Marco De Michelis

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Le Corbusier in Hellerau

Charles-Edouard Jeanneret travelled in Germany between April 1910 and May 1911, before he undertook his “voyage in the Orient” with August Klipstein. It was a year rich in experiences and obligations, divided among his difficult apprenticeship with Peter Behrens in Berlin, the never-completed project with his teacher Charles L’Eplattenier for a book on the construction of cities,¹ and the drafting of the manuscript *L’Etude sur le Mouvement d’Art Decoratif en Allemagne*.²

In October of the same year, his brother, the musician Albert Jeanneret,³ also went to Germany. He followed Emile Jaques-Dalcroze who had accepted an invitation to transfer his school of rhythmic gymnastics to the garden-city of Hellerau that was rising not far from Dresden.

This text, translated for *Perspecta 26* by Vicki Bilenker, is part of a completed research project dedicated to the architectural work of Heinrich Tessenow. The complex archival research was made possible by the financial support of the Department of the History of Architecture of the University Institute of Architecture in Venice, by the Bauakademie of the German Democratic Republic, which facilitated access to numerous archives, and also by a generous scholarship granted by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung of Bonn which permitted a long sojourn in Germany between 1981 and 1983.

¹ H. Allen Brooks, “Jeanneret and Sitte: Le Corbusier’s Earliest Ideas on Urban Design,” in *In Search of Modern Architecture: a Tribute to Henry Russel Hitchcock*, ed. Helen Searing (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 278–297.

² Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, *L’Etude sur le mouvement d’Art Decoratif en Allemagne* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland: Imprimerie Hafeli & Co., 1912).

³ Albert Jeanneret (7 February 1886 – 25 April 1973) studied violin in Berlin and Geneva in preparation for a career as a soloist. In 1905 he encountered the musician and pedagogue Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Dalcroze, who at that time was elaborating the foundations of his Rhythmic Gymnastics, inspired



Jeanneret, who already had met several of the protagonists of the German architectonic reform, including Theodor Fischer, Hermann Muthesius, and Peter Behrens, profited from visits to his younger brother, Albert. Through Albert he came into contact with one of the most extraordinary intellectual constellations in Germany at the threshold of the war. These artists, architects, musicians, and theater people had been brought together by the plan for the first German garden-city.

During his first visit to Albert, at the end of October,⁴ the young architect encountered Wolf Dohrn, disciple of Friedrich Naumann (of the National Socialist Movement) and the first secretary of the German Werkbund; Karl Schmidt, the founder of the Deutsche Werkstätten and another central protagonist in the formation of the Werkbund; and Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, who had initially conceived his rhythmic gymnastics as an instrument for the renewal of music teaching, and was expanding his pedagogic objectives toward a plan for global educational reform, the “rhythmization” of human life.

The serene atmosphere of this young community passionately involved in original research could not but seduce the future Le Corbusier, attracted and made curious, as he himself wrote to his parents, “everything is new... the new painting, the new sounds, the new literary forms,” loved by “one who searches.”⁵

In Hellerau, Jeanneret recorded the architecture of Fischer, Muthesius, Richard Riemerschmid, and the Englishman Baillie Scott. He also perceived the neo-Biedermeier jests, the picturesque temptations, and noted in his *Carnet*: “With all his Hellerau, Riemerschmid doesn’t really enchant me.”⁶

For Jeanneret, Hellerau was situated right in the middle of the German debate on the modern style. On one side Alfred Messel, Bruno Paul, and Behrens sought to retrace the path of Schinkel back toward the style of the Empire, toward the classical architectural codes and the archaic severity of the Doric. On the other side, Albin Müller and Riemerschmid represented the diminishing influence of the Jugendstil; they “remain[ed] the last witnesses, obstinate in the creation of new forms for the pure pleasure of new forms.”⁷

During Jeanneret’s second visit to Albert, at Christmas of 1910,⁸ Hellerau seemed to have gained a new leading figure, the architect, Heinrich Tessenow. In *L’Etude sur*

Albert to dedicate himself to this new discipline. When Dalcroze transferred his school to the garden-city of Hellerau, Albert followed him there. Beginning in 1919, Albert directed a school of rhythm in Paris, collaborating in “l’esprit nouveau.” At the outbreak of the Second World War he returned to Switzerland, where he continued to teach rhythm and music until his death

⁴ Charles-Edouard Jeanneret to his parents, 28 October 1910 (letter), Le Corbusier file, LCms62, Bibliothèque de la Ville, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland; *Carnet III*, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris, page marked “Munich, 28 October 1910”.

⁵ Jeanneret to his parents, 28 October 1910 (letter).

⁶ Jeanneret, *Carnet III*, page marked “Munich, 28 October 1910”.

⁷ Jeanneret to Charles L’Eplattenier, 16 January 1911 (letter), E212, Fondation Le Corbusier.

⁸ Albert Jeanneret and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret to their parents, 29 December 1910 (postcard), Dossier Jeanneret-Perret, XXII/16, Bibliothèque de la Ville, La Chaux-de-Fonds. This postcard, signed “Albert-Edouard”, was sent by the two brothers from Dresden.

le Mouvement d'Art Decoratif en Allemagne of 1912, Jeanneret speaks of the "extraordinary city of Hellerau" as being constructed by "the greatest artists of Germany."⁹ Among these, Tessenow is the first to be cited. Later, in 1924, in an article truly resentful of events in German architecture,¹⁰ Le Corbusier describes Tessenow, the "modest" builder of the village of Hellerau, as being among the "generous spirits and human hearts." He includes two images of Tessenow's work, the house for Alexander von Salzmänn, where Albert lived,¹¹ and the Hall of the Dalcroze Institute.

This Christmas visit resulted in Tessenow's inviting Jeanneret to work on the definitive plan of the Dalcroze Institute. Jeanneret was strongly tempted to abandon Behrens's studio to participate in a project whose importance must have been clear to him. Surely he knew of Tessenow's two preliminary versions of the project. In the middle of January 1911, Jeanneret hinted to L'Eplattenier of the possibility of cutting short the Berlin sojourn to transfer to Dresden.¹² However, at the end of February the idea seemed to die when Tessenow told Jeanneret, who had requested that his involvement "should be extremely instructive," that "he intended to retain for himself the most interesting part."¹³

During 1911, Jeanneret returned to Hellerau twice, once at the beginning of April, before proceeding to Munich, Stuttgart, Hagen, Hamburg and Berlin, and, then again in the first days of May. From Hellerau he left on the seventh of May for his voyage in the Orient.¹⁴ During these visits he saw the start of construction in the yard of the Dalcroze Institute. He would speak fully of the Dalcroze Institute, without having seen it finished, in his *Etude*.¹⁵

This text helps us in interpreting the particular attention paid Tessenow by the young Jeanneret, for whom the architecture of the *Bildungsanstalt* is inseparable from the presence of its inspirer, Dalcroze, and his project to reform a gracious garden-city into a "collectivist manifestation," an educative nucleus offered to the entire world. There would be realized "the most favorable circumstances so that genius

⁹ Jeanneret, *L'Etude sur le mouvement*, pp. 42 and 47–51.

¹⁰ Paul Boulard [Charles-Edouard Jeanneret], "Allemagne", *L'Esprit Nouveau* 27, November 1924. See also Winfried Nerdinger, "Standard und Typ: Le Corbusier und Deutschland 1920–1927," in *L'Esprit Nouveau. Le Corbusier und die Industrie 1920–25*, ed. Stanislaus von Moos (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn Verlag, 1987), pp. 44–53.

¹¹ In two letters to his parents, Albert speaks of his stay in the Salzmänn house. See Albert Jeanneret to his parents, 18 February 1912 and undated, XXII/51 and XXII/53, Dossier Jeanneret-Perret.

¹² Jeanneret to L'Eplattenier, 16 January 1911 (letter), E212, Fondation Le Corbusier.

¹³ Jeanneret to William Ritter, February 1911 (letter), E2, Fondation Le Corbusier. This letter is also published in a book that is fundamental to the understanding of Le Corbusier's travel in Germany and the following trip to the East; see Giuliano Gresleri, *Le Corbusier. Viaggio in Oriente* (Venice: Marsilio Editori and Fondation Le Corbusier, 1984), pp. 389–391.

¹⁴ Albert wrote on the 8 March 1911 that "Edouard will arrive April 2 after having left Behrens; he will remain some days here, and then will make his trip to Germany, coming back here at the end." On the 4 April 1911 he wrote that "Ed. arrived last night." (Albert Jeanneret to his parents, 8 March and 4 April 1911 [postcards], XXII/31, Dossier Jeanneret-Perrier). The itinerary of the voyage in Germany is reconstructed in Gresleri, *Viaggio in Oriente*, p. 19.

¹⁵ Jeanneret, *L'Etude* (see note 2), p. 50.

might be manifest, so that artists can produce almost total works of art.”¹⁶ The great Institute was, at once, a theater, stadium, and gymnasium, all of which would imbue the city with a new spirit.¹⁷

Much that Jeanneret writes on the music of Dalcroze—“There inside it is that simplicity, that joy, that need for unity and that return to health”¹⁸—could also have referred to Tessenow’s architecture. Jeanneret contrasts Dalcroze’s compositions with the “exacerbated modernism” of a Richard Strauss, whose work suggested the suicide of music and the death of opera as exemplified by *Salome* and *Electra*. Between the arbitrary passion for the new (proclaimed by the diverse Jugendstil Secessions) and the pure and simple impulse of modernity determined to rediscover “the style” in the classical texts of Greek architecture, Le Corbusier wrote in 1913 that Tessenow:

seals with the great complex of the Institute the contract of the good with the useful. This great builder has not pretended even for an instant to make beauty. He wanted to be useful to those for whom he was building a dwelling. It is because of this that Hellerau is so beautiful in some of its parts, precisely where any pretext has been put aside.¹⁹

With the realization of Hellerau, the birth of a new religion was announced, one that professed “that happiness should be useful” and that inaugurated “an era of good with Dalcroze, an era of utility with Tessenow, the builder of houses.”²⁰ In the new religion of modernity, a city arises like a work of art and, at the same time, like an army, under the reign of order.

Perhaps Jeanneret knew Karl Scheffler’s brief text of 1912, where Scheffler says:

If other architects of our time seek ambitiously to be classicists, then Tessenow

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁷ In 1924 Le Corbusier sent a copy of *Vers l’Architecture* to Dalcroze and wrote, “You are one of the personalities who has contributed most to the development of a true *esprit nouveau*.” (12 January 1924 [letter], Dossier Dalcroze, Fondation Le Corbusier). Le Corbusier’s interest in Dalcroze during the 1920’s is illustrated by the fact that he attended classes at the Paris school direct by Albert (*L’Esprit Nouveau*, Van Moos, p. 230) and by the publication in *L’Esprit Nouveau* of an essay by Albert on La Rythmique. This essay was an accurate description of the “sober and solid” architecture of Tessenow’s building (*L’Esprit Nouveau*, n. 2, p. 183–189 and n. 3, p. 331–338).

¹⁸ Jeanneret to L’Eplattenier, 16 January 1911 (letter).

¹⁹ Jeanneret, “Hellerau (Lettre de voyage),” in *Feuille d’Avis de La Chaux-de-Fonds*, 4 July 1913. Le Corbusier again visited Hellerau at the end of June 1913 when he assisted in the presentation of Gluck’s *Orfeo* at the Festival of the Institut Dalcroze. The Internationale Baufach-Ausstellung at Leipzig fell in the middle of his trip (Jeanneret to W. Ritter, undated [certainly of June 1913] [letter], E2 [11] 145–148, Fondation Le Corbusier). Jeanneret renounced the plan to go to Hellerau in June, 1912 to participate in the first Festival of the Institut Dalcroze where Tessenow’s now completed building must have been open to the public (Herta Hesse-Frielinghaus, *Briefwechsel Le Corbusier Karl Ernst Osthaus*, Sonderveröffentlichungen 2 [Hagen: Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, 1977]). It is symptomatic of the compartmentalization of historiographic work (which pushes historians of the theater to ignore the work of Tessenow and those of architecture to ignore the work of Appia and Dalcroze) that the editor should interpret the rendezvous at Hellerau as a reunion of the direction of the Werkbund and not instead as a musical festival. Jeanneret was informed by his mother of the Hellerau festival of 1912 in July (18 July 1912 [letter], Dossier Jeanneret Perret, XXXV/18).

²⁰ Ibid.

with his building is, silently, a classicist full of discretion. That is: he has fundamentally investigated the living sense of construction of our time, to the point at which the necessary becomes beautiful, the useful is transformed into song.²¹

Hellerau, City of Music

The establishment of Hellerau, the first German garden-city, was at the initiative of the Dresden industrialist Karl Schmidt.²² He had established the Dresdner Werkstätten for the production of furniture in 1898. It had grown to employ 500 when, in 1906, faced with the problem of creating a new factory, Schmidt chose a radical transformation of the industrial plants outside Dresden. His project included a residential settlement for his workers and managers.

Hellerau might have been nothing more than another workers' city, following the example of the English company towns or of the worker colonies realized by Krupp since the middle of the nineteenth century. However Schmidt, a protagonist of the modern, sought to expand each of his initiatives into a complex project of reform. Muthesius once observed, with light irony, that his field of interests extended from "the sofa cushion to the construction of the city."²³ Hellerau must be understood from its beginning, then, in terms of the crisis of the contemporary city and its reform. For the garden-city Schmidt not only proposed settlement rules and low building densities, but also appealed for the socialization of property revenues and the renunciation of possible speculative operations. These reforms which Ebenezer Howard had already considered primary, had remained when the Howardian project was diffused throughout Germany after 1902.²⁴

A suitable society would acquire the grounds of the new city and assign them in concession to a cooperative building group also constituted for the occasion. The building group would assume responsibility for the house construction and would lease them, hereditary and unlimited for the duration of the community. In Hellerau, both the proprietary land society and the cooperative, although financed by the Deutsche Werkstätten, would be independent of it, just as the members of the cooperative would not only be the dependents of Karl Schmidt, but also whoever could pay the associated quota. Schmidt worked with Riemerschmid on the first version of the plan during the summer of 1906. The structure of the city was articulated in four assigned zones: production, low-cost housing, collective services, and a section of villas and single-family houses, resulting in a socioeconomic structure differentiated and articulated by population.²⁵

²¹ Karl Scheffler, "Das Haus," in *Die Schulfeste der Bildungsanstalt Jaques-Dalcroze*, vol. 2, pt. one, *Rhythmus-Ein Jahrbuch* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1913).

²² For biographical information on Karl Schmidt see the appendix.

²³ Schmidt, curriculum vitae (see appendix).

²⁴ For discussion of the German garden-city movement, see Kristiana Hartmann, *Deutsche Gartenstadtbewegung. Kulturpolitik und Gesellschaftsreform* (Munich: Heinz Moos Verlag, 1976).

²⁵ The Hellerau bibliography is vast. One should at least consult: Wolf Dohrn, *Die Gartenstadt Hellerau* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1908); *Gartenstadt Hellerau*, Ein Bericht über den Zweck, die Organisation, die Ansiedlungs-Bedingungen, die bisherigen Erfolge und Ziele (Hellerau: Verlag der Gartenstadt Hellerau, 1911); "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau," in *Die deutsche Gartenstadtbewegung* (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Gartenstadt-Gesellschaft, 1911): pp. 17-24; Wilhelm Mackowsky, "Die

The originality of this approach is again documented by the institution of the Siebener-Kommission. This commission was charged with investigating the desires and dwelling needs of future inhabitants of Hellerau by means of a questionnaire. The control of the architectural quality of the individual building projects was entrusted to a second commission, the Bau-und-Kunstkommission, comprised of some of the most notable figures of German architecture including, Fischer, Muthesius, Fritz Schumacher, Riemerschmid, the painter Otto Gussmann and the sculptor Adolf von Hildenbrandt. It is worth noting that the same group of artists and intellectuals gathered around the Hellerau project, more or less during the same years, gave life to the organization of the German Werkbund first based in Dresden-Hellerau. Its first secretary, Dohrn, was the principal protagonist of the transfer of Jaques-Dalcroze's school to Hellerau. The reformative strategy that took shape in the project of the new garden-city was not limited to the themes of cooperative association mentioned above, particularly the reform of the house and the elimination of property revenues. The Hellerau project reflected the vast spectrum of inquietude and uneasiness stirred up by the sudden expansion of industrial civilization in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century a mood that resulted in that variegated and ambiguous movement known as the "Reform of Life."²⁶

This movement sought the healing and renewal of human existence through the assumption and practice of a new hierarchy of cultural values. It was, then, a "self-reform," a kind of privatization of the social question, that the individual subjectively achieves when he renounces the artificiality of the metropolitan life, rediscovering the primal and healthy energy of nature. He substitutes a new hygiene of daily habits for the intoxication produced by the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, meat, and medicines. He transforms the authoritarian and hierarchical principles that govern the educative systems and the productive structures of modern civilization into principles of community cooperation and of self-management.

In the garden-city, the reform of life and the reform of the city came together. Josef August Lux, Hellerau's director of courses in professional training promoted by the Dresdner Werkstätten, published the "health code" proposed by the cocoa industrialist George Cadbury to the inhabitants of the company-town of Bournville, England.²⁷ Cadbury asked the inhabitants not to consume alcoholic beverages, not to wear garments that were too tight, to eat moderately and regularly, and even to breathe through the nose and keep the mouth well closed while sleeping. The natural duty of the family was to be the care of the kitchen-garden and the garden.

One can recognize equally educative and moralizing intentions in the circulars that

Gartestadt Hellerau bei Dresden," in *Der Profanbau*, IX, 1913, n. 19: pp. 581-612; Erich Hanel, "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau," in *Die Kunst. Monatshefte fuer freie und angewandte Kunst*, XIV, 1911, n. 7: pp. 297-343.

²⁶ See Marco De Michelis, "Naissance de la Siedlung," *Cahiers de la recherche architecturale*, 1985, n. 15/17: pp. 138-153; Wolfgang R. Krabbe, *Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974); Janos Frecot, "Die Lebensreformbewegung," in *Das wilhelminische Bildungsbürgertum*, ed. Klaus Vondung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), pp. 138-152.

²⁷ "Gesundheitskodex des Arbeiterdorfes Bournville," *Hohe Warte*, 1904-1905, n. 9: p. 192.

the Hellerau cooperative sent to its own members, requesting respect for the vegetation and protection of the birds, supporting the initiatives of the local consumer cooperative, and instilling pride in the inhabitants, with prizes for the most beautiful flower gardens.²⁸

No wonder, then, that Schmidt, in his first instructions to Riemerschmid for the plan of Hellerau, did not only occupy himself with the needs of the inhabitants and the building of the factory. He also suggested the conversion of the one existing building into a non-alcoholic restaurant, and the construction of a community building, an open air theater, and a plant for air-purification (typical of the naturalistic medicine propagandized by the "Reform of Life").²⁹ Facilities were proposed for the satisfaction of the spiritual and cultural needs of the community: scholastic institutions following the reformatory anti-authoritarian pedagogy based on the exaltation of self-education and on the balance between manual activity and intellectual exercise;³⁰ athletic installations; a *Gesellschaftshaus* (community building) for the "restoration of the spirit and of art";³¹ and a House of the People, a visible symbol of the community, located at the center of the new city.³²

The aspiration of the garden-city was to be a place for the re-establishment of German culture, a new "German Olympus."³³ As a national center of cultural, theatrical, musical and gymnastic displays, the traditional barriers between disciplines would be surmounted and art would be rejoined with daily life, popular festivals, and collective and permanent education of the people. Theodor Fischer formulated an ideal model, describing it as

the building that he would have liked to build . . . a house not to be inhabited by an individual or a family, but by all; not to study and to become wise, but rather simply happy; not to pray according to this or that belief, but rather to meditate and to live intimately. Therefore not a school, nor a museum, nor a church, nor a concert hall, nor an auditorium! . . . something of all of these and also something more.³⁴

²⁸ "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau GmbH und die Baugenossenschaft Hellerau an die Hellerauer," undated [c. 1911] (typewritten memorandum), Riemerschmid Archive, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.

²⁹ Schmidt to Riemerschmid, 17 September 1906 (letter), Riemerschmid Archive. Extracts of these letters were published in the exhibition catalog *Richard Riemerschmid. Vom Jugendstil zum Werkbund. Werke und Dokumente*, ed. Winfried Nerdinger (München: Prestel Verlag, 1982).

³⁰ Dohrn, "Hellerauer Schulplane," *Gartenstadt VI*, 1912, n. 5: pp. 85-87; Idem, "Kulturbestrebungen in der Gartenstadt," *Die deutsche Gartenstadtbewegung*, pp. 101-103.

³¹ J. A. Lux, "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau," *Hohe Warte*, 1906-1907, n. 20: p. 317.

³² Ibid., p. 317; Dohrn, *Die Gartenstadt* (see note 24), p. 27. On the relations between the garden-city and the House of the People, see De Michelis "Case del popolo tedesche," in *Case del popolo. Un'architettura monumentale del moderno* (Venice and Marseilles: 1986), pp. 115-174.

³³ Heinrich Hart, *Die Vermählung von Stadt und Land. Ein soziales Experiment*, Flugschrift n. 2 (Berlin: Verlag der Gartenstadt-Gesellschaft, 1904). See also Hans Kampffmeyer, *Die Gartenstadtbewegung* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner Verlag, 1909), p. 105; and idem, "Die Gartenstadt in ihrer kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Bedeutung," *Hohe Warte*, 1906-1907, n. 7: p. 114.

³⁴ Theodor Fischer, "Was ich bauen mochte," *Der Kunstwart*, 1906, n. 1: pp. 5-9. It is significant that the article was reprinted in the issue of *Hohe Warte* dedicated to Hellerau, 1906-1907, n. 20: pp. 326-328.

Fisher's text was well known by the founders of Hellerau: by Schmidt as suggested by his letter to Riemerschmid,³⁵ by Wolf Dohrn who explicitly refers to it,³⁶ by Lux who connects it with the possible rebirth of a popular culture, accented with festivals and traditional rites.³⁷

The general musicalization of the new community of Hellerau must be seen in the context of these themes. The transfer of Dalcroze's school of rhythm from Geneva to Hellerau, and the realization in 1911 of the grand Institute designed by Tessenow, were the conclusive events of this project. In late 1906 and in 1907, a plan was perfected for the musical organization of the garden-city.³⁸ The plan had been entrusted to Richard Batka, a musicologist from Prague, who was the music editor of *Der Kunstwart*.³⁹

Batka proposed to entrust to a Musikverein (musical association) the double duty of organizing the activity of music lovers and musicians and of providing musical education for young people. Children's musical education would begin at age six, based on an adaptation of the Dalcroze Method tying the fundamental principles of music to gymnastics and outdoor physical exercises. Only at age ten was the study of a musical instrument allowed to begin, with performance practice in small orchestral groups. At eighteen years came enrollment at the Musikverein, based on the choice between the role of active member or that of audience: the concerts given by the active members would be offered in some way for the benefit of the listeners. A task, not secondary, of the Musikverein, was to collect and disseminate songs tied to the practice of diverse professions. Dalcroze's influence is very evident here, in the attempt to harmonize the development of the various productive activities through rhythm and common song. Popular festivals were to be tied to the natural unfolding of the seasons and to the important recurring events. The progress of the week would be underscored by appropriate songs saluting the repose of Saturday night and the beginning of the work week on Monday morning. Even the wail of the sirens was to be replaced by musical signals, trumpet blasts or the sounding of bells. In this way music would become an indissoluble component of everyday life, a "vital blessed force, that awakens, inflames, consoles, quiets."⁴⁰ The encounter between Jaques-Dalcroze and the first German garden-city thus was foretold in the prehistory of Hellerau.

Dohrn, Jaques-Dalcroze, Appia, Tessenow

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze began to develop his method of rhythmic gymnastics in the final years of the nineteenth century, by proposing exercises to his solfeggio

³⁵ Schmidt to Riemerschmid, 26 September 1906 (letter), Riemerschmid Archive (see note 28).

³⁶ Dohrn, *Die Gartenstadt Hellerau* (see note 24), pp. 27-29; idem, "Gartenstadt Hellerau", *Gartenstadt* III, 1909, n. 1: pp. 5-12.

³⁷ Lux, "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau," p. 317.

³⁸ [Richard] Batka, "Plan der musikalischen Organisation in der Gartenstadt Hellerau," *Hohe Warte*, 1906-1907, n. 20: pp. 318-319. See also H. Kampffmeyer, "Die Gartenstadt Hellerau," in *Der Kunstwart*, XXI, 2 (1908): pp. 103-106; Max Rosler, "Plan der musikalischen Organisation in der Gartenstadt Hellerau," *Mitteilungen für die Gemeinde Rahnitz-Hellerau*, 1913, n. 10.

³⁹ For biographical information on Richard Batka, see the appendix.

students, designed to improve their perception of musical rhythm through physical movement.⁴¹ The success of his first attempts spurred Dalcroze to dream of “a musical education in which the body itself played the role of intermediary between sound and thought and became the direct instrument of our feelings.”⁴² In the space of a few years, Dalcroze’s research had extended its own pedagogic objectives beyond the internal themes of musical education to the entire personality of the individual.

Considerations of “musical arrhythmia” became the premise for a reflection upon the “general arrhythmia” of the human condition in the modern world. Dalcroze felt the healing of the human condition obtainable through “special education, that would aim to coordinate nerve response, to bring muscles and nerves into accord, to harmonize the body and the spirit.”⁴³

After assisting in a demonstration of Dalcroze’s rhythmic gymnastics in May 1906, the revolutionary stage-designer Adolphe Appia wrote a passionate letter to the musician in Geneva saying that he had discovered in the method of Dalcroze the solution to the problem that had impassioned him for years, the “exteriorization of music,” by means of which the human body could liberate itself from “anarchy and, therefore, from ugliness.”⁴⁴ Appia continues, “your teaching makes music something that involves the body in its own interest, and in this way resolves the problem in the most practical manner. . . . Thus your idea will eventually, in the course of some generations, modify the brain.”⁴⁵

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In his answering letter, Dalcroze sums up the objectives of his research:

to render unto the body its eurhythmia, to make music vibrate within it, to make music an integral part of the organism, to sound this marvelous keyboard that is the muscular and nervous system, to plastically render a measured thought in space as in time.⁴⁶

His encounter with Appia revealed to Dalcroze grand themes for the reform of scenic action and musical theater. In these first years the fraternity between Appia and Dalcroze fed on ever more complex themes: the rapport between movement and space; the unity of corporal and musical movements and of luminous “vibrations” in the theatre;⁴⁷ the creation of appropriate scenery for rhythmic evolutions (to which Appia passionately dedicated himself, producing between 1909 and 1910

⁴⁰ Batka, “Plan der musikalischen,” p. 319.

⁴¹ For biographical information on Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, see the appendix.

⁴² Dalcroze, “Gli studi musicali e l’educazione dell’orecchio (1898),” chapt. 1 of, *Il ritmo la musica e l’educazione*, new Italian edition, edited by Louisa Di Segni-Jaffe (Torino: ERI Edizioni RAI, 1986), p. 32.

⁴³ Ibid., Preface, p. 26.

⁴⁴ For biographical information on Adolphe Appia, see the appendix.

⁴⁵ Appia to Dalcroze, Trolaz, May 1906 (letter), SST: Ja 4, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze, Geneva. See also Edmond Stadler, “Jacques-Dalcroze et Adolphe Appia,” in *Emile Jaques Dalcroze*, Neuchâtel (see appendix).

⁴⁶ Dalcroze to Appia, 21 May 1906 (letter), SST: Jb3no220, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

⁴⁷ Dalcroze to Appia, undated [1907] (letter), SST: Jb3no12, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

the extraordinary designs of *Espaces Rhythmiques*) and the idea of a new esthetic solidarity between spectator and artist that substituted the active and sympathetic participation of the public for passive perception.⁴⁸

These developments were paralleled by Dalcroze's growing impatience to have a space conceived specifically for his rhythmic gymnastic exercises. Dalcroze spoke of this desire to his friend Appia, for the first time in November 1906: "There are moments in which I desire—forgive me!—a great win in the lottery!! Then, with what joy would I install my method in model premises."⁴⁹ In the spring of 1909, enthusiasm for the "Espaces Rhythmiques" sent to him by Appia rekindled in Dalcroze the desire to realize premises in Geneva "where I could utilize for my experiments your admirable projects, realized under your direction."⁵⁰ In the autumn of the same year Dalcroze returned yet again to this theme, "Ah, by God! That I should be able to conquer this space, to construct the stage where your scenery could be erected and to experiment with the setting of my ideas and yours." He linked the project to the realization of a Geneva festival centered around staging entirely by Appia, "so that in Europe there would be interest in the new art that would prepare the public for the artistic and aesthetic joys of tomorrow."⁵¹

At a rhythmic gymnastics demonstration in Dresden, in October 1909, Dohrn heard Dalcroze for the first time and observed the exercises of his students.⁵² Dohrn interpreted Dalcroze's message that, as we have seen, had already extended well beyond music teaching, as a general instrument of social reform, and political and cultural renewal. When, the day after the demonstration in Dresden, Dohrn together with Karl Schmidt⁵³ proposed to Dalcroze that he transfer his institute to the new garden-city, the Swiss musician was especially tempted by the opportunity to have premises finally constructed specifically for his method.

Dohrn saw in Jaques-Dalcroze's work the potential to realize the musicalization of Hellerau that would shape the new community. Rhythm was assigned the task of transforming the inhabitants of Hellerau into *Zukunftmenschen* (men of the future).⁵⁴

48 Appia, "Style et solidarite," *Le Rythme*, I, 1909, n. 6: pp. 49–52. Reprinted in Appia, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 3.

49 Dalcroze to Appia, 3 November 1906 (letter), in Stadler, p. 422.

50 Dalcroze to Appia, undated [1909], Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

51 Ibid.

52 For biographical information on Wolf Dohrn, see the appendix.

53 Schmidt underscores his presence and his agreement with the summons of Dalcroze and Hellerau in a *Bericht über die Entstehung von Hellerau* (unedited and undated, Archive of the VEB Deutsche Werkstätten of Hellerau). The affirmation is significant in light of the break that was to follow between Dohrn and Schmidt precisely on account of the Institut Dalcroze.

54 Prince Sergei Wolkonsky (1860–1937) was one of Dalcroze's most enthusiastic supporters. He recorded in his memoirs that Wolf Dohrn had observed, at the end of a series of rhythmic exercises executed by the children at Hellerau on the premises of the factory of the Dresdner Werkstätten: "Isn't it so? Behold the men of the future!" (S. M. Wolkonsky, "Meine Erinnerungen. Jaques-Dalcroze-Die Dohrns-Wolf Dohrn," in Hans Gerd Feudel, *Ein Leben für die Rhythmik. Gedenkschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von Elfriede Feudel [1881–1966]* [Remscheid: Bundesverband Rhythmische Erziehung, 1981], pp. 131–146).

Dohrn refers to *Work and Rhythm*⁵⁵ a book published in 1896 by the economist Karl Bucher, in which the “de-rhythmization” of social and productive life is interpreted as a symptom of the rupture, provoked by modern civilization, of traditional equilibria, of the shattering of the life experience into conflicting fragments. The rediscovery of rhythm would calm the growing contrast between intellectual work and manual work, quieting the unease that agitated German society.

Dohrn proposed an analogy between Dalcroze, who discovered the means of utilizing the natural force of the psyche, and the engineers who know how to dominate the motive forces of steam and electricity.⁵⁶ A project like Dalcroze’s could be realized only in a place such as Hellerau, a city “that binds art with the solution of social tasks, first with the solution of the habitation question, and then conceives of art as an indispensable educative tool, as a social need of our time.” Here the exercise of rhythmic gymnastics not only would be in the service of “learning” something, but, globally, would also restore health, would “recuperate as much as the intellectualism of our time has sinfully cancelled out our life.”⁵⁷ Such an attitude was completely typical of the reforming cultures between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Already the reform of property revenues, the re-agrarianization of territory by cooperative colonies, the garden-city, the elimination of paper money, and even the vegetarian diet were conceived and propagandized as infallible panaceas of every social question.⁵⁸

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In November of the same year Dohrn made a trip to Geneva. Karl Scheffler, the influential art and architecture critic, recalled in his memoirs the irresistible enthusiasm of Dohrn:

Dalcroze was his discovery, he believed in him, wanted to believe in him. To do so, he idealized Dalcroze’s didactic system with typically German coherence until it seemed imbued with the Platonic spirit and took its germative form from which could sprout the ideal state. Dalcroze, himself a little stunned, observed how his theories, formulated only for the function of music teaching, became glorified – like the feelings of the duck, when it sees its duckling, lovingly nested, swim away. But Dohrn’s temperament and initiative were irresistible.⁵⁹

Dalcroze seemed, at the beginning, reluctant to accept the invitation to move to Germany.⁶⁰ However, having at his disposal equipped premises, teaching halls, and a great hall for public presentations, spurred him to change his opinion in the first months of 1910.

⁵⁵ Karl Bucher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (Leipzig: Abhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1896).

⁵⁶ Dohrn, “Die Aufgabe der Bildungsanstalt Jaques-Dalcroze,” in *Der Rhythmus, Ein Jahrbuch herausgegeben von der Bildungsanstalt Jaques-Dalcroze*, vol. 1 (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1911), pp. 2–31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁸ See Krabbe, *Gesellschaftsveränderung*.

⁵⁹ Karl Scheffler, *Die fetten und die mageren Jahre. Ein Arbeits- und Lebensbericht* (Leipzig and Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1946), p. 44.

⁶⁰ Thus wrote his sister (Helene Brunet-Lecomte, *Jaques-Dalcroze. Sa vie-son oeuvre*, pp. 108–109).

Enthusiastic about the opportunity granted him, he wrote to Appia in March 1910:

It is, in reality, a unique occasion for founding a popular theater, truly artistic... the shining flower of the art on a vigorous plant with indestructible roots, and not the hothouse flower with the severed root that is the theater of today. Oh! this idea of seeing an entire population inclined toward a work that it feels compelled to realize, compelled by its education, by its desire, by the need for art and for beauty; a work that, on the stage, would represent the character, the aspirations, and the work of a people!!!⁶¹

In the same letter, some requirements of the future theater hall begin to take shape. The stage must satisfy Appia's requirements, with a disposition of lighting that could reproduce "[the] day and [the] night and have the possibility of being infinitely modulated and modified." A few days later, Dalcroze turned to his friend, telling him of a meeting with Dohrn concerning a cost estimate (500,000 marks) for construction and of the proposal to choose as designer "the best electrician in Germany, a certain Behrens."⁶² Evidently, Dalcroze only knew of Behrens through his work for A. E. G., the large manufacturer of electrical appliances.

Dalcroze had now taken on the role that Dohrn had envisioned in one of his letters. The Swiss musician contrasts the offer made to him to open a school in Berlin with the institute already underway in Hellerau:

In Berlin it is solely a matter of music, certainly also of musical modeling, but above all a preparation for art. In Hellerau, instead, it is a matter of creating an organic life, of harmonizing, thanks to a special education; the country is its inhabitants; to create with rhythm a moral and aesthetic architecture identical to that of your houses; to elevate rhythm to the height of a social institution and to prepare a new style that would be the natural expansion, the authentic product of the soul of its inhabitants.⁶³

Efforts to guarantee the realization of the project were initiated in the spring of 1910. From the end of April, Dalcroze was in Dresden holding a conference and organizing the start of courses for the end of that year in a provisional location. Meanwhile, Dohrn was charged with involving public and private institutions in the financing of the initiative. He solicited the mayor of Dresden, stressing the danger that Dalcroze might go back on his decision.⁶⁴ Dohrn created a "Committee for the Foundation of the Institute for Musical-Rhythmic Formation," one that convened at the end of May under the presidency of the Count von Seebach, Director General

⁶¹ Dalcroze to Appia, 28 March 1910 (letter), Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

⁶² Dalcroze to Appia, 11 April 1910 (letter), SST: Jb 3 no47, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

⁶³ Parts of the letter from Dalcroze to Dohrn are published in, Appia, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 3., ed. Bablet-Hahn (see appendix); Dohrn recalls it in his discussion on the occasion of the placing of the first stone of the Institute ("Die Aufgabe der Bildungsanstalt," [see note 56], p. 14; *Kulturbestrebungen in der Gartenstadt*, p. 102. Cf. Dohrn, "Der Rhythmus," *Die Kunst. Monatshefte für freie und angewandte Kunst*, XV (1911-12): pp. 325-326; Dalcroze, *Ich liebe die Freude*, p. 419; Dalcroze, "Die hygienische Bedeutung der rhythmischen Gymnastik," *Gartenstadt*, V, 1911, n. 11, pp. 154-155).

⁶⁴ Dohrn to Beutler, Oberbürgermeister of Dresden, 3 May 1910 and 18 May 1910 (letters), "Errichtung einer rhythmisch-musikalischen Bildungsanstalt durch Jaques-Dalcroze," 314/1910 Dir.-Reg., Stadtarchiv, Dresden.

of the Court Orchestra and of the Court Theater.⁶⁵ In a short period of time, Seebach gathered as adherents over one hundred personalities of the Saxon court.

On July 7, 1910, the contract between Dalcroze and the City of Hellerau was finally signed.⁶⁶ In the meantime, the choice of Heinrich Tessenow as designer seemed to have been already decided. The signature of the architect appears, together with that of Dohrn, Dohrn's brother Harald, and Alexander von Salzmänn, at the bottom of a card from Dalcroze to Appia dated June 23.⁶⁷ Dalcroze left Dresden to spend the summer vacation at Mount Verita on Lake Maggiore, the heart of the "Reform of Life" and the meeting place of the reforming intelligentsia of Europe.⁶⁸

The Tessenow Project

We have noted that the first architect Dohrn considered for the construction of the Dalcroze Institute was the prestigious Peter Behrens. When Tessenow became the definitive choice, he was barely thirty-five and certainly unaccustomed to great professional undertakings. Latent contradictions violently manifested themselves as the project developed.

Within Hellerau's founding group many and diverse states of mind emerged. Foremost was diffidence in the face of Dalcroze and his method. At the beginning of the enterprise, Schmidt, along with Dohrn, instigated the first contacts with the Swiss musician and consented to be part of the Komitee founded to support the project. However, when it came time to make operative decisions, Schmidt was stricken with uncertainty and feared the discredit that the failure of the initiative would reflect upon the entire Hellerau undertaking. Riemerschmid, who besides being the designer of the garden-city plan was also the son-in-law of Schmidt, sought enlightenment and reassurance from Friedrich Klose, Generalmusikdirektor in Munich. In a letter of July 1910, Schmidt begs Klose to share his opinion of the Dalcroze method, particularly the plans for the reform of the musical theater. The response that Schmidt obtained must have greatly relieved him, since the illustrious professor did not hide his admiration for Dalcroze and called his "genial" conception of rhythm not only an "essential ingredient of any art, but above all of life."⁶⁹

Schmidt was also preoccupied with the grandiosity and liberality of Dohrn's plans. He would have preferred a modest provisional building in wood, to be followed by a definitive construction when the Institute reached a point of consolidation. In the face of an estimate of 450,000 marks, he reacted with extreme violence, condemning the "frightening lightness" of Dohrn. He withdrew completely from the

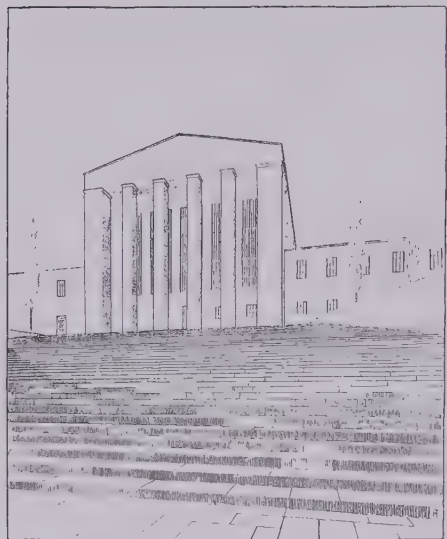
⁶⁵ Komitee zur Grundung einer musikalisch-rhythmischen Bildungsanstalt für Professor E. Jaques-Dalcroze, 30 May 1910 (typewritten note), Stadtarchiv, Dresden; this circulating letter of the committee includes an exposition of the aim of the project and a summary of the financial plan.

⁶⁶ Copy of the contract is in the Stadtarchiv, Dresden.

⁶⁷ Stadler (see appendix), p. 430.

⁶⁸ See *Monte Verita. Antropologia locale come contributo alla riscoperta di una topografia sacrale moderna*, ed. Harald Szeeman (Milan: Electa, 1978).

⁶⁹ Riemerschmid to F. Klose, 29 July 1910 and Klose to Riemerschmid, 8 August 1910 (letters), Riemerschmid Archive; Hartmann, *Deutsche Gartenstadtbewegung* (see note 24), pp. 49-50.



2. Tessenow, the Dalcroze Institute of Rhythmic Gymnastics, first scheme, 1910.

3. Adolphe Appia, "I tre pilastri," *Espace rythmique*, 1909.

project. The rupture became definitive when, faced with an increased cost of one and one-half million marks, Dohrn "obliged" Schmidt to contribute 150,000 marks, otherwise meant for the garden-city.⁷⁰ Riemerschmid had similar concerns.

Dalcroze's requests were imprecise and his plans for works to be staged at Hellerau nebulous. One day a request came for a stage more wide than deep and the day after the opposite; one day space for one thousand spectators and the next, for three or four thousand. Tessenow's enthusiasm caused him to underestimate the shortcomings of the entire program.⁷¹ This was a significant problem. Riemerschmid again took upon himself the right to develop his own plan, proposing to subject both his and Tessenow's plans to a jury formed by a majority of Hellerau's architects and painters or to the existing Artistic Commission of Hellerau.⁷²

In August of the same year, Dohrn sought to resolve the conflict with a summary memorandum, to which Riemerschmid responded point by point.⁷³ In his letter and in observations which Dohrn's memorandum had tried to address, the contradiction that the young Le Corbusier had immediately recognized became explicit: the architecture of Tessenow did not suit the Riemerschmidian Hellerau. The monumental character of the project as envisioned created an unhealthy contrast to the garden-city landscape; the exaltation of formal aspects in the project testified only to the superficial excitement of the purchasers. The criticism also involved

⁷⁰ Thus Schmidt reports in his *Bericht über die Entstehung von Hellerau*.

⁷¹ Riemerschmid to Schmidt, 12 July 1910 (letter), Riemerschmid Archive.

⁷² Ibid. Unfortunately, the reconstruction of the events is based upon fragmentary documents. Riemerschmid claimed to be able to present "other projects." Perhaps he meant that one of his plans was already prepared. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to confirm this hypothesis. Other documentary sources of great importance appear to have been lost or are untraceable. All Appia's letters from the Dalcroze-Appia correspondence (with one exception) are lost, destroyed after his death. All of Tessenow's original designs and letters are dispersed. The only documentation available is published in the periodicals of the time. The letters of Dalcroze and Dohrn exist in only fragmentary form.

⁷³ The memorandum has not been found but the accompanying letter by Dohrn of 3 August 1910 and the long response of Riemerschmid of 8 August 1910 are in the Riemerschmid archive.



Dalcroze and Appia, whose program and whose needs had been imprecisely formulated.⁷⁴ The satisfaction expressed by the two, with the solutions proposed by Tessenow, lost all significance in the absence of a coherent program. The enthusiasms that pushed ultimately to define the project as a “national sanctuary” revealed a perilously triumphal attitude. Riemerschmid renounced his proposal to impose himself as architect for Dalcroze, but did not renounce his ability to exercise his influence on the final decisions.

During the spring, Tessenow had already completed his first plan for the Institute (fig. 2). The days spent with Dalcroze and Appia in Dresden during June were preceded by a meeting in Lausanne, most likely before the end of April.⁷⁵ There is no doubt that a subtle but tenacious connection tied the work of the young architect to the *Espaces Rythmiques* created by Appia for Dalcroze.

In Tessenow's oeuvre, only a juvenile project of 1903 for a “Bismarck Tower” bears witness to research of a severe monumentality based on the intersection of elementary geometric volumes (here the typical Germanic theme of the superposition of cylinder and cube) and accentuated by imposing stairs that trace the course of ritual

⁷⁴ Appia alludes to the meeting he had with Dalcroze and Riemerschmid in a postcard of June 2, 1910 to his brother-in-law the journalist Henri Odier. After the meeting the two proceeded to Hellerau: the direct participation of Appia in the discussions for the plan of the Institute occurred throughout the initial planning process. The transcription of the correspondence of Appia with Odier is in the Schweizerische Theaterstiftung of Berne.

⁷⁵ Dalcroze confirmed the meeting in Lausanne in a brief undated letter and asked Tessenow to bring his designs with him. Tessenow brought his plans (“that I love very much”). Alexander von Salzmann also participated in the meeting. Dalcroze alludes to Salzmann, “a Russian painter whom I admire enormously and who will be an ideal collaborator for you on Hellerau regarding the stage,” presenting him to Appia as if he already knew him. For this reason the argument can be made that the meeting in Lausanne took place before Appia's trip to Hellerau in June of the same year.



4. Tessenow, second scheme for the Institute. 1910.

5. Tessenow, definitive plan for the Institute. 1910.

ascension toward the entrance.⁷⁶ But in the project for Hellerau, the thirty-eight steps that lead to the grand colonnade accented by four square pilasters reproduce the solemn and slow cadence of “Claire de Lune” and of “I tre pilastri” (fig. 3), designed by Appia in 1909. The grand portico of the Institute, flanked by two simple wings whose ends one cannot discern, evokes the same rarified atmosphere, animated only by deep shadow, that Appia designed for the rhythmic evolutions of Dalcroze’s students. This first version of the project would have occupied the hill, right at the center of Hellerau where, from the beginning, it was intended to concentrate the community buildings of the garden-city. The price of the clash between Schmidt and Riemerschmid was the renunciation of this placement that would have immediately identified the school-theater of Dalcroze with the house of the people of Hellerau as envisioned by Fischer.

Little is known of the intermediate phase that led to the elaboration of a second project, this time located in a more marginal area, initially reserved for the construction of low cost housing.⁷⁷ Here Tessenow gave up the great entrance portico, opting for a solution that foretells the intersection of two transepts of equal dimension at the great central nave crowned by a large steep pediment; one reaches the interior through an entrance of modest dimensions, underscored by

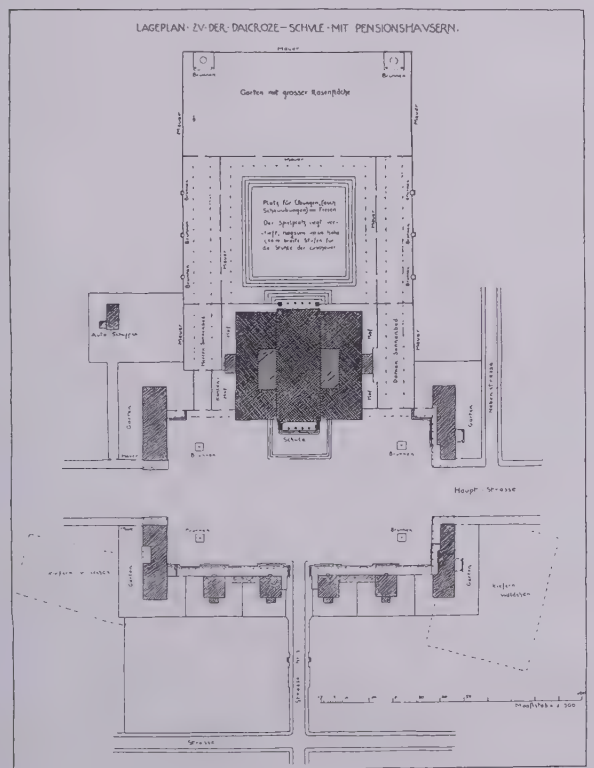
⁷⁶ Gerda Wangerin and Gerhard Weiss, *Heinrich Tessenow. Ein Baumeister 1876-1950* (Essen: Verlag Richard Bacht, 1976), p. 171. Tessenow’s plan was reproduced in this monograph which was dedicated to the architect. It was first published in *Deutsche Bauhütte*, VII, 1903, n. 11, p. 73.

⁷⁷ *Erklärung zu der Situation und den Strassenführungen der Strassen 1, 8, 10 und 12, soweit diese zusammen mit der Bearbeitung des Dalcroze-Hauses neu gebildet sind*, undated, Reimerschmid archive. Without doubt this document pertains to Tessenow’s second plan. It insists upon the property delimited by the streets numbered 1, 8, 10, 12, found in the area of Hellerau at the northeast borders of the settlement designated in the Reimerschmid plan for the construction of low-cost housing. Here Tessenow explained the motives that induced him to place the little one-family houses behind the walls bounding the Institute and to include a line of trees in the gardens standing before the houses. Unfortunately the designs documenting this relationship have been lost.

a light pergola (fig. 4). As in a monastic structure, the complex is isolated and protected from the external world by two lines of little one-family houses backed by a low confining wall, inside which a colonnaded way delimits the plaza in front of the Institute.

For reasons we can only try to interpret, this solution also was abandoned in favor of a third, surely finished in the beginning of 1911 and already defined, in its fundamental elements, in August of the preceding year (fig. 5).⁷⁸ On August 24, in fact, Dalcroze was able to announce to Appia that after the interminable

wars between Schmidt and Dohrn between Riemerschmid and Tessenow, between von Salzmann and Riemerschmid . . . , calm finally reigns in Hellerau. The plan of Tessenow has been adopted, not on that hill, but on another. In this manner, at least, Schmidt will have his House of the People, in the place that he dreamed of and in the style of Riemerschmid. We will be elsewhere, but I couldn't care less. The important thing is that the building should be what pleases us, and wholly that.⁷⁹



⁷⁸ Dalcroze to Appia, undated [probably late 1910 or early 1911] (letter), Geneva, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze. Dalcroze pleads with his friend to join him in Dresden to show him the Tessenow plan and to listen to his opinion on the designs "that you will find to be good". To be able to use the building in October, Dalcroze notes, "work must absolutely begin in February." See also Dohrn to the mayor of Dresden, 30 January 1911 (letter), where a reunion of the administrative committee for the Institut Dalcroze is announced for the following week, with the presentation of the plan for the Institute as the order of the day.

⁷⁹ Dalcroze to Appia, 24 August [1910] (letter), Archive of the Institut Dalcroze. In fact the House of the People of Hellerau would never be built.

In the meantime thoughts about the great hall that would host public presentations of Dalcroze's experiments proceeded. From Mount Verita, Dalcroze proposed to Appia and Dohrn a hall of grand ironwork, like that of a railway station, open at the two ends with two huge arches that would permit an absolute permeability between the interior and the exterior.⁸⁰

The system for illuminating the hall also required the examination of numerous alternatives. First, the prejudicial objections of Dohrn had to be overcome. He considered the emphasis on light "as literary and sentimental," giving rise to Dalcroze's reaction: "he judges always based on the memory of reading or philosophy or esthetics. He does not know how to formulate an opinion unless he has found *the words*: he does not live things."⁸¹ Acquiring an installation for cinematography or equipping the hall with a cupola for indirect light, according to the system of Mariano Fortuny, were considered.⁸²

The solution finally adopted was ingeniously conceived by von Salzmänn.⁸³ He planned to cover the walls and ceiling of the hall with two layers of white canvas, spaced one meter apart, impregnated with wax. Inside, thousands of electric bulbs, with an intensity regulated with a sort of "luminous organ," would produce an immaterial and diffuse light, variable at will, from absolute darkness to the inundation of the interior of the hall with shining light. The system was perfectly adapted to the architecture of the hall Tessenow had conceived, with Appia, as a grand parallelepiped absolutely free of fixed installations, in which both the scenery, and the tiers for the public (with the exception of a small gallery above the entrance to the Institute) could assume different configurations, thanks to the use of moveable fixtures (figs. 6-8). Neither stage nor curtain interrupted the continuity of the space which could open at the end to the great garden standing behind. Even the orchestra pit, completely excavated, was invisible to the spectators and could be covered over when not in use. Surrounding this hall that extended nearly from one side to the other, along the principal axis of the building, Tessenow planned a complex of extraordinary simplicity. The main body, dominated at the ends by two steep pediments and by two porticoes that repeat the motif of the great square pilasters of the first plan, is flanked by two lower wings, each as wide as the central nave. The two steep pediments contain yin and yang medallions at their center which symbolizing dance and equilibrium (fig. 11). Simple geometric figures constitute the facade—the square, the rectangle, the triangle—their proportions under rigorous control and with almost imperceptible irregularity. The intrados of the grand portico forms a perfect square. The tympanum is half the height of the square as are both side wings. The large horizontal windows that illuminate the two entrance wings and the two small halls for exercise are interrupted at the

6. Interior of the great hall with the working scenery realized by Alexander von Salzman according to Adolph Appia's directives, c.1912-13.

7. Dora Brandenburg-Polster, design of the interior of the hall of the Institute, c.1913.

8. Interior of the great hall with scenery by Adolphe Appia for the second act of Gluck's *Orfeo*, produced for the first Festspiels held in June 1912.

80 Dalcroze to Appia, undated [June-July 1910] (letter), Institut Dalcroze, SST: Jb 3 no55.

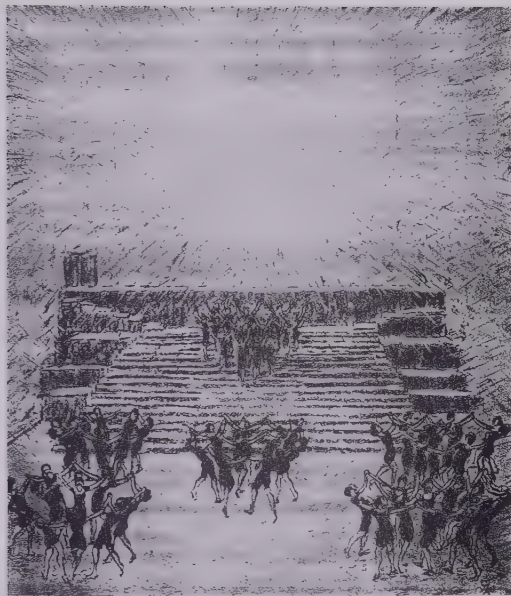
81 Dalcroze to Appia, undated [Spring 1911] and 24 [May 1911] (letter), Dalcroze Institut.

82 Dalcroze to Appia, 3 June [1911], Dalcroze Institut. The proposal probably was advanced by Appia who, since 1903, knew and appreciated Fortuny. The system was not adopted in the end because it was too mechanized and not transportable.

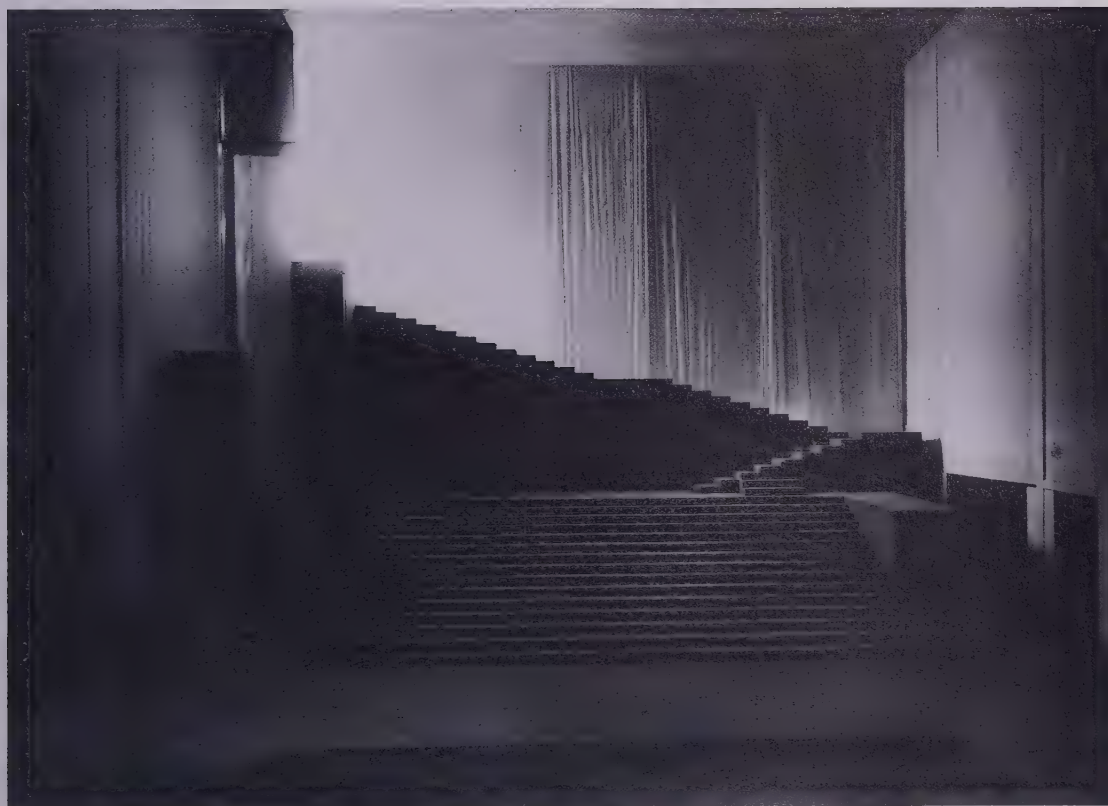
83 For biographical information on von Salzmänn, see the appendix.



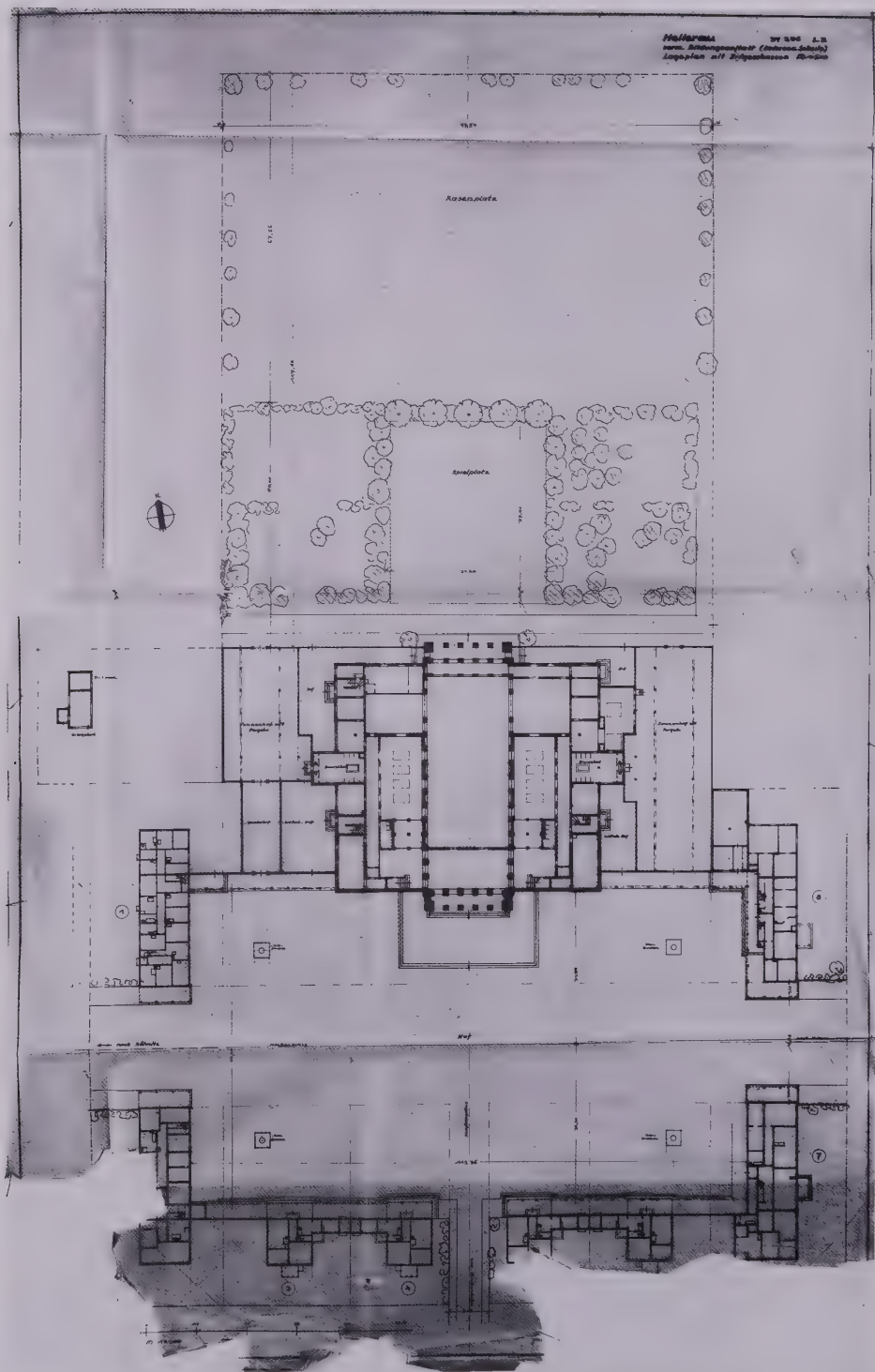
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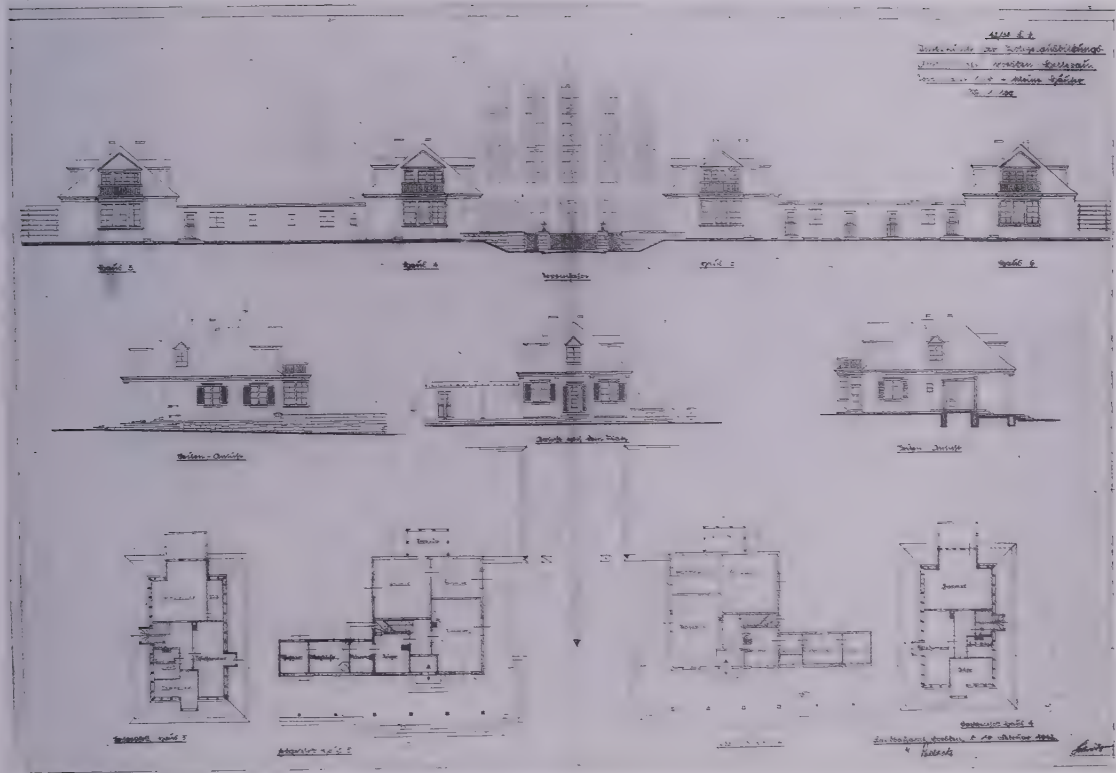
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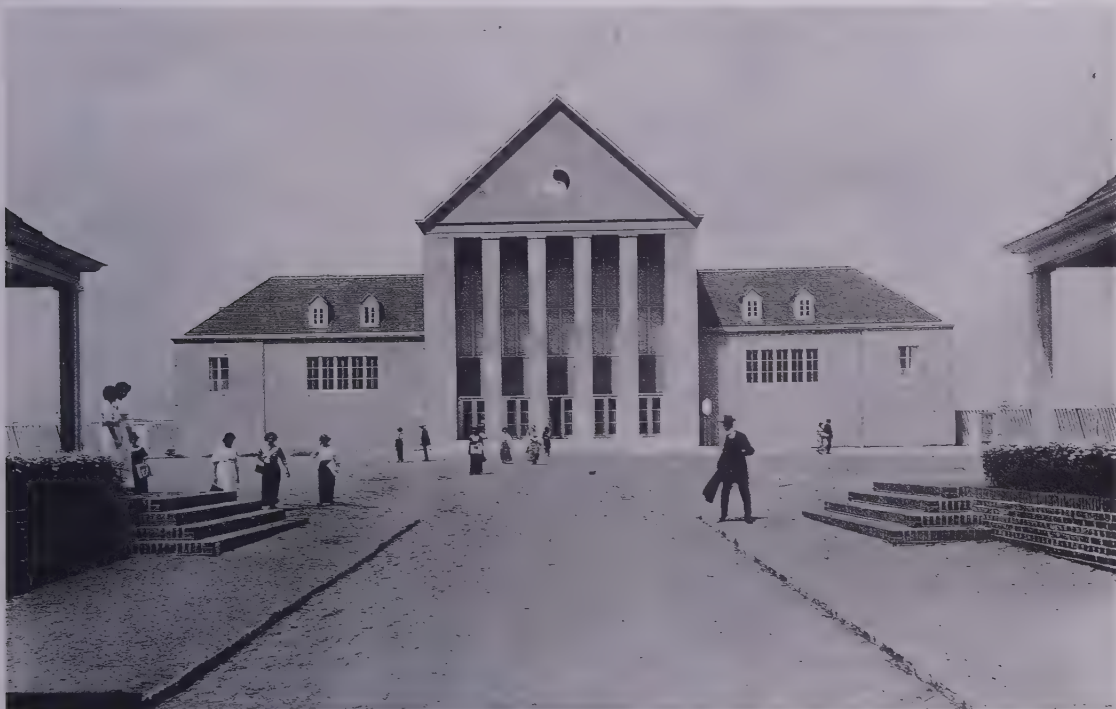
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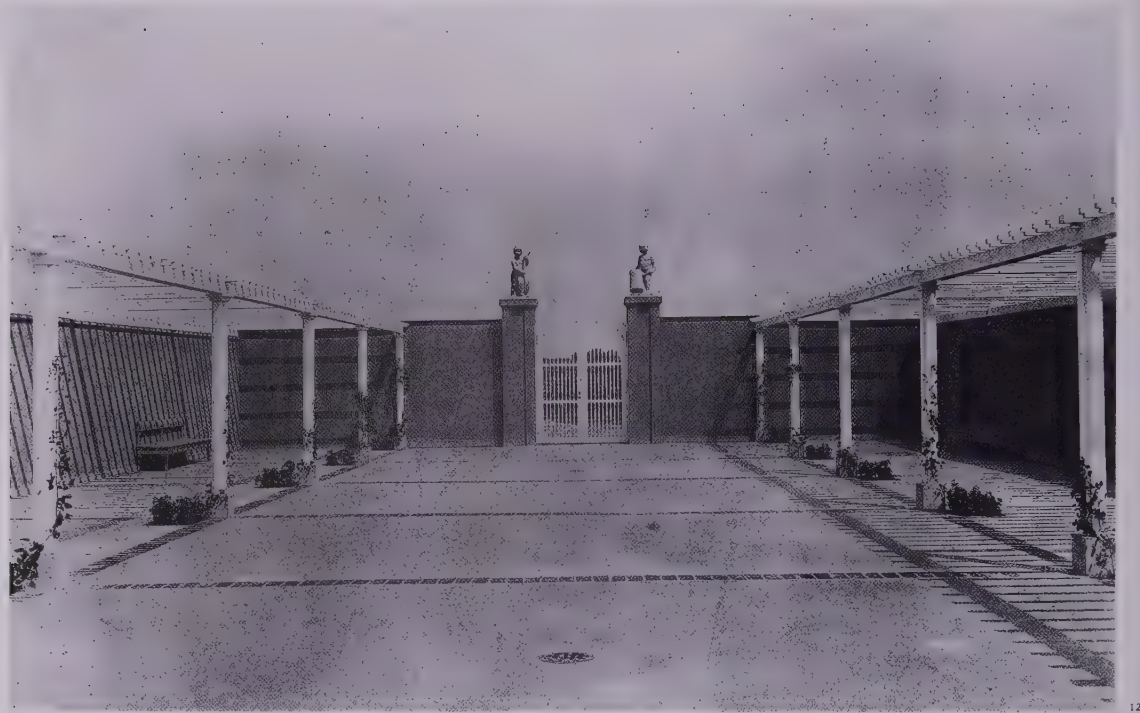


9. Plan of the complex as built, 1911-12; plan drawn c. 1938.
10. Elevations and plans of the houses for students; drawn in 1942.
11. The Institut building seen from the entrance to the plaza, phtographed in 1913.



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12. Courtyard for open air exercises, photographed in 1913.

13. The houses for students, photographed in 1913 from the top of the main building of the Institute.

center of the two elongated rectangles. The triangle at the large facade is almost exactly a right isosceles triangle, exactly one quarter of the area of the entrance portico beneath. The absolute symmetry of the installation derives from the multiplication of the entrance ways and from the presence of little, irregular episodes (windows, dormers) liberally placed according to distributive need. On either side of the great hall are the areas designed for teaching, the rooms for the administration, two luminous bath halls for men and women that open to two well-protected courts (fig. 12.) These courts were designed for open air exercises, and for baths with light and air, dictated by the “reforming” hygienic practices on Mount Verita.

The great building faces a large plaza surrounded by student houses, bound together by delicate pergolas (figs. 9, 10, 13.) Here, with sovereign majesty Tessenow successfully joins the diverse scales of the domestic and serene small houses with the majestic Institute and accentuates dominant architectonic figures, like the deep facade of unusual dimensions.

Dalcroze reacted enthusiastically to the project. In a letter to Dohrn he wrote that

Tessenow's designs entirely satisfy me from a technical point of view. By this I mean to say that all the spatial solutions seem to me resolved here as I would have wished. But beyond this I must note with the greatest joy that also my moral and artistic objectives have been fully understood by Tessenow. The style of his buildings, with their harmony and with their simplicity, are perfectly adapted to the style of the rhythmic gymnastic exercises. . . . For the art that I intend, a renewal of the collaboration with space is absolutely indispensable but, evidently, this collaboration does not deprive it of its freedom nor of its original values at all.⁸⁴

84 The two letters are cited in Storck, *Jaques-Dalcroze*, pp. 88–89.



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The judgment of Appia is no different:

The more I reflect upon Tessenow's designs the more it seems impossible to me that a plan could unite within it the major number of essential and unforfeitable conditions for its function. Tessenow has understood in an almost genial manner that the architecture of this building must recede in the face of the life one wants to awaken here. He has understood that the style of this Institute resides in the absolute and serenely discreet silence of every line and every surface. In truth, from this point of view one could not do better and Tessenow's intuition seems almost wonderful to me.⁸⁵

The first stone was placed festively on April 22, 1911.⁸⁶ In the autumn Dalcroze was able to begin courses at Hellerau in the left wing of the nearly-completed building. At year's end he urged Appia to sojourn at Hellerau, appealing to his indisposed friend with an exquisite description of the building and of the atmosphere at Hellerau:

But today, what joy, what harmony, what a delicious impression of harmony and of stimulating quiet, if I may put it that way. The vestibule (fig. 14) and the entrance are a wonder, a veritable enchantment for the eye, with two beautiful stairs at the sides, their warm white and red colors, the magnificent illumination. The two halls with their galleries are extraordinary for the space and the invisibility of the public and their two halls with their lamps are explosive in their gaiety. In one of these (in the right wing) there is a beautiful stair with twelve steps nine meters wide, the steps easy, wide, on which the outlines of bodies stand out superbly (fig. 16). The dressing rooms are spacious, the bath and

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ In truth a few days' work was already begun, as Dalcroze announced in a letter to Appia (4 April 1911, Archive of the Institut Dalcroze).



14. Entrance to the great hall of the Institute, photographed in 1913.

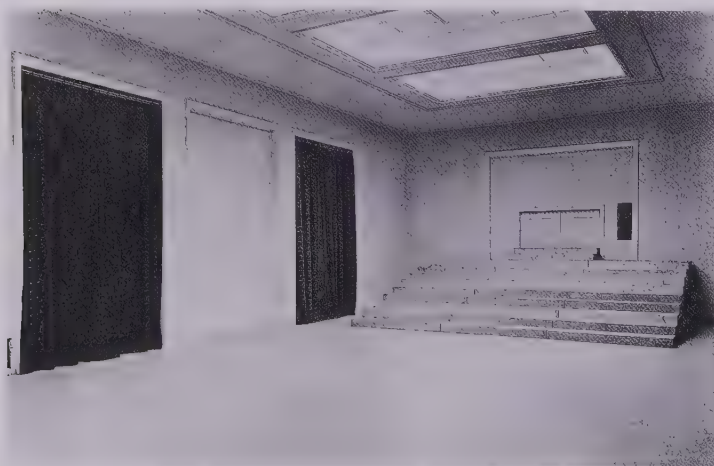
15. Bath hall, photographed in 1913.

16. Hall for exercises, with lights; photographed in 1913.

17. The plaza of the Institute on the occasion of the Festpiels of 1913.



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shower halls, with their beautiful baths and their beautiful white walls that one would say are porcelain, are truly of an atmosphere of repose (fig 15). As to the great hall, I do not want to speak of it. One cannot enter without a shiver of happiness and . . . of apprehension . . . , I wonder if we can take advantage of this suggestive space as one ought, where human respect is gathered, the emotion of the things that one awaits and desires and the sureness of the almost ultimate rhythms, that patiently await their completion. Will we know how to complete them? Will we know how to give life to these virgin spaces, to animate these lines, to reawaken these echoes?⁸⁷

The sweeping success of the first Festspiels organized in June 1912 seemed to confirm the hoped-for but ephemeral triumph (fig. 17). Only two years after, at the outbreak of the world war, Dalcroze abandoned Hellerau. Although the Institute survived the painful years of the disastrous economy, even the return of peace could not re-imbue it with the splendor of its first years

Only the architecture of Tessenow and the memory of the innumerable visitors from throughout the world who arrive to admire the “tall white temple with smooth round pillars in front” remains.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Dalcroze to Appia, undated (letter) [circa late 1911]. Archive of the Institut Dalcroze.

⁸⁸ Upton Sinclair, *World's End* (New York: The Viking Press, 1940), p. 1. In truth the pilasters of the Institute were not round.

Appendix

Karl Schmidt (1873-1948)

Karl Schmidt was born in Zschopau in Silesia. After apprenticing in a joinery factory in Chemnitz and working for several years in Bremen, Berlin, Denmark, Switzerland and London, Schmidt opened his own factory in Dresden in 1898. From the beginning, he turned to artists and architects to develop furniture projects and technical manufacturing experiments. This allowed him in 1906 to present the first furniture entirely produced through mechanized procedures. In the next few years the catalogue of the Dresdner Werkstätten contained work by Peter Behrens, Mackintosh, Baillie Scott, Olbrich, and Riemerschmid—much like the Münchner Werkstätten founded by Karl Bertsch in 1902 or the Wiener Werkstätten founded by Josef Hoffman, Kolo Moser and Fritz Warndorfer in 1903.

Schmidt, co-founder of the Deutscher Werkbund in Sept. 1907, was, in the same year, a member of the directing committee of the German Society for the Garden-City. See three curricula vitae, 19 February 1941, 26 May 1941, and undated (typescripts), Archive of the VEB Deutsche Werkstätten Hellerau, Hellerau; Heinz Wichmann, *Aufbruch zum neuen Wohnen. Deutsche Werkstätten und W. K. Verband 1898-1970* (Basel and Stuttgart: Birkhauser Verlag; Klaus Peter Arnold, *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Werkstätten in Hellerau*, Dissertation, Universität Halle.

Richard Batka (1868-1922)

Richard Batka was born in Prague. From 1897 he was editor of Ferdinand Avenarius' magazine *Der Kunstwart*. From 1908 he lived in Vienna. There he published *Der Merker*, wrote music criticism for *Wiener Fremdenblatt*, and taught the history of opera at the Academy of Music and the Dramatic Arts. He published extensively on the history of music (Schumann, Wagner, J. S. Bach, etc.) and on questions of musical pedagogy. See *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, vol. 15, (Kassel, Basel, Tours, and London: Barenreiter, 1973), p. 551. According to Karl Lorenz, historian of rhythmic gymnastics and editor of *Rhythmik in der Erziehung*, Batka would have been able to meet Dalcroze in 1905, on the occasion of the congress of musical pedagogy of Solothurn where Dalcroze presented his method of teaching and a demonstration by his students. Batka writes on the Dalcroze System in a long article in July of 1907 (Batka, *Musik und Gymnastik*, in *Der Kunstwart*, XX, 2 [1907], pp. 365-368). Curiously, the historians of rhythmic gymnastics and dance, like those of the contemporary theatre, attribute the origin of Hellerau's interest in rhythmic gymnastics to Dohrn's meeting with Dalcroze in 1910 but ignore Batka's plan, which arose at least three years before.

Emile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950)

Emile Jacques-Dalcroze was born in Vienna to a Swiss family. He studied in Geneva, Paris, and Vienna with Faure, Delibes, and Bruckner. In 1892 he was nominated Professor of Harmony and Solfeggio at the Conservatory of Geneva and in 1902 he was authorized to hold special classes in rhythmic gymnastics there. In 1906 he met Adolphe Appia with whom he would collaborate intensely. After a sojourn in Hellerau (1910-1914) he returned to Geneva where in 1915 he inaugurated the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze. His method was disseminated throughout Europe and schools dedicated to his method were opened in London, St. Petersburg, Paris, Frankfurt, and Berlin. He composed numerous instrumental works and, above all, collections of songs and dances dedicated to infancy. By the time of his death his method had become part of music teaching throughout the world. See Karl Storck, *E. Jaques-Dalcroze. Seine Stellung und Aufgabe in unserer Zeit* (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1912); Helene Brunet-Lecomte, *Jaques-Dalcroze. Sa vie. Son Oeuvre*, (Geneva and Paris: Edition Jeheber, 1950); *Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. L'homme, le compositeur, le createur de la rythmique*, ed. (Neuchatel: Editions de la Baconniere, 1965); Marie-Laure Bachmann, *La Rhythmique de Jaques-Dalcroze, une education par la musique et pour la musique* (Neuchatel: Editions de la Baconniere, 1984). The fundamental written work by Dalcroze is *Le Rhythme, la musique et l'education* (Paris: Fischbacher/Rouart/Lerolle, 1920), translated in English (1921), German (1921), Italian (1925).

Adolphe Appia (1862-1928)

Adolphe Appia, b. Geneva, September 1, 1862. After musical studies, in Geneva, Zurich, Leipzig, Paris and Dresden, from 1888 he dedicated himself to the reform of theater staging, based on criticism of traditional Wagnerian staging. Between 1891 and 1892 he wrote notes on the directing and design of scenery of Wagner's *Ring der Niebelungen*. In 1894 his *La mise en Scene du drame Wagnerien* was published by Chailley. The next year he began to write, to be issued in Monaco in 1899, with the type of Hugo

Bruckmann. Among his few realized theatrical works, Gluck's *Orfeo* (second act) at Hellerau in 1912, *Tristan und Isolde* at La Scala in Milan conducted by Arturo Toscanini, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Basel in 1924-25 are documented. In 1921 *L'oeuvre d'art vivant* was issued by Atar in Geneva. Ill from nerves and alcohol intoxication, he died in 1928. The publication in progress promised by the Societe suisse due Theatre is fundamental, edited by Marie L. Bablet-Hahn, of the *Oeuvres completes*, Lausanne, *L'Age d'homme*, vol. I-III, 1985, 1986, 1989. Cf. also, Gernot Giertz, *Kultus ohne Götter. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze und Adolphe Appia*, Munich, Kitzinger, 1975; A. Appia, *Attore Musica e Scena*, edited by Ferruccio Marotti, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1975; *Adolphe Appia 1862-1928. Attore - spazio - luce*, catalogue of the exhibition edited by Irene Lambelet and Norberto Vezzoli, Zurich, Pro Helvetia, 1980.

Wolf Dohrn (1878-1914)

Wolf Dohrn, was born in Naples to Anton Dohrn (1840-1909) and Marie von Baranowska, product of a family of the Russian-Polish aristocracy. In Munich in 1902 he first studied psychology and aesthetics with Theodor Lipps, then economics with Lujo Brentano. He was drawn to Friedrich Naumann and the national socialist movement and participated with Naumann in the electoral campaign of 1903. Having completed his doctoral thesis in aesthetics (*Die künstlerische Darstellung als Problem der aethetik. Untersuchungen zur Methode und Begriffsbildung der aethetik mit einer Anwendung auf Goethes Werther*) in 1907, Wolf renounced an academic career, and became Karl Schmidt's collaborator in Dresden, where he was particularly occupied with Hellerau. From 1908-1910 he was first secretary of the German Werkbund. He had Alfons Paquet replace him, so that he could dedicate himself exclusively to the Institut Dalcroze which he founded and financed. He died 4 February 1914, following a ski accident on the Swiss mountains. Cf. Theodor Heuss, *Anton Dohrn*, Tübingen, R. Wunderlich, 1940; Klaus Dohrn, *Von Burgern und Weltburgern. Eine Familiengeschichte*, Pfullingen, Verlag Günther Neske, 1983; Karl Lorenz, *Wolf Dohrns Vermächtnis*, in "Rhythmik in der Erziehung", XI(1984), n. 2, pp. 6-11; *Dem Andenken von Wolf Dohrn*, in "Berichte der Dalcroze-Schule", 1914, n. 6 (special issue); Fritz Hellwag, *Nachruf Wolf Dohrn*, in "Kunstgewerbeblatt", 1914, n. 7, p. 139; Eugen Katz, *Wolf Dohrn*, in "Die Hilfe", XX(1914), n. 7, pp. 111-112; Walter Riezler, *Wolf Dohrn zum Gedächtnis*, in, Heinz Thiersch (editor), *Wir fingen einfach an*, Munich, Richard Pflaum Verlag, 1953, pp. 91-92; Peter Sperans, *Das Bayreuth der Rhythmik. Zum Tode von Dr. Wolf Dohrn*, in "Universum Jahrbuch", 1914, pp. 66-69; *Dr. Wolf Dohrn gestorben*, in "Mitteilungen für die Gemeinde Rahnitz-Hellerau", 1914, 7 February, n. 6; Alfons Paquet, *Wolf Dohrn. Ein Nachruf*, in "Mitteilungen für die Gemeinde Rahnitz-Hellerau", 1914, 14 February, n. 7.

Kara-za, A Movable Theater

an interview with Tadao Ando

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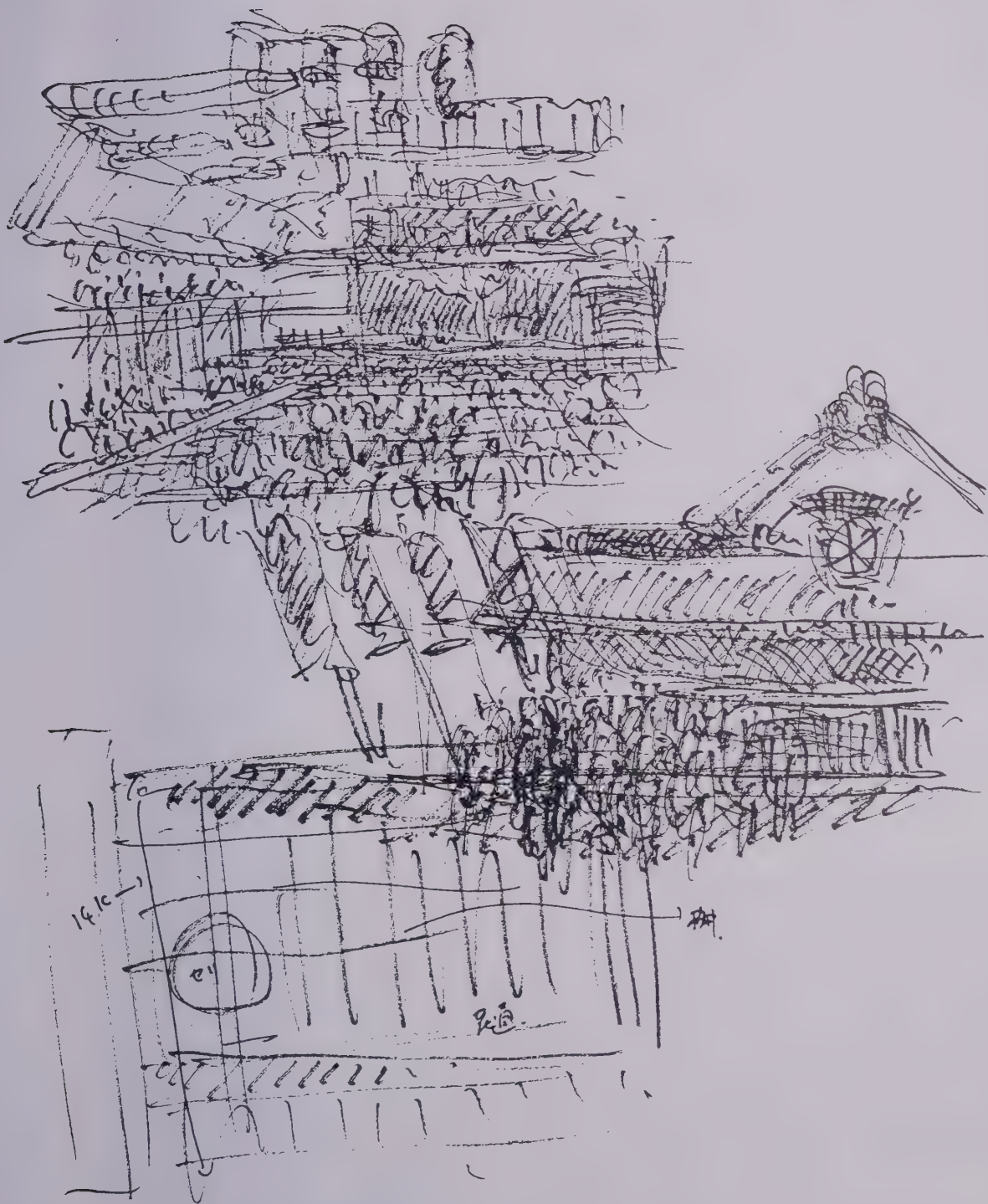
In July 1985, I was asked to create a theater in the Asakusa district of Tokyo. As I began to design, Kanamaru-za, a theater I had seen on Shikoku Island, was in the back of my mind. It is a kabuki playhouse built at the end of the Edo era (Kyoho period, c. 1800). Located in Takamatsu city, it is part of Konpira Shrine, the first stop on the praying route of eighty-eight temples. To reach the theater/temple complex, one must climb to the mountain's summit, through the town in front of the temple gates. The experience of this difficult climb heightens the feeling that one is approaching an unusual place, and enhances one's sense of pleasure upon arrival. Kanamaru-za may be the oldest surviving wooden kabuki theater and is an interesting wooden structure for me.

Theaters nowadays are fully equipped with up-to-date technology in order to provide the best possible environment for actors and audiences. Audiences watch the acting while seated in com-

fortable chairs as if in their own living rooms.

The place is air-conditioned, needless to say. The use of technology superficially manipulates even the acting itself. If an actor's voice is not audible, sound effects can amplify it. Because of all this comfort and technical manipulation, I find there is no real excitement for the actor or for the audience.

I found Kanamaru-za very interesting because of the poor condition of its lighting and acoustics. When an actor is not in good shape, you feel it. In a modern theater, you never know what the actor's condition and feelings are because there are too many layers of manipulation between the actor and audience. To me, that's not real acting. Acting becomes interesting when we, as an audience, can feel the actors themselves. When *that* is communicated, then for the first time excitement emerges. Actors challenge their own capabilities and the audience responds to their humanistic content. Thus, I think that the ideal



thing with opera glasses, you know. In any case, these theaters, growing more commercialized, became big business. Well, that's our theater today.

In principle, since we live in a society that relies on mass communication, theaters must be able to house as large an audience as possible. However, I wanted to question what theater is really all about. I am not saying that all theaters should be designed this way; this is my response to modern theater in general. My feeling of what theater might have originally been or meant motivated me to design this theater.



Does Kara-za relate to the tradition and culture of Japanese theater?

I think so. As a playhouse, like kabuki, I guess. The word "kabuki" originally referred to something original or new. Kabuki is a form of theater generated by public culture. For instance, we call someone who dresses or acts outlandishly *kabuki-mono* (*mono* means person). I think this theater gives an impression of modern *kabuki-mono*, when seen from both inside and outside because it is formally and conceptually unusual.

The Kara-za project developed as a result of your response to Kara Juro's theater troupe. What was your relationship with him and his actual involvement in the design process?

Kara Juro is a person who is always interested in creating something new. His plays are not written for a large theater. He and his actors used to

perform in what we call *aka-tento* (red tent). Kara Juro is an actor, a writer, and a director. I recently saw his new play in Tokyo. When we arrived, he guided me to a seat. Then he acted in his play for a while. When we were leaving the theater, we saw him again at the door still selling tickets. He is that kind of person. There is no one like him in this day and age. He is a very versatile, yet down-to-earth man.

You can probably say that these factors had some influence on my design but nothing really specific.

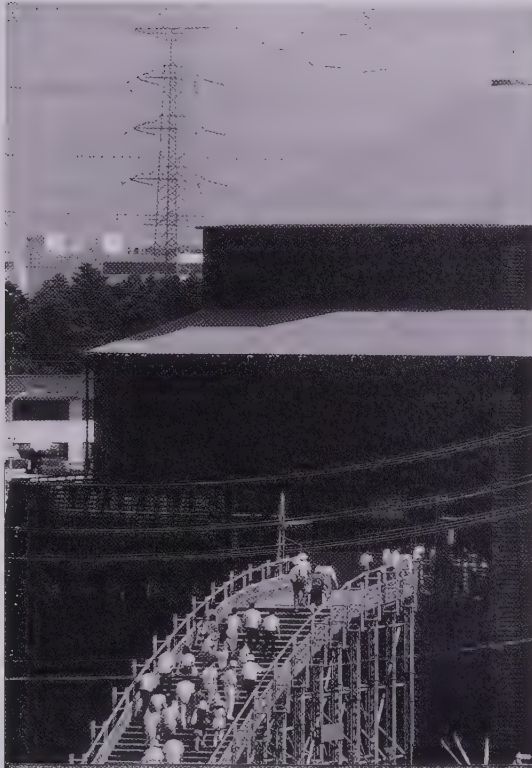
Did Mr. Kara participate in the actual design process?

No, not in the design process itself, and in fact the project wasn't just for Mr. Kara's theater group. This really is my concept of what a theater should be. Although Kara Juro was involved from the beginning, the actual client was the district leader of Asakusa, Tokyo. I thought there was little possibility that the project would be realized, and so resolved to enjoy myself and design something fantastic. In fact, the district could not raise sufficient funds. Eventually the design was constructed for a well-known company and used as a pavilion at a trade exposition in Sendai, in northern Japan. It will be used as a temporary theater in Asakusa and then at a drama festival in the Kansai district. It may be used by Issey Miyake in New York as well.



The theater is reached by an arched bridge. What is the role of the bridge in the design?

The approach to Kara-za is by a *taiko-bashi* (a half-drum shaped bridge) symbolizing one's departure from the world of reality. In the Edo period, a bridge was usually situated on the approach to a theater district, to mark the dividing point between this world and *higan* (the other world). People crossing the bridge become conscious of entering an extraordinary fictional place.



This *taiko-bashi* is similar in form to the one in Itsukushima, at Miyajima Shrine. *Taiko-bashi* function as thresholds, as do the *torii* (gates) at shrines like Ise or Heian. In a Japanese house, you have a *shiki* (threshold) at the entrance to signify a separation of worlds. Without this, you would walk into a different world, but one which has not been distinguished from regular public space. I had planned to surround the theater with a bamboo enclosure to increase the other-worldly quality of the space.

The bridge and the theater building are constructed from the same material. What is the relationship between the two forms?

The form of the theater is a dodecagon. It is structurally independent of the bridge which pierces the dodecagon volume. I think that a dodecagon represents the world. The number twelve is symbolic of the cosmos. In Japan, there are twelve animals corresponding to the twelve-year cycle of the calendar. In the West there are twelve months to a year and so forth.

The dodecagon is composed of a layered column structure that forms two concentric rings around the central space. The inner ring, covered by its

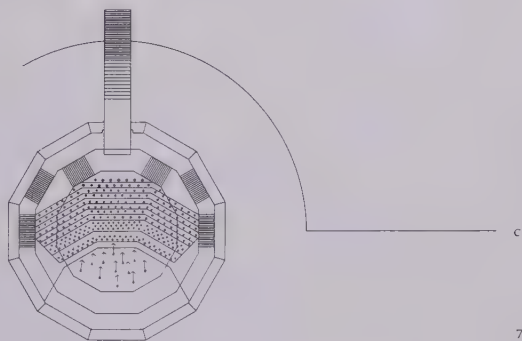
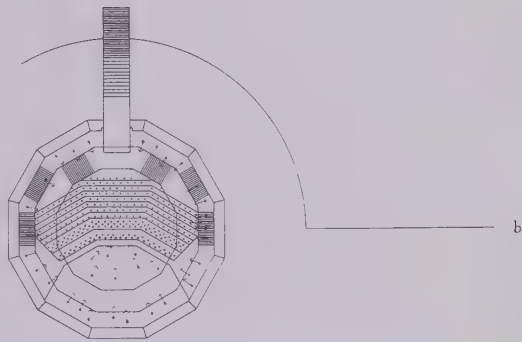
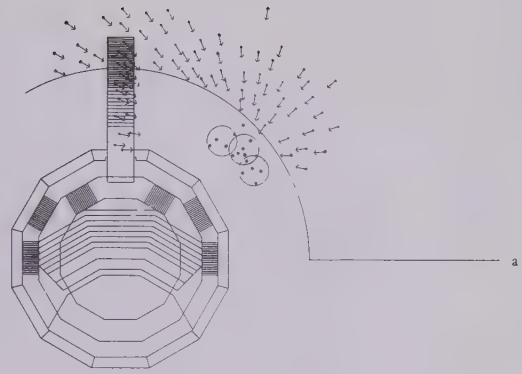


own roof, is integrated with the central space by the extension of the arc of the seating. The unroofed outer ring serves as a passageway for the actors. If it rains, the plays are still performed. Rain comes in but there is no problem. When the actors finish and exit through this passage, the audience cannot see them, only hear their voices. They hear them singing. They often sing at the end. You know how Buddhist monks read prayers at temples? It sounds better when you hear it from outside the building, doesn't it? It's better just to hear the sound without watching the prayers.

Can you explain why you overlap the structural system and the seating layout of the theater?

These seats are located in between pipes so people can sit within the structure. The structural system of the building and the seating don't align perfectly, but I think that's fine. My concept is to contain something that is not perfect in a perfect world.

You know the typical way in which the audience is seated to watch actors perform "properly" on a stage? I don't call that a real form of theater. A theater should be a place where audience and actors get emotionally involved through the many possibilities that are generated: actors can appear on stage from different directions, the audience can physically surround actors and vice versa. As in the *hana-michi* of traditional kabuki, actors sometimes emerge from the back of the theater and run through the audience to the stage.



5. Kara-za, theater entrance.
6. Outer layers of structure sheathed in black wood panels.
7. Circulation/use diagrams:
 - a. audience gathered on bridge prior to and after performance while actors greet them from grade level.
 - b. actors surrounding audience during performance, entering and exiting within inner ring.
 - c. typical performance arrangement.



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Can you elaborate on the functions of the subsidiary areas, such as the backstage?

The backstage is all underneath, so there are always actors beneath the audience. There is one large room that serves for both dressing and set storage. We left some sheets of the plywood floor unattached so that the actors could raise them to come out. We have to prepare many interesting things such as unexpected openings to the stage, having actors come out from here and there.

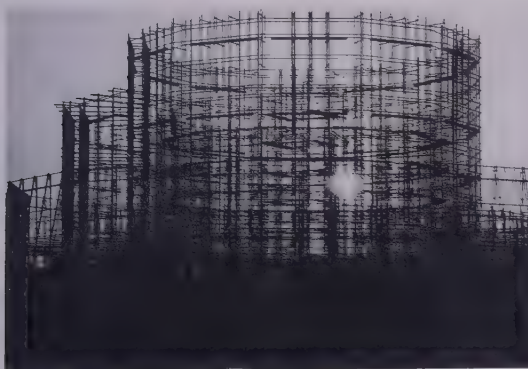
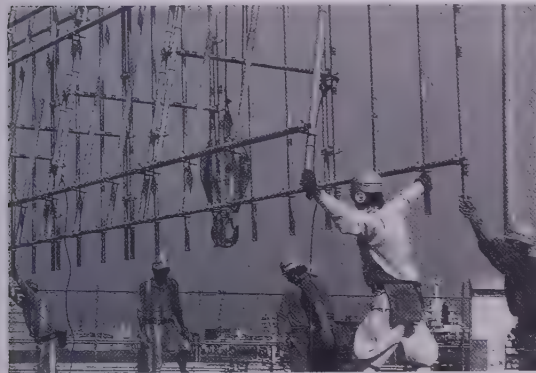
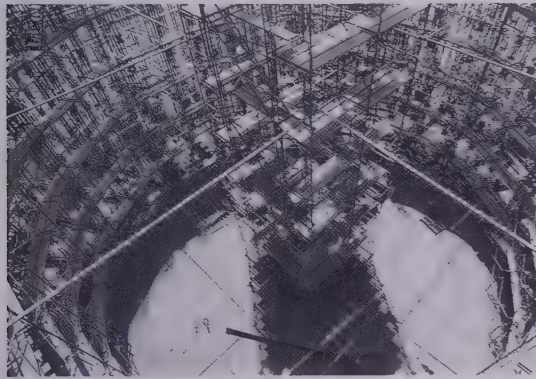
Formally, this theater is quite different from Japanese traditional theater. Hearing voices from underneath or elsewhere without seeing them makes the audience feel that they are surrounded by the actors' world. Plays on a small scale such as one-man theater or *kami-shibai* (shows featuring paper illustrations and dramatic readings to tell adventure stories) were originally performed

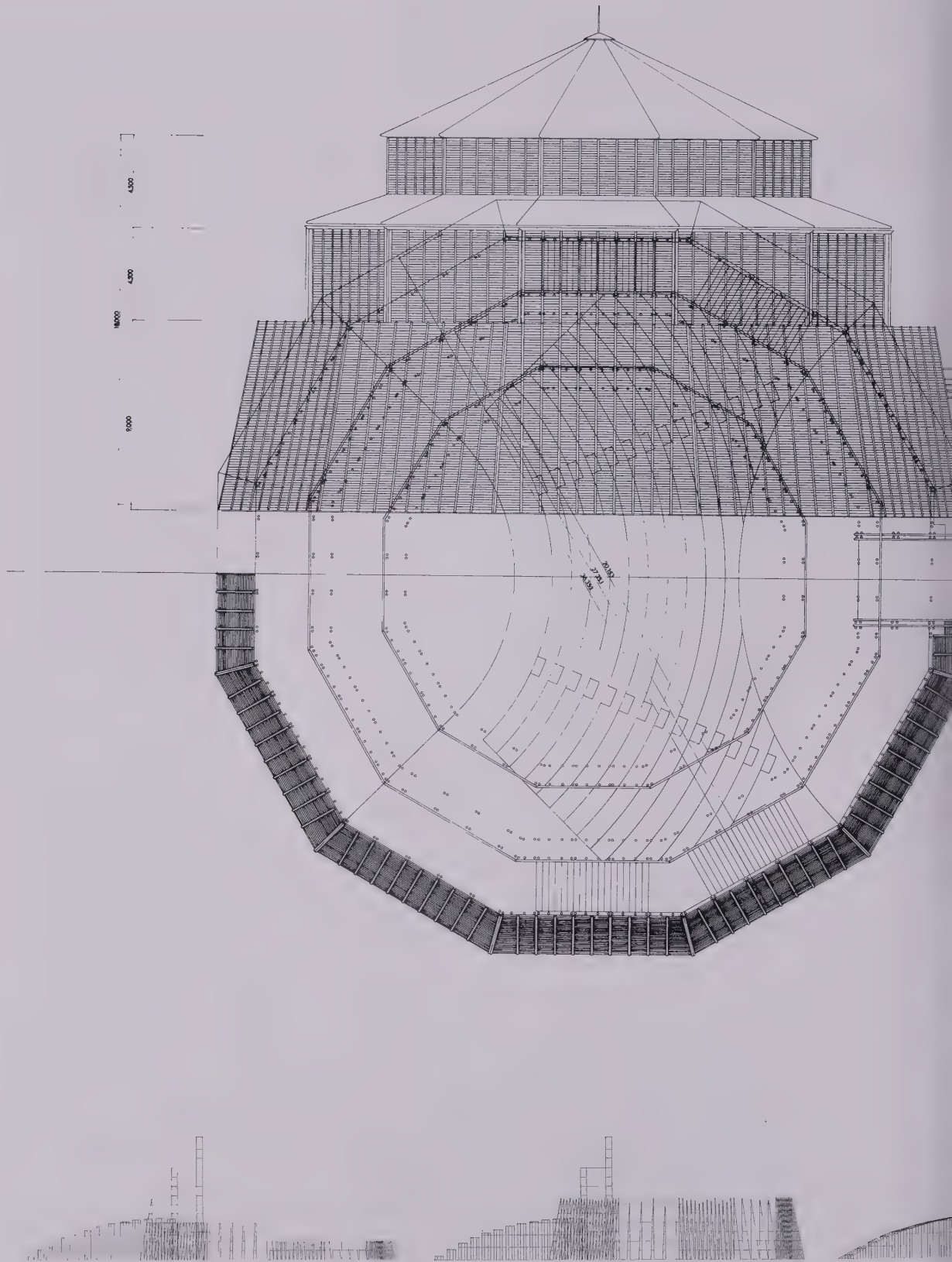
outside without a playhouse. In Europe, a piazza could become a theater and in Japan, a small side street or temple courtyard could do the same. This small and simple form of theater eventually became large enough to be our modern theater. So, in principle, we should assume that stages exist everywhere in a city. What I have done here was to cover one part of the city with a roof.



8. Interior view of seating/
structure intersection.

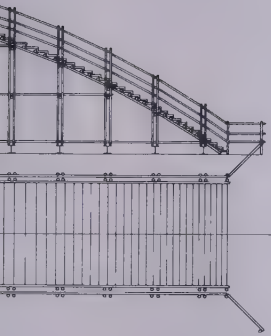
9-12. Photographs during
construction.



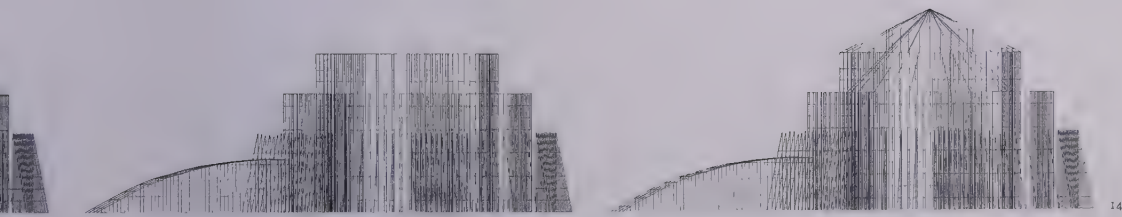


13. Theater elevation and plan.

14. Scaffolding erection
sequence.



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Can you describe the material components of the building?

Because the theater was to be moveable, the main structure is an assemblage of pipes used in scaffolding. I think that scaffolding is very functional. The shape of its individual members is dictated by its functionality and efficiency; anyone can put it together. The basic structure is a truss, but analysis according to existing programs proved impossible because there are so many joints. Consequently, each member had to be considered in section.

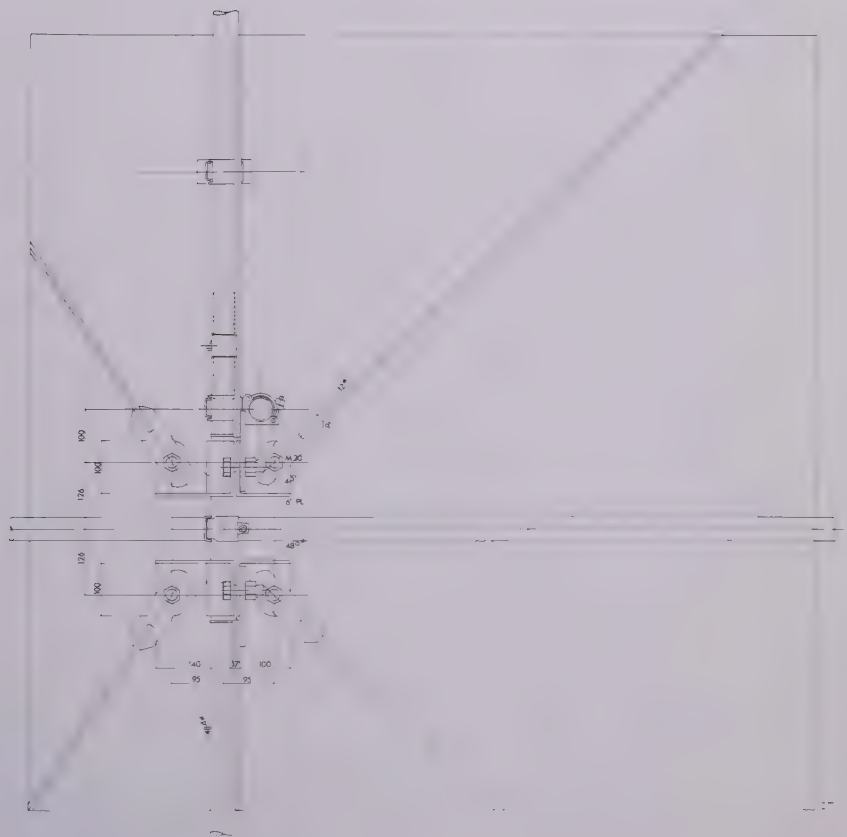
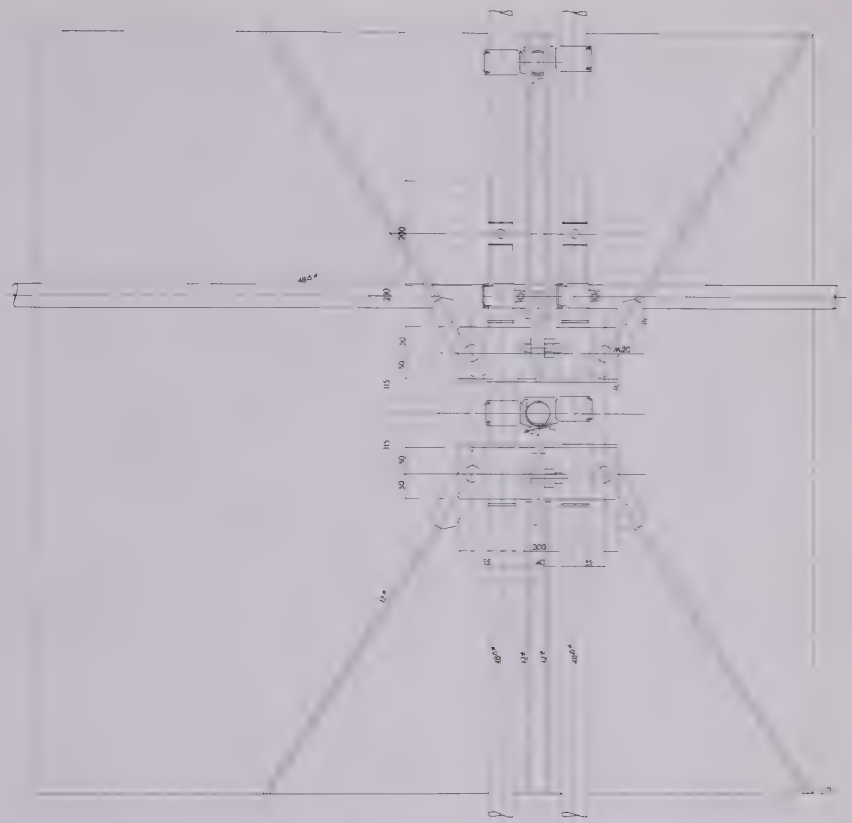
The members are pipes 48.6 mm in diameter and 2 mm thick. The longest are 9 meters long. Twenty-five thousand ready-made clamps are used. The members are held together solely by frictional force. The analysis of the joints was difficult to substantiate. In order to concentrate as much of the stress as possible in the joints we ordered special brackets and 20 mm diameter braces. There are twenty types of joints in all.

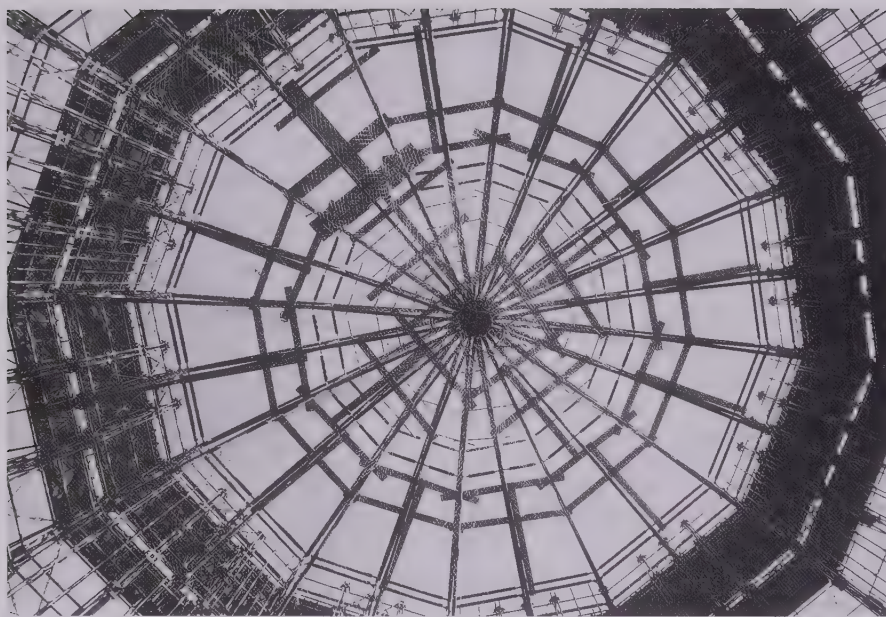
The pipes can be assembled in fifteen days. Moreover, there is no need to transport building materials, with the exception of certain special parts. Practically everything is available locally. If one faxes drawings and instructions, the building can be easily put together anywhere. By reducing architecture to information, it is possible to transmit a building anywhere in the world.

15. Detail of scaffolding clamp at base of the theater.

16-17. Working drawing details of pipe connections.







- 18. Umbrella roof structure.
- 19. Detail, black skin panels.
- 20. Site plan, Asakusa, Tokyo, showing processional route to the theater.

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The shape of the roof is like a large open umbrella. It is made of the same scaffolding as the main structure, covered by a red fabric skin. This skin is not required for the structural integrity of the building; it just lightly sits on it. I think that the theater without this roof would be its ideal form, but of course that's not possible because of the weather. At the end of some performances the tent is peeled back. Each of the three pieces of fabric can be pulled back by ropes. It's up to the theater troupe—if it's appropriate for them, they open up the roof.

The material of the outer skin is a plywood panel used for concrete construction. The plywood panels are attached to larger frames which make up the sides of the dodecagon. The panels are painted black. Old Japanese fences are often oil-stained black like this. Spaces left between each panel allow light to filter through. During the day, natural light filters in through these slits. At night, the red glow of the interior is visible from outside.

The overall colors are red and black. Red is the color used for celebratory occasions in Japan.



What is your attitude toward artificial light in the theater?

Of course, you can't do without it. An entrance lobby is usually very bright, isn't it? But I keep the lobby very dark. So, you come into the lobby and it is pitch black. In the house of the theater, light filters up from underneath the seating.

What is the relationship between this theater and the city where it is located?

It depends on the place. I have to look at the location in order to come up with an idea. I can't develop an idea by talking about it. I just have to

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see.... It so happened that when I went to see the Tokyo site, I came up with the idea of lighting candles along a procession route. The idea of everyone in the Asakusa neighborhood lighting candles is appropriate because there are many shrine festivals and street fairs there. All of the city participates in the making of the theater. It doesn't get interesting unless the people participate.



How do your commercial buildings provide places for public participation?

For me, the most important aspect of commercial architecture is to provide the space that functions as a meeting place for the public. In Japanese commercial architecture I feel there is too much emphasis given to the function of selling. When I design, I don't overemphasize the features of the store itself. Instead, I first create a dramatic space in the middle of the store which can serve various purposes. It can function as a piazza, a little passageway, or an improvised outdoor theater space. Then I add the store features. Many retail/commercial spaces are just a bunch of stores lined up. I don't think they serve the proper

function of commercial architecture. There are, however, good examples of commercial architecture in the United States, such as Rockefeller Center. There, many stores and restaurants surround a central space where people can eat in summer and skate in winter. The stores there actually have secondary roles. It is a shame that new shopping centers do not follow such a great example. I think that the main function of commercial space is to generate a central place where people can come and enjoy a city.

I find many possibilities in commercial space. However, I think that developers and architects should be more brave about building such spaces.

My commercial works are not really featured anywhere, there are only a few in GA publications. They mainly feature my concrete ones. Do you know Kitano-Cho? It is a small town about one square kilometer. I have built many buildings there, one every year or so... in twenty years I will have twenty buildings there, plus plazas and extras.

In general, architects can predict only fifty percent of the end result when they are designing. The other half is something that they subconsciously create. This they can figure out only once it is built. Basically, architects as creators have to get excited about going to see their completed buildings. You really cannot lose that spirit. You know how children make toys? When they are making a toy they don't know what it will look like. But when it is built they get very excited. When you become older, you enter a society where economic constraints and other elements often interfere with your creative freedom. You become an architect while forgetting all that excitement you had when you were a child.

Meditations on the Frame

José Ortega y Gasset

In Search of a Theme

There are very few things in this room where I now write; among them, however, are two large photographs and a small painting, which, in times of forced leisure, sickness, or fatigue, are favorites in attracting my attention. The two photographs face each other from opposite walls. One is a reproduction of the figure of the *Mona Lisa*, which hangs in the Prado Museum [*sic*]; the other is of the *Man with his Hand on his Breast*, painted by that frenzied Greek from Toledo. This unknown character is a glowing, passionate physiognomy, who restrains an incurable and friendly exaltation by the weight of his hand and looks out at the world with feverish eyes. A starlike phosphorescence emanates from his white collar ruff. His pointed beard seems to tremble, and against his black suit the golden hilt of his sword throbs like a perpetual flame beneath his heart. I have always thought that this figure was the most consummate representation of Don Juan; that is, of Don Juan according to my way of interpreting him, which differs a bit from the standard ways. As for the *Mona Lisa*, with her plucked eyebrows and elastic, molluscan flesh, with her double-edged smile (which is at the same time one of enticement and disdain), for me she symbolizes extreme femininity. Just as Don Juan is the man who, to women, is purely a Man—not father nor husband, nor brother nor son—the *Mona Lisa* is the quintessential Woman, whose charms remain unconquered. Mother and wife,

For the original text, see "Meditacion del Marco," in *Obras de Jose Ortega Gasset*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1943), vol. 1, pp. 369–75. This translation is by Andrea L. Bell. It was commissioned by The Art Institute of Chicago for *The Art of The Edge* curated by Richard Brettel.

sister and daughter: these are the by-products of femininity, the forms that woman dons when she stops being, or is not yet, Woman. The majority of women are fully Woman for only one hour of their lives, and men tend to be Don Juan for no more than a few moments. If we stretch these moments out, prolonging them so that they last throughout all existence, we will create the ideal figure of Don Juan and Doña Juana. Because that is what the Mona Lisa is: Doña Juana. Thus, these two photographs, from their opposite walls, are two of a kind. Victorious over all other women, it was interesting to make Don Juan undergo this greatest of experiments by subjecting him to the powers of Doña Juana. What will happen? The room in which I am writing is the psychology lab where the experiment will be conducted. When evening falls throughout and light's rearguard fights the invading darkness in the corners of this abode, a dynamic exchange of energy will burst forth between both photographs. More than once I have had the pleasure of coming upon this tacit dialogue between the two symbolic cartoons, this offense and defense which they launch like fireworks and send shooting throughout these rooms like great Roman candles.

Since I must still write one more folio[†] in order to fill out all the dimensions of this volume, why not write it on this subject? There is, however, one difficulty. Such a serious subject as love and pain will not fit in just one folio; it requires dozens of them, and at this time the task is to write just one.

Let us search for a humbler theme. Perhaps that little painting that hangs to the left of the *Man with his Hand on his Breast*. It is a landscape by Regoyos, that humblest of painters, the Holy Father of dirt clods and forest groves, who, it seems would get down on his knees in order to paint a cabbage. The painting depicts a corner of the Bidasoa river: a serene plot of vegetable gardens, the lead-colored mountains of France showing vaguely the background, weightless clouds drifting on high, the sinuous curves of the river, a shimmering town gilded by the last rays of the sun, and the international bridge over which hurries a little train, the only spot of nervousness in the midst of the vaporous calm. The smoke from the locomotive vanishes into the air, and just when it's about to disappear altogether, we see it reborn of itself, and so it goes on, indefinitely. This continuous rhythm of the death and resurrection of the little wisp of smoke endows the painting with a sort of vital pulse that keeps it forever in an unfading present tense.

Couldn't one fill a folio with all that this insignificant painting suggests? Unfortunately, no. Nothing would be easier than to write several folios about this painting; but to write one, only one—impossible. The reader doesn't suspect the difficulties that one must go through in order to write just one folio. And everything in the world possesses this same marvelous quality! There is so much to say about even the most trifling of them! And it is so painful to arbitrarily amputate the limbs from a subject and then offer the reader only its stump-covered torso!

[†] In Ortega y Gasset's time it was customary to write in folio form, that is, on sheets of paper of a specific dimension which would then be folded over into quartos or octavos and considered as a completed work or as a section of a book.—translator

Let us search, then, for an even humbler theme than the humble painting by the humble painter. For example: its gilded frame. Let us meditate briefly on the frame. Even with our subject matter thus limited, we shall certainly be unable to do more than barely touch upon it.

Frame, Clothing, and Adornment

Pictures live housed within their frames. That association of picture and frame is not an accidental one. Each has need of the other. A picture without a frame has the air about it of a naked, despoiled man. Its contents seem to spill out over the four sides of the canvas and dissolve into the atmosphere. By the same token, the frame constantly demands a picture with which to fill its interior, and does so to such an extent that, in the absence of one, the frame will tend to convert whatever happens to be visible within it into a picture.

The relationship between the one and the other, then, is essential and not accidental. It is of the nature of a physiological requirement, just as the nervous system requires the circulatory one and vice versa, just as the torso aspires to culminate in the head, and the head to perch atop a torso.

The partnership between frame and picture is not, however, the same type as the one between clothing and the body (the first partnership to come to mind when searching for comparisons). The frame is not the picture's clothing, because clothing covers up the body, whereas the frame, on the contrary, shows the painting off. It is true that clothes often reveal part of the body, but to us this always seems a slight bit of madness committed by the outfit, a breach of duty, a sin. The amount of body surface that the clothing reveals is always proportional to the amount that it conceals, so that when the first quantity is greater than the second, clothing stops being clothing and becomes decoration. Thus, the belt worn by a naked savage is of ornamental character, rather than being an article of dress.

But neither is the frame an ornament. The very first artistic act executed by man was one of adornment and, above all, the adornment of his own body. In adornment, that primordial art, we find the seeds of all subsequent art. And that first artistic act simply consisted of the union of two works of nature that nature itself had not united. Man placed a feather upon his head, or strung together tiger's teeth to hang about his neck, or clasped a bracelet of colorful stones around his wrist; and behold, the first babblings of that complex and divine discourse on art.

What mysterious instinct induced the Indian to affix a magnificent, showy feather to his head? Undoubtedly, it was the instinct to draw attention to oneself and signal one's difference from, and superiority over, the others. Biology shows us that this instinct for superiority and self-betterment runs deeper than the one for self-preservation.

That inspired Indian felt in his heart a hazy notion that somehow he was worth more than the rest, that he was more of a man than the others; that his whistling

arrow was the truth in all the impenetrable forest, as it went rushing madly toward its target underneath the wing of the bird with the precious feathers. This consciousness of superiority languished mutely inside of him. But when he placed the feather upon his head, the Indian thus created an external expression of that private notion he held about himself.

Was that feather on his head there merely so that others would look at it? No; the showy feather functioned more like a lightning rod, attracting the looks of others and conducting them downwards so that they would focus on himself. The feather was an accent mark, and an accent mark does not modify itself but rather the letter beneath it. The feather served to accent and glorify the Indian's head and body, shooting from him like a cry of color launched at the four winds.

All decoration preserves this same meaning, which is evident in the telltale downward-slanting strokes of the feather on a savages' forehead. It calls attention to itself, yes, but in the spirit of channeling that attention downwards onto the person whom it adorns. Similarly, the frame does not call attention to itself. Proof of that is simple. If each of you were to reflect upon the paintings you know best, you would find that you cannot recall the frames in which they are set. We are not used to *seeing* a frame except when it is in the carpenter's shop; bereft of a painting; that is, when the frame is not fulfilling its function, when it's, so to speak, out of a job.

The Island of Art

Instead of attracting attention to itself, the frame limits itself to concentrating attention and making it spill out onto the picture. But that is not its principal skill. The wall upon which the Regoyos painting hangs does not measure more than 18 feet. The painting takes up only a minimal part of that space and, nevertheless, is able to present me with an ample segment of the Bidasoa region: a river and a bridge, a train, a town, and the curved ridge of a large mountain. How can all of that fit in such a meager space? Obviously, it is there without being there. The painted scenery does not cause me to react to it in the same way that I could react to its real-life counterpart. The bridge isn't really a bridge, nor is the smoke smoke, not the countryside countryside. Everything in it enjoys a merely apparent existence. The painting, like poetry or music, like all works of art, is an aperture of unreality that opens magically unto us in our real world.

When I look at my grey, domestic walls, my attitude is inevitably one of vital utilitarianism. When I look at the painting, I enter an imaginary space and adopt an attitude of pure contemplation. Wall and painting, then, are two antagonistic and uncommunicative worlds. My spirit leaps from reality to unreality as if from wakefulness to dreams.

The work of art is an imaginary island that floats surrounded by reality on all sides. In order for it to be produced, it is necessary that the aesthetic body remain isolated from the real world. We cannot, by merely walking one step at a time, pass from

the ground upon which we tread to the ground that is painted. It takes more than that. The indecisive nature of the boundaries between the artistic and the living disturbs our sense of aesthetic pleasure. Hence the picture without a frame, confusedly blending the boundaries with the pragmatic, extra-artistic objects that surround it, loses all elegance and suggestion. What is needed is for that real wall to terminate quickly and abruptly, so that we may find ourselves suddenly and without hesitation in the unreal territory of the picture. An isolator is needed. And that isolator is the frame.

In order to isolate one thing from another, a third thing is needed which must be neither like the first nor the second—a neutral object. Now, the frame is not the wall, a merely utilitarian fragment of the real world; but neither is it quite the enchanted surface of the painting. As the frontier for both regions, the frame serves to neutralize a brief strip of wall. And acting as a trampoline, it sends our attention hurtling off to the legendary dimension of the aesthetic island.¹

The frame, then, has something of the window about it, just as the window is a lot like a frame. The painted canvases are portholes of ideality which are perforated in the mute reality of the walls. They are openings of illusion into which we can peer, thanks to the beneficent “window,” the frame. On the other hand, a corner of the city or countryside, seen through the square outlines of the window, seems to split off from reality and acquire a strange palpitation of the ideal. The same thing happens with the far-distant things that are trimmed away by the unequivocal curve of an arch.²

The Gilded Frame

The triumph of the gilded frame over all other types of frames (an undisputed fact proven throughout the centuries) supports this manner of interpreting the frame's function. After all, if we intend to tear ourselves away from our everyday real-world dealings, nothing could be better than to come face to face with something completely devoid of all similarity with natural things (since these things, to a certain extent, always suggest practical problems). Now then, all shapes, no matter how stylized, retain some allusion to the real objects from which they have been distilled. The purest and most geometric ornament, the curve or scroll of Greek architecture, preserves the indestructible echo of some natural form, just as the ancient seashell, fished out of the ocean a thousand years ago, still reverberates with the sound of Atlantic undertows. Only that which is without shape is free from any allusion to reality.

The predominance of the gilded frame is due, perhaps, to the fact that metallic paint is the material that gives off the most reflections. A reflection is that note of color, of

¹ Remember the etymology of *isla* [island], a word that comes from *insula*. The root *sul*, like *sa*, signifies the idea of leaping or jumping. Thus, *in-sula* means that bit of land, that large rock which has “jumped” into the middle of the sea.

² Note the fact that this tinge of unreality grows as the distance between the arch or window and whatever scene is visible beyond it increases. Because of that, we do not perceive the intermediary planes, and the actual roads by which we might arrive at those scenes remain hidden to us.

light, which contains no form in and of itself, but which is pure, shapeless color. We do not attribute the *reflections* of a metallic or glazed object to the object itself, as we do its surface color. The reflection is neither the reflecting object nor whatever may be reflected in it. Instead, it lies somewhere in between those things, a specter without substance. For this reason—because a reflection has neither its own form nor that of anything else—we are unable to arrange our perception of it, and we often end up rather dazzled and bewildered.

Thus the gilded frame, with its bristling halo of sharp-edged radiance, inserts a ribbon of pure splendor between the painting and the unreal world. Its reflections, acting like excited little daggers, incessantly cut the lines that we unwittingly string up between the unreal painting and the surrounding reality. For that same reason, at the entrance to Paradise one finds an angel brandishing a flaming sword—that is, with a reflection in its fist.

The Front Stage Curtain

The front stage curtain is the stage's frame. It stretches open its wide jaws like parentheses, ready to hold within it something different from whatever may already be present in the room. Because of that, the freer the curtain is of ornamentation, the better. With an enormous and absurd gesture, it warns us that in the imaginary hinterland of the empty stage behind it another world is beginning; the unreal, the phantasmagoric.

Let us not accept, then, that the curtains yawn open before us merely in order to speak of mundane affairs and repeat those same things which the audience already knows in its head and feels in its heart. Let us, instead, accept their opening up only in order to exude gusts of dreamlike fantasy and steamy breaths of legends.

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Failure

The attempt to write a folio about the frame fails, as had been foreseen. We must conclude when we have but begun. We should now go on to discuss the hat and veil as frames for the female face. But we will have to give up on that. And later on it would have been worthwhile to pose the suggestive question of why paintings in China and Japan are usually unframed. But how can one approach that subject, which implies as it does the radical differentiation between Far Eastern and Western art, between the Asian heart and the European one? In order to understand it, it would first be necessary to suggest why the Chinese orient themselves toward the south and not the north, as we do; why they dress in white in times of mourning, rather than in black; why they begin the construction of their houses with the roof and not with the foundation; and finally, why, when they want to say "no," they nod their heads up and down, as we do when we say "yes."

1. Aldo Rossi (with C. Zuber),
sets for *Madame Butterfly* and
Lucia di Lamermoor, Rocca
Branaleone, Ravenna, 1986.

The Theaters of the Architect

Alberto Ferlenga

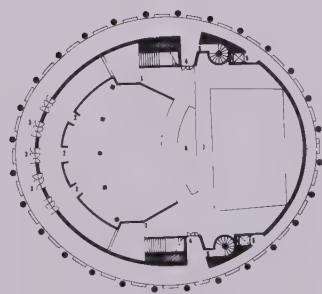
For Aldo Rossi, the idea of the theater has always served as a suggestive source. It is one of his indisputable obsessions and through it one may interpret his entire *oeuvre*. In the various stages of his work, this idea is developed on many levels.

At the most literal level, form and function coincide and the theater, adopted as an urban type, is re-proposed in all its most classical elements. The architect's personal history begins with a project of this nature, his university thesis for a theater in Milan. It continues with other projects, such as the Paganini Theater in Parma, where the proposed edifice, cylindrical in form, is a synthesis of theatrical elements and elements drawn from actual theaters across the Po region, while preserving a certain distance from more traditional architectures. The Teatro del Mondo, in which an incredible range of references seem to converge, epitomizes the urge where history, city, typology, and architecture merge in a construction that is

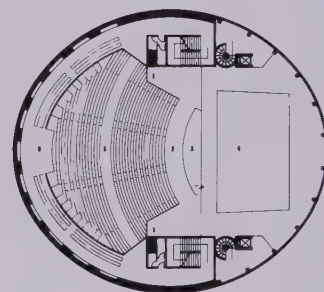
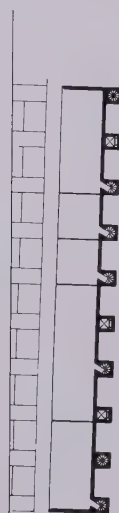
This article was translated from the Italian for *Perspecta 26* by Stephen Sartarelli.







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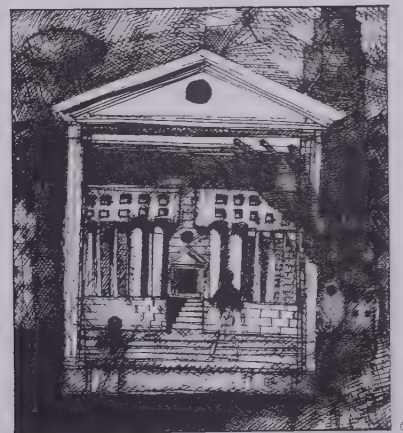
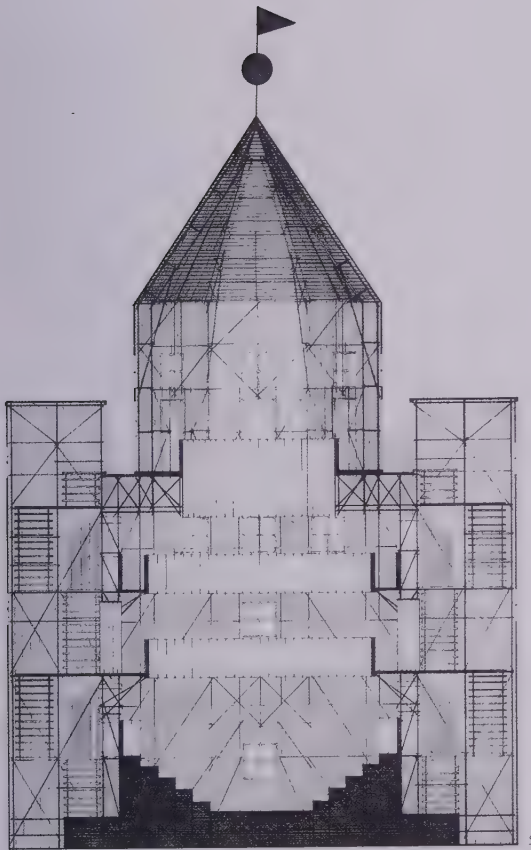
2. Rossi, Pilotta Square and Paganini Theater, competition design, Parma, 1964.

3. Pilotta Square and Paganini Theater, ground floor plan.

4. Pilotta Square and Paganini Theater, upper floor plan.

5. Teatro del Mondo, Venice Biennale, section, 1979.

6. Little Scientific Theater, 1978.

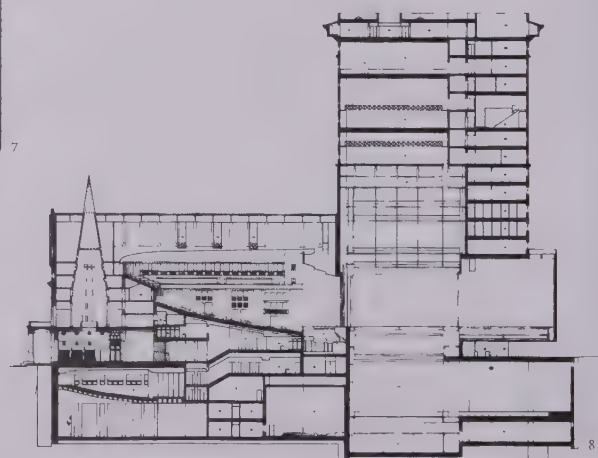


little more than a game and which transfers to an urban fragment the “uselessness of yet another project, that of the little scientific theater,” capturing, perhaps, by this very fact one of the essential aspects of any theater building form.

The new Carlo Felice Theater being built in Genoa represents Rossi's most complete synthesis of the idea of the theater. Here, the suggestions drawn from the great opera houses are accompanied by the conviction that the city, with its spaces and architectures, is the fundamental, generative element in this field. The new theater thus takes shape as a part of the city, with a real piazza that is covered like an entrance, and a virtual piazza that is like an auditorium, whose walls “are like interiors/exterior of the city; like the houses giving onto the piazza, parts of a whole whose center remains the stage and the spectacle.”

This premise leads us to another, more hidden level that cannot be illustrated by descriptions of individual works, but is rather a condition that unites most of Rossi's projects. At its base still lies

an idea of the city and its buildings as the backdrop of the human affairs that complete and justify the architecture. The courtyards, piazzas, and galleries of actual cities and houses constitute part of Rossi's architecture, not only because their forms and proportions join this architecture to an unbroken tradition, but also because they have been the sites of events and encounters whose vitality and memory the architect wishes to re-create by reproducing their architectonic contours. If one thinks of specific projects, like the student houses in Trieste or in Chieti, or more generally of the domestic or urban sites proposed over the years, it is easy to notice how, among the many kinds of nature present in these buildings, there is one that constantly brings the architecture to present itself as a stage. This occurs through a backward shifting of signification from the real stages of theatrical fiction to the equally real spaces of the city, which constitute for the most part the principal reference of those stages.



7. Rossi with Cardella, Reinhart;
Braghieri, Carlo Felice Theater,
Genoa, competition design, site
plan, 1982.

8. Carlo Felice Theater,
longitudinal section.

9. Elementary School, Fagnano
Olona, the stairway from the
interior courtyard, 1972-76.





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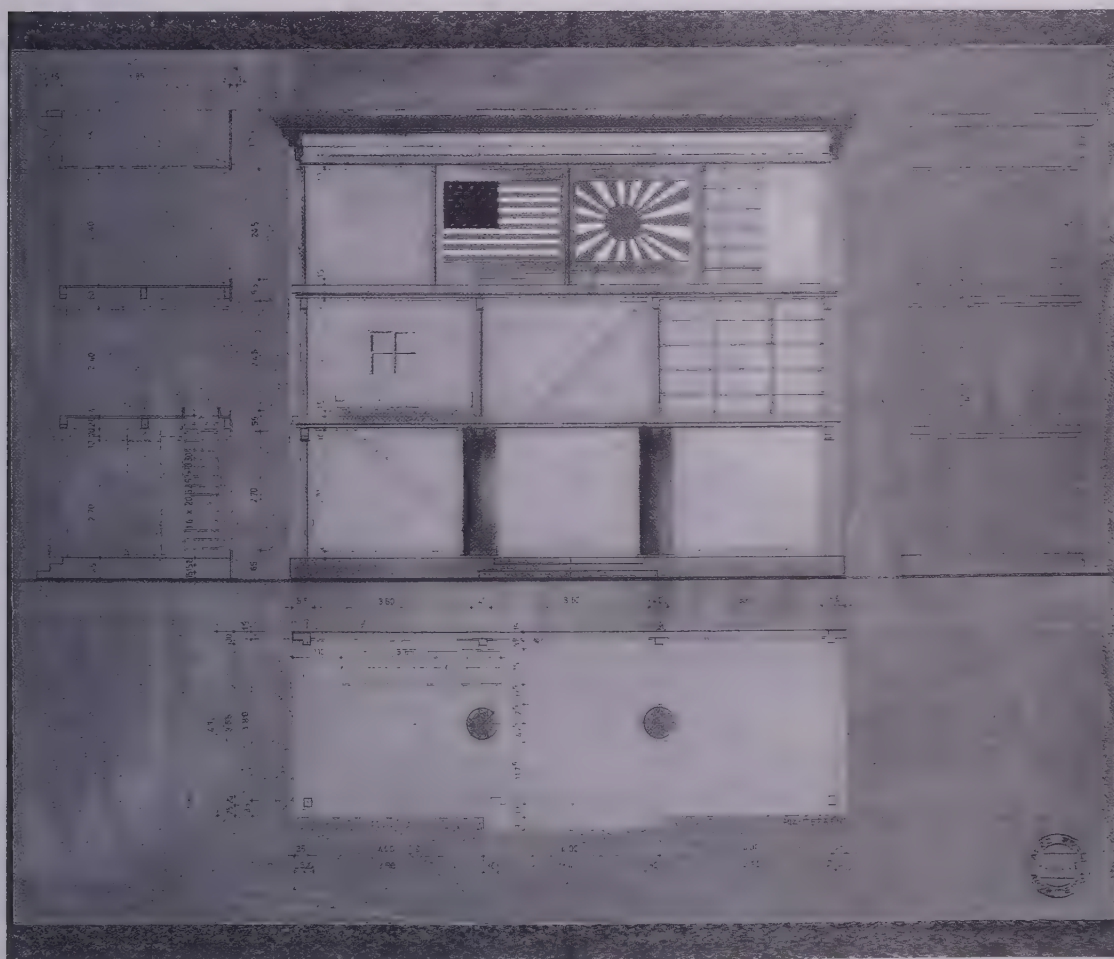
This “theatricalization” of architecture, on which one could write at great length, is therefore another level on which the idea of the theater runs through the work of Rossi. Interestingly, this theatricalization never leads to scenographic solutions. One reason for this is that generally the implication of “stage” does not involve the totality of the building; rather, it asserts itself with emphases of ordinary sites from which is drawn a natural propensity to such theatricality. One need think only of the courtyard to the school of Fagnano Olona, the octagon of the Broni school, the galleries in Trieste, or the porticoes and piazzas of many of the more recent projects. A good deal of Rossi’s work is based on this nearly mythological transfiguration of places of the most common sort. If we consider the Gallarate or the new buildings in Berlin, or the cemetery of Modena, we will see how, through a typically “theatrical” process, it is often by means of the “characterization” of certain architectonic elements such as columns, roofs, or windows that the architect comes to define the image of a new project. The roles that the individual parts of the edifice are called on to play never happen by chance but occur as part of a precise hierarchy, just as in the plot of a play.

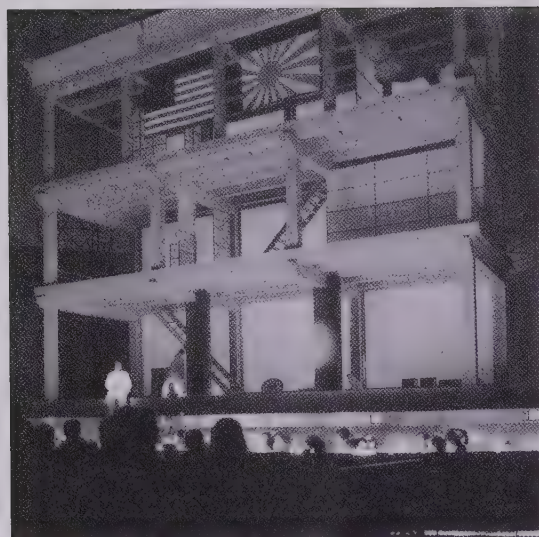
The recent stage designs for productions of *Lucia di Lamermoor* and *Madame Butterfly* in Ravenna and other Italian cities belong to another kind of relationship between architecture and theater. In determining their relation to the other works we might liken them to the products of another activity that Rossi has long been engaged in, the “construction of machines” for the most varied purposes: literally theatrical as in Ravenna, or less directly scenic, as in exhibits. This family of projects, whose life runs parallel to that of the real buildings, includes the various productions for the Milan Triennale and the Venice Biennale, and the wood monuments constructed for the architect’s own shows, such as the “Modenese

machine” and the recent tower of York. At first, during the days of few realized projects, this activity became a way of giving life, though ephemeral, to pieces of architecture that Rossi would have liked to have been real: it was a kind of apprenticeship in architecture, an experimentation of relationships and forms. Later, the machines became the reflection of an investigation aimed at the most common spaces, the real ones, with all the surprises and deformations that those might engender under the strain of continuous observation.

10. Gallarate 2, Milan, view of passageway, 1969-73.

11. Set for *Madame Butterfly*, 1986.

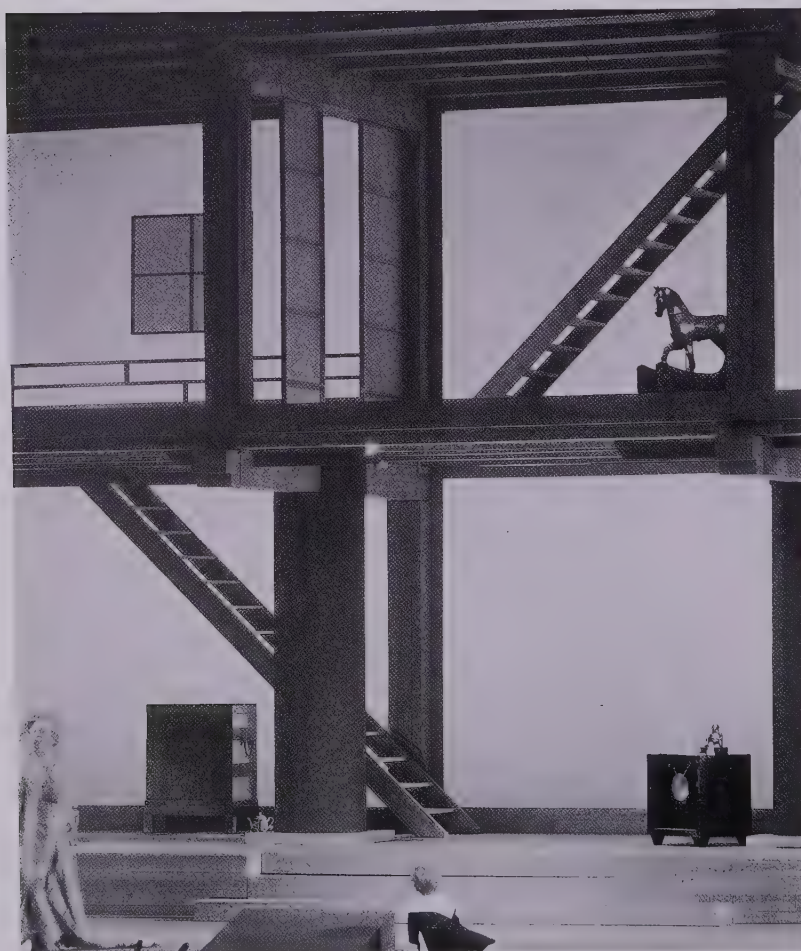




12 Performance of *Madame Butterfly*, Ravenna, 1986.

13 Performance of *Madame Butterfly*, Genoa, 1986.

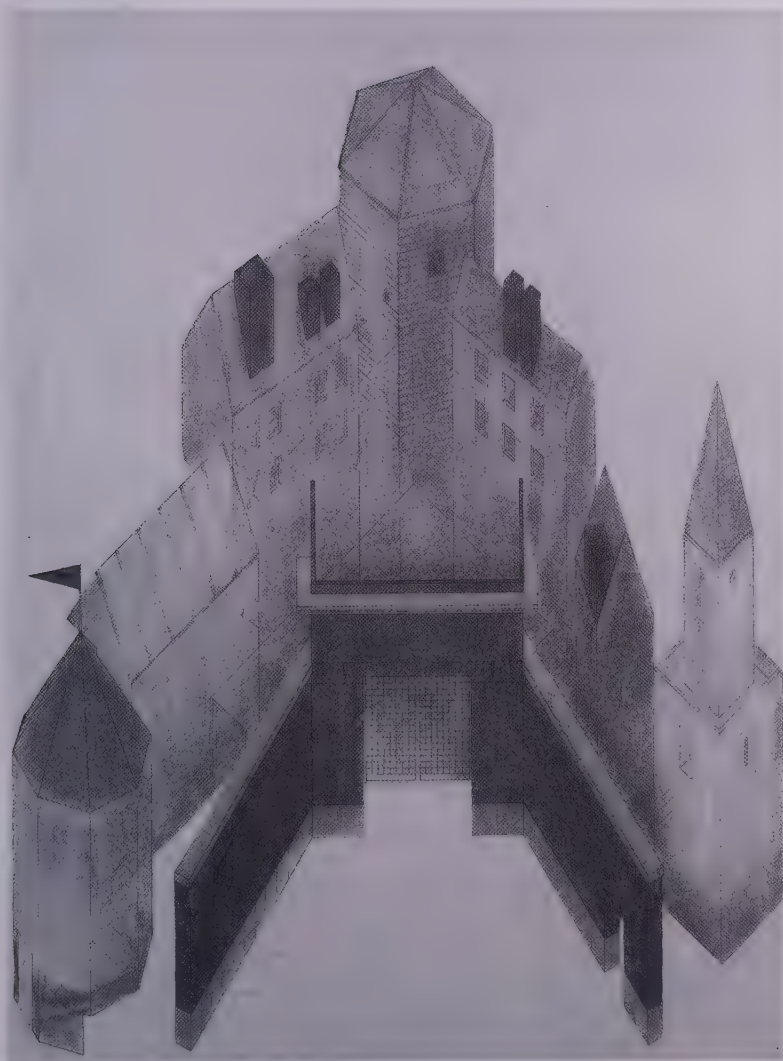
14. Set for *Lucia di Lamermoor*, 1986.



Such were the origins of the stage design of *Butterfly* and the “Domestic Theater” presented at the 17th Milan Triennale. Both projects look like sectioned houses in which a few objects, used as symbols and presented out of scale, serve to evoke different events. The construction for *Lucia*, on the other hand, is different and more complex. In this case the fragment of a city is presented in a corner of the enceinte of Brancaleone Castle in Ravenna. The references from which the set draws life are the very walls of the castle, which become part of the stage. The profile of Ravenna constitutes a second backdrop against which stand out the pointed roofs, other cities, other projects.

These stage designs gave me the opportunity to give representation to some of my voyages which turn up in my drawings. Especially the Japanese interiors with their solid, light limpid colors. Moreover, I had just returned from a trip by car through France and in particular Burgundy; I had seen my favorite cities and villages, with their great roofs and the windows of the houses lit up in deserted squares.

As usual, description, even when made by the artist, only partially explains the projects; but when, in the Ravenna castle, the floodlights light up the city, or the house at night, the new machines successfully demonstrate their own necessity as stage objects, once again uniting architecture and theater.







15. Set for *L'ora di Lammone*
Rocca Branciforte, Lammone,
1986.

16-18. Details of the set for *L'ora di Lammone*.



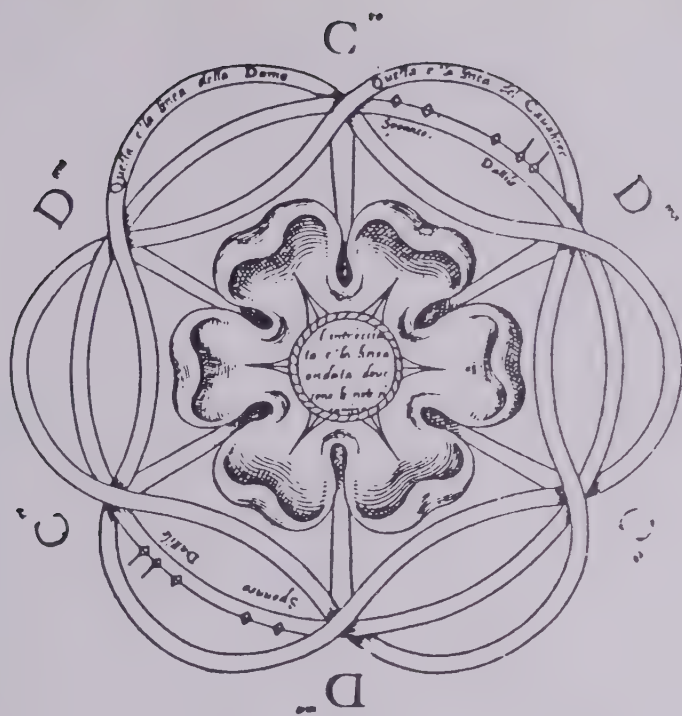
Dance Notation

Ann Hutchinson Guest

Dance has been called moving architecture, a truth which the complexities of contemporary choreography may mask. Not only does the dancer's body form shapes and groups of dancers form moving or static designs, but also group arrangements carve up the stage space, establishing areas of open as well as enclosed space which are significant in their changes and contrasting effects.

While the recording of movement on paper—dance notation—does not look like movement (disregarding primitive stick figure drawings), there is an “architecture” in the sequence of graphic symbols used to record dance patterns. Over the centuries many different devices have been used to capture dance steps on paper. What are the elements that have to be represented?

The process of dance notation requires reducing four-dimensional movement (time being the fourth dimension) to a two-dimensional surface. The parts of the body in action have to be defined, as does the form of movement involved (flexion, extension, rotation, directional placement) and the duration of each in relation to the overall time structure. In group dances the relationship of dancers to one another must be determined and recorded, as well as their location on stage and their paths of travel. In a dance score each performer is like a small orchestra—arms, legs, head, torso, etc. in motion—this is then multiplied by the number of dancers who are performing individual sequences.



1. The Rose Pattern from
Nobilità di Dame by Caroso,
1600.

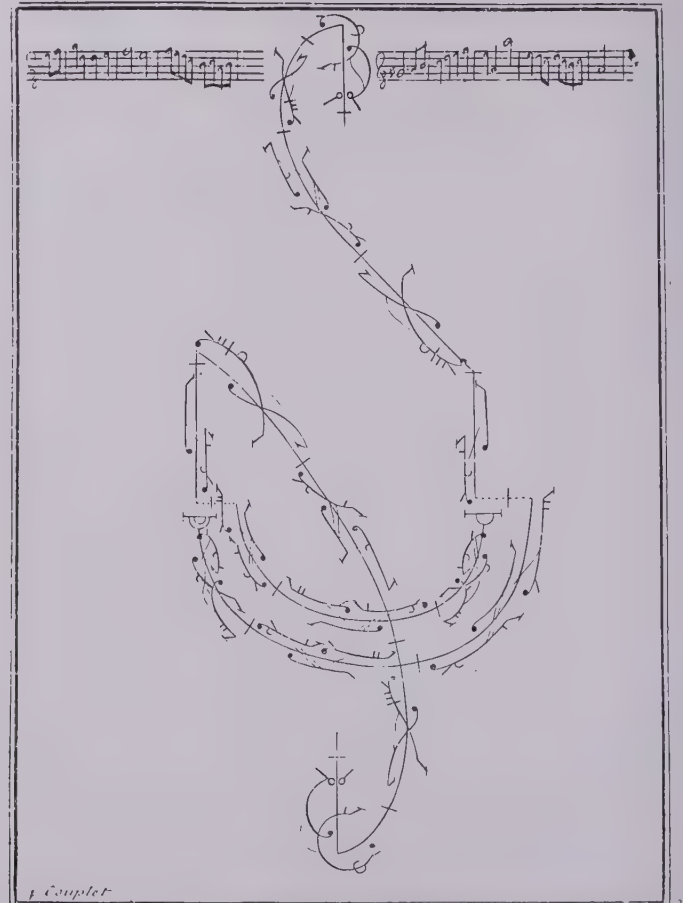
The line of dance, as well as the dancer's line, is a vital expressive element in choreography. When choreographic focus is on a solo dancer performing a complex movement, it usually occurs in one location. When travel across the floor is featured, it requires simpler body actions and simpler steps. Floor designs may employ straight lines, curves, circles, and spirals, all of which can be used by a solo figure, but are more readily visible and more satisfying to the viewer when performed by many dancers, particularly in line formations. In the Renaissance Farandole, for example, one can see the open circle, the spiral, the twisting lines as the dancers follow their leader.

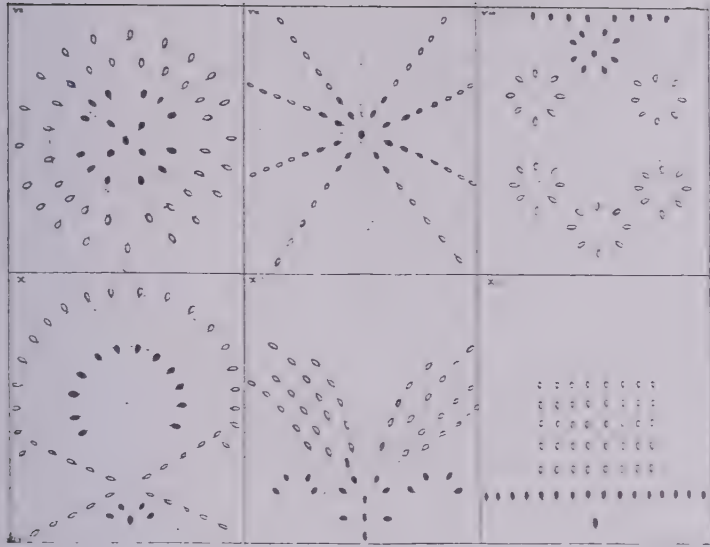
Dance steps as such were simple in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Emphasis at court was on display, one's exalted position being evident from one's raiment and noble deportment. The paths across the dance floor—the various “figures” such as separating from one's partner, meeting again, circling the room, approaching the “presence” (the king or duke)—all had significance. An early published example, the delightful Rose Pattern published by Caroso in 1600, illustrates the familiar circling and interweaving pattern of the “grand right and left,” also known as the “hey” (fig. 1).

2. Part of the *Rigadoon Royal*
by Mr. Issac, 1711.

3. Horse ballet, *Il Mondo*
Festigante, 1661.

4. Designs for a horse ballet
from *Des Ballets Anciens et*
Modernes by Menestrier, Paris,
1682.

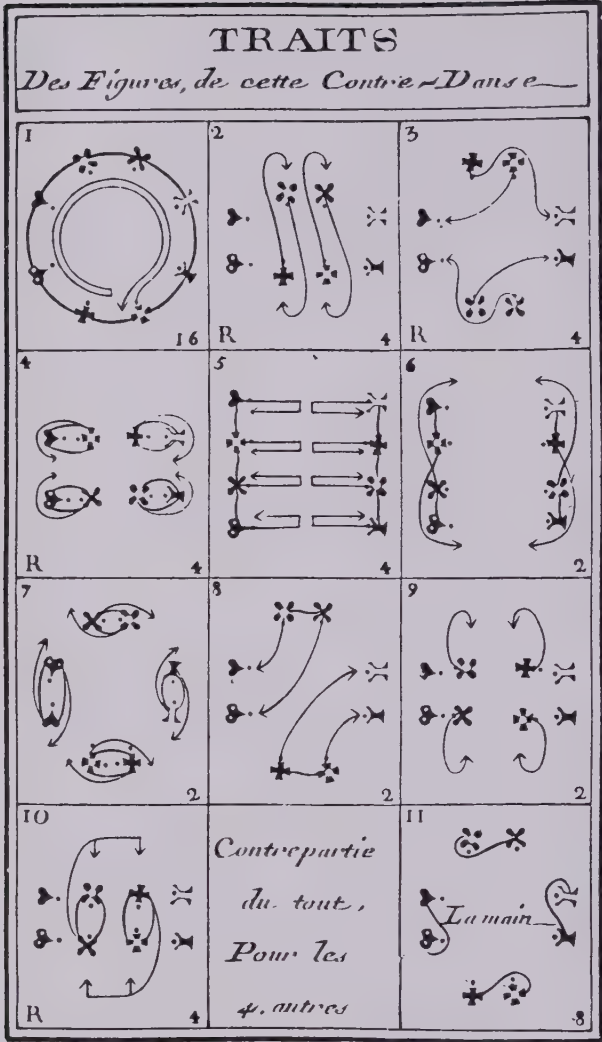




Delineation of the path across the floor was used as the basis for the first fully developed system of dance notation, published in 1700 by Raoul Feuillet. The particular footwork to be performed was written on the line of path traveled by the dancers. So appropriate was this system to the dance of the period that it spread throughout Europe. Many of the dances published are studied and performed to this day. In a couple dance (fig. 2), the top of the page represents the "front" where the "presence" sat. The paths of the dancers are marked off with bar lines, which coincide with the bar lines in the music at the top of the page.

Emphasis on floor pattern could also be seen in the equestrian arts, for horse ballets were much in vogue as displays of cultural superiority (figs. 3, 4).





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Man  Woman 

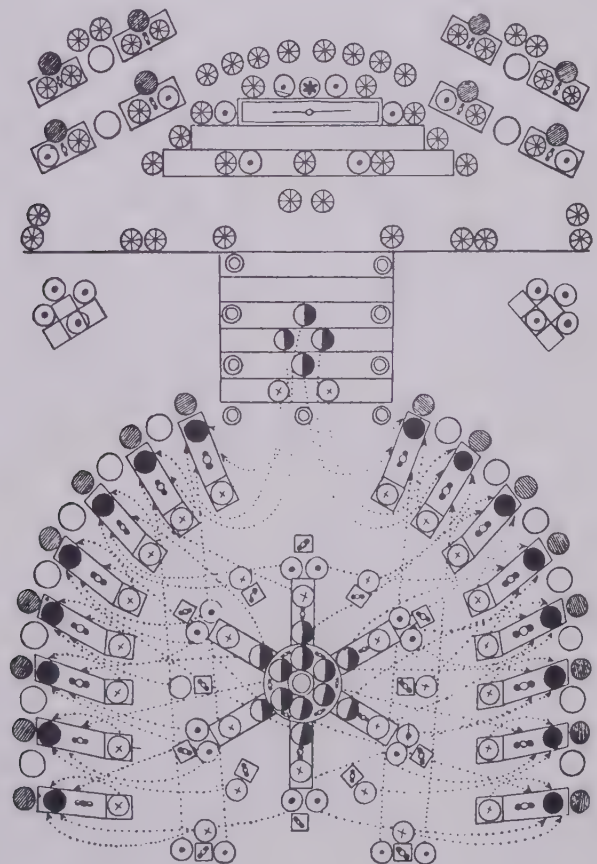


The technical complexities of Baroque footwork gave way to the simpler steps but more intricate floor plans of the Contredanses (fig. 5). These social dances were for the pleasure of the performers, the dance being performed by several sets where the ballroom permitted. We see the emergence over the centuries of some ingenious examples of choice of signs to indicate the gender of the performers. These range from top hats and crowns, to playing card designs, to crosses and fans (fig. 6). In the late nineteenth century, grand spectacles using large casts were much in vogue, often requiring advance planning on paper. The colored floor plans of Luigi Manzotti in the library at La Scala, Milan, are works of art in their intricacy (fig. 7). It can be said that the more intricate the floor design, the simpler the steps used to produce it. Equally, choreography which is aimed at tableaux, however fleeting, tends to use simple transitions.

5. Contredanse, *La Belle Princesse* by Landrin, c. 1760.

6. Indications of performers on floor plans:
left. Jolizza, 1907,
center. Roller, 1843,
right. Klemm, 1855.

7. Choreography for the ballet
Amor, floor plan by Luigi
Manzotti, Paris 1890.



We can see systems of dance notation where direct pictorial representation is used. In figure 8, an excerpt from Zorn's notation of the Cachucha, we can see the figure and thus need learn the meaning of only a few symbols. The dancer's positions are pictorially represented with a few movement signs. On the small left stage, plans show the dancer's path as seen from the audience's point of view.

In Sutton's system (fig. 9), figures are depicted as literally as possible, with signs added to provide clarification for missing information. Movement here is drawn from the audience's point of view. No floor plans are given since this is a classroom exercise where the dancer stays virtually in the same place. The basically representational system developed by Joan and Rudolf Benesh is more abstracted than that above, but one can see movement lines in the ballet sequence of figure 10. This classroom exercise shows the single figure as viewed from behind. Movement lines connect the location of the limb extremities.

8. *The Cachucha*, as recorded by F. A. Zorn, 1887.
9. Sutton notation of Buornville Ballet sequences, 1976.
10. Benesh notation of Bourmonville Classical Ballet, 1979.



GRAMMAR OF THE ART OF DANCING

Contestantes.
W.M. 60

This section contains four staves, numbered 1 to 4, each representing a dancer. Each staff begins with a musical staff in treble clef, followed by a series of dance figures. The figures are labeled 'Fig. 1' and include various symbols such as circles, lines, and arrows to indicate movement. The music is in 6/8 time, as indicated by the 'W.M. 60' marking.

No. 16 Girls' Enchainement

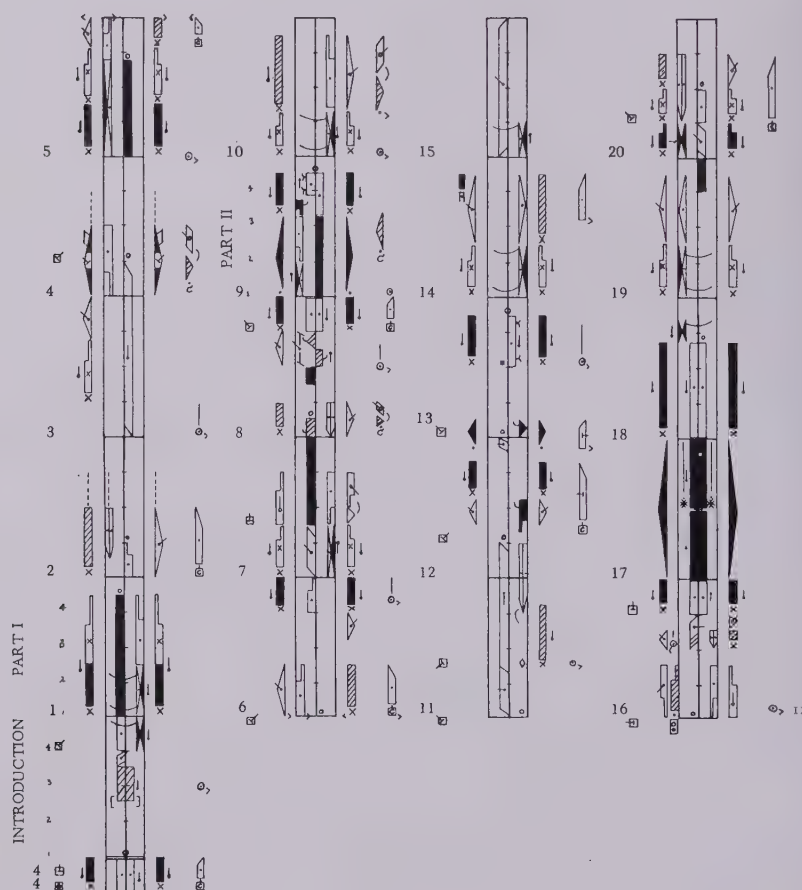
Waltz

This section contains four staves of music for a waltz. Each staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music is written in 3/4 time. The first staff ends with a double bar line and a 'C' time signature. The second staff begins with a 'C' time signature. The third staff begins with a 'C' time signature. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line and the word 'Fin'.

In contrast, the system by Rudolf Laban based on movement analysis is an “alphabet” system in that movement is “spelled out” according to the selection and arrangement of basic movement possibilities. Laban, who has been called the father of modern dance in Europe and whose movement theories have had a far-reaching effect in physiotherapy as well as dance, began as a student of architecture early in his career. His system is quite abstract; the shape of the block symbols point to the directions of action; rhythm and duration are indicated by the length of the movement symbol (the longer the symbol, the slower the movement). Reading from the bottom up, the elements of movement are spelled out for each part of the body (fig. 11). While a familiar comment is that Labanotation does not look like dance, the designs are readily recognized by those who have learned to read them, just as patterns created by musical notes are readily recognized by musicians (fig. 12).

11. Labanotation of a
Bournonville Classical Ballet,
Adagio, 1979.

12. Floor plan and
Labanotation from
Balanchine's ballet *Serenade*,
1950.





148

147

146

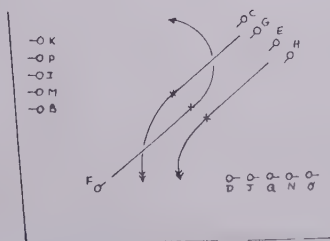
145

ONQJD

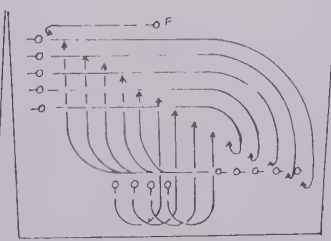
BMIPK

HEGC

F



145-6 x = moment of jet



147-150

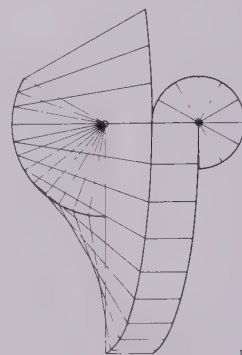
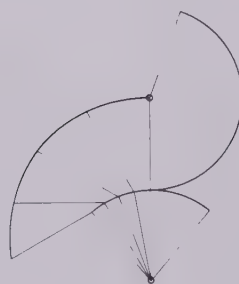
A system which speaks a mathematical language in its geometrical analysis of movement and in its use of numbers, the Eshkol-Wachmann system (fig. 13) cannot be so readily sight-read. No floor plans are provided in this system. In this example dancers A and B are alike until the end of the phrase. The numbers below the shapes indicate the instructions (formulae). The Eshkol-Wachmann system has spawned an interesting by-product, the creating and recording of formulas for a wide range of visual designs created by John Harries (figs. 14, 15).

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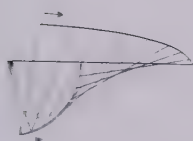
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13. Eshkol-Wachmann notation from the *Diminishing Series Dance Suite*, 1978.

14, 15. Excerpts from John Harries's *Language of Shape and Movement*, 1983.



		Count	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	1	2
A.B	Hand									Σ	P				
	L. [Forearm]							$\uparrow 3$	$\uparrow 3$	R					
	Arm	(P)						(S)	$\uparrow 3$			$\downarrow P$			
	Hand								Σ	P					
	R. [Forearm]							$\uparrow 3$	$\uparrow 3$	R					
A	Arm	(O)						(S)	$\uparrow 3$			$\downarrow P$			
	Head & Neck		P		R				$\uparrow P$						
	Σ X M Upper Body				R				$\uparrow P$						
	1=22.5°	(S)	X		(S)		X		R			$\downarrow 3$	$\downarrow 3$	$\uparrow 3$	
B	R. Leg	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$
		$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$
	L. Leg	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$
		$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$
	Front	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow$



3	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 0^\circ$
2	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 8$

3	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 10^\circ$
2	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 8$

1	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 45^\circ$
2	$\frac{1}{2} \uparrow 6$



Representing the Body Politic

The Theater of Manhood in Classical Athens

John Winkler

In the debate of Aristophanes' revised *Clouds*, the personification of Stronger Speech (Kreittôn Logos) tries to win the allegiance of young Pheidippides to the principles of old-fashioned education by presenting a comparative chart of the two body-types that result from his training and from that of his opponent, Mr. Weaker Speech (Hêttôn Logos):

If you do what I say and pay careful attention, you will always have a rippling chest, glowing skin, broad shoulders, a tiny tongue, a solid rump, and a teeny pee-pee; but if you follow the modern practices . . . you will acquire a sickly complexion, narrow shoulders, a nothing chest, an enormous tongue, spindly thighs and an immense subpoena.¹

What Stronger Speech outlines for us here is a system—or rather a humorous parody of a system—for evaluating the best and worst in male bodies. As such, its occurrence in an Athenian comedy is no accident, for, as a body of new research has shown, the Athenian theater was an occasion for displaying and playing with the civic ideology of Athens.² Tragedy, comedy, and dithyramb, in their quite different ways, were representations by and to the citizen body of its own corporate identity—its moral history, its conflicting ideals, its internal divisions, its scapegoats

¹ For an account of the original production and the two versions of the play, see Kenneth J. Dover, ed., *Aristophanes' Clouds* (Oxford, 1968), pp. lxx-xcviii. I follow Dover's text.

² Some of the more significant essays along these lines have been collected in John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Nothing to do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton, 1989).



and embarrassments. Central to this set of representations was *andragathiê*, manly excellence. For the citizenry of Athens, whether gathered in the theater or in the Pnyx (both of which were used for official assemblies), was essentially a corporation of men, ready to defend their territory and households. To recapture the original sense of Attic drama we must unthink numerous assumptions about society, text, and occasion derived from later theater-going and imagine ourselves instead in an ancient Mediterranean culture, in which a particular conception of gender was one of men's most powerful tools for organizing the social and political world. In this brief essay I will touch on some fundamental aspects of Athenian theatrical costuming and architecture which spoke to these concerns.

The Aristophanic chart of good and bad physiques falls short of being an adequate code or rule-set for assessing the male body in two respects: it is not complete, since it leaves out facial features, hair and other pertinent points such as the waist-line; and it is a one-sided, too rigorous perspective, not a sophisticated and complex statement of what ideal manhood meant for the polis. For *andragathiê* means much more than physique and body-building; it includes all the mental abilities and practical skills and refinements of character valued in a worthy citizen.³ But in the face-to-face maneuvering of a highly competitive society, the very look of a man may give an opening for praise or blame, for admiration or disapproval, for defense or attack.⁴ We can bring out the political (that is, in this context, the social) implications of Stronger Speech's cartoon bodies by comparing a similar argument in Aristophanes' *Wealth*.

To some extent the ideal male body was traditionally that of the young aristocrats, habitués of the gymnasia, who are figured on so many Attic vases. But in his play *Ploutos* (*Wealth*) Aristophanes stages a debate between Wealth and Poverty in which Poverty claims to turn out better men than Wealth in mind and body. He remarks particularly on one feature of the male body that is crucial in all discussions of the ideal citizen-soldier, a feature that serves as a fulcrum for representations of youth, maturity and middle age and that plays a decisive role in articulating (or we might say shaping) the dramatic genres—the waist-line: “from [Wealth],” claims Poverty, “we get the gouty men with paunches and waddling calves, the shamelessly fat, whereas from me come the sleek and wasp-waisted who are terrors to our enemies” (558–61). The irony is underlined by Chremylos, who immediately remarks that Poverty slims his ideal warriors' waists by simply starving them (562).

The Politics of Costume

The body contrast described by Aristophanes is found in the Attic theater in the opposition between the general look of tragedy and comedy. From the evidence of vases, reliefs and terracottas, tragic characters were costumed and proportioned in a way that heroized or ennobled them, while comic characters were contrived to look squat, fat and grotesque. The very look of characters on the stage, their

³ Cf. Isokrates *ad Demonicum* 6.

⁴ Thus, the speaker of Lysias 10.29 alludes to the defendant's impressive height and manly good looks, and claims that this is all the more reason he should be held accountable for his cowardly behavior.

costumes and masks, set up two parallel languages or dialects in which the issues of proper civic masculinity could be represented, debated, and played with. The core concern which generates those images (and is variously supported or challenged by them) is the military fitness of each male citizen, the physical and psychic qualities enabling him to face ultimate risks for the common good, sometimes the very survival, of the entire polis.

The look of Attic comedy and tragedy can be reconstructed from several sources—vases, terracotta figurines, relief sculpture.⁵ For any single item we might wonder how accurately the artist has portrayed what he saw, that is, how far his intention to represent actors was realized in a drawing or figure that showed what was actually there or what was only imagined to be there.⁶ But the aggregate of surviving theatrical depictions builds up a well-defined field whose boundaries, particularly in the differentiation of comedy and tragedy from each other, are unmistakable.



2. Perseus parody, c. 420 B. C. E., Athens. Vlastos collection.

Let us approach this topic from the body shapes contrived in comedy, starting with the evidence from Athens itself. On the famous Perseus parody, (fig. 2) the presence of a stage platform and audience shows that a comic performance of some sort is intended (although the audience's chairs suggest that it is not in the theater of Dionysos: perhaps it is a rehearsal, watched by the producer and playwright). The artist has selected several signs of a comic look—a wispy beard, an inelegant pose, squat proportions—but has not (or perhaps the producer has not) endowed the actor

⁵ Arthur D. Trendall and T. B. L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (New York, 1971; and Arthur W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed. revised by John Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968).

⁶ Sometimes vase scenes show what happened in the narrative of a messenger's speech, for the dragging of Dirke by a wild bull in Euripides' *Antiope*, see Trendall and Webster, III.3.14, for Medea's murder of her children, III.3.36 or the thunderstorm which put out the burning pyre under Alkmene (Euripides' *Alkmene*), III.3.6-8. Background figures, personifications, and gods may illustrate some aspect of a play's contents even when they did not figure explicitly as characters in the script.



with a notable paunch, at least not one that can be seen frontally. The lines at the wrist are the only certain acknowledgement by the artist that this is not a naked man dancing, but an actor whose precise *quality* of nakedness has been contrived by a costumer. Some have suggested that this is not a comic actor but a real dwarf.⁷ The preponderance of vases, however, will show that, although the point is well taken, it is probably too literal, since the overall effect of comic padding was to give the actor the proportions, especially when seen at a distance, of a dwarf.

The proper way to establish the corporeal code, of course, is to look at contrasting bodies by the same artist. Thus, on the Perseus vase there is a clear contrast between the faces of the gentlemen in the audience and the face (that is, the mask) of the actor on the stage. The Karouzou chous (fig. 3) in the National Museum in Athens gives a more complete version of the code. The left-hand figure wears a grotesque mask, comic padding, and a big, artificial phallos; balancing him on the right is a youth with a Dudley Do-Right profile in what is meant to be a state of noble nakedness. This pair might almost serve as an illustration of Stronger Argument's point, except that the unsteady youth drinking between them is faced not with a choice between two "real" bodies, but with one "real" body, on the right, and one man in a funny suit.⁸

Greek artists seldom portrayed fat, phallic and grotesquely leering men, apart from satyrs (and even they are often lean-bodied and small-phallused).⁹ When these

7 G. Van Hoorn, *Choes and Anthesteria*, (Leiden, 1951).

8 Van Hoorn, fig. 148; S. P. Karouzou, who found the pot in a shop on the Odos Pandrosou and persuaded the dealer to present it to the National Museum, reads the scene quite differently—as an actual children's play on Orestes, the right hand figure being interpreted as a Fury, Karouzou, "Choes," *American Journal of Archeology* 50 (1946), p. 37.

9 Some black-figure artists liked showing athletes in the heavy-weight class, such as the wrestlers by the Painter of Tarquinia R. C. 3984, see Carlo Tronchetti, *Ceramica Attica a figure nere*, Materiale del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia V (1983), p. 74-5; or the pugilists of the Altalena Painter (*ibid.*, p. 77-9), whom Beazley characterized as a comedian, or the "tubby boxers", as Michael Vickers calls them, of the Michigan Painter's stamnos in the Ashmolean, see Michael Vickers, *Greek Vases*, Ashmolean Museum #30 (Oxford, 1978).



3. Chous with youth and two actors; Athens. National Museum.

4. Thrashing of thief; New York, Metropolitan Museum.

artists did so, it was regularly with unmistakable indications that such an appearance was not a natural state, but rather an artful contrivance for the special purposes of the stage. There seems to have been a sort of practical ban on showing unbecoming bodies, unless it was made perfectly clear that their fatness and slackness was artificial. That artificiality is clearest on the numerous fourth century vases from the Greek colonies in south Italy showing what have been called phlyax-actors and phlyax plays.¹⁰ These plentiful vases, which are immensely entertaining in their own right, well illustrate the sort of costuming for which we have limited but indisputable Athenian evidence. Doubts, of course, have been raised about their value as indications of Athenian practice, but their closeness in some cases to Athenian comedy has recently been demonstrated by Oliver Taplin.¹¹

An Apulian kalyx-krater by the Tarporley Painter (fig. 4) provides an excellent example of stage padding. The stomach is clearly a pillow tied to the actor's waist, the rump is stuffed cloth, and one can even see the skin suit hanging loosely about the old man's neck. Our impressions of the comic look are confirmed by comparing the front sides of these vases with their backs, which typically show a pair of ephebes, as on an Apulian bell-krater in the Virginia Museum (fig. 5a-b). Obviously this artist could show a male nude in classic contraposto when he wanted to. The idealized youthful body on the reverse provides a kind of base line against which the deliberate deviancies of the comic body are measured.

¹⁰ Arthur D. Trendall, *Phlyax Vases*, 2nd ed., *Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies*, Supplement 19, (London, 1967); and Marcello Gigante, *Rintone e teatro in Magna Grecia* (Naples, 1971).

¹¹ Oliver Taplin, "Phallology, Phlyakes, Iconography and Aristophanes," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 33, (1987), p. 92-104.



5a-b. Three comic actors; two ephebes; Virginia Museum.

5

Phallos Politikos

The interpretation of dramatic costume offered in this paper is political and social. There is an alternative view which focuses not on the taut or slack quality of the entire male body in the context of a military ideology but simply on the phallos, seeing it as a survival from primitive fertility rites. The padded characters, on this view, are described as descendants of vegetation demons in the entourage of the archaic Dionysos. That view has more to do with our own embarrassment at exposed genitality than with the authentic meanings of drama to its original audience. We cover our embarrassment by making an immediate leap over the social to the “primitive”—a code word for that Other which is so distant from us as to be exempt from our taboos. This Other tells us more about what we have repressed than about what the Greeks displayed. I offer a strategy of interpretation, which emphasizes the social and contemporary meanings of Attic body imagery over the putatively natural and timeless. When representations of the body are viewed in terms of biology and anatomy, we lose the historical dimension of their meaning. Anatomy, we might even say, is politics: that is, the field we call anatomy was coded for the Greeks with social messages about class and status. To look at the anatomy and not the society effectively conceals what the Greek artists and symbol-shapers revealed.

Consider for a moment the political fortunes of the phallos in democratic Athens. As David Halperin has shown,¹² Athenians attributed to Solon several sweeping changes in the laws which in effect redefined the conception of the citizen body. A citizen could no longer be made a slave for his unpaid debts: his physical person at least was untouchable, he could not be manhandled as slaves and foreigners could be, he could not be tortured to produce evidence in a court of law as slaves and in some cases foreigners could be. In principle the body of the citizen (perhaps since he was one who could be called to put his body on the fighting line for the common

¹² David Halperin, “The Democratic Body: Prostitution and Citizenship in Classical Athens,” in his *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, (New York 1989).

safety) was declared to be a free zone, exempt from physical intimidation, and this remained a fundamental rule for the democracy. At the same time Solon instituted public brothels with price supports, enabling all male citizens to have equal access to a subsistence level of sexual pleasure. Together these two regulations served to increase the status of the ordinary man, who had no special claim to honor from family or wealth. Simply by being a male member of the civic corporation he is honored with a minimum physical impunity (the dignity of his masculine person may not be breached) and with an easily available symbol of his equality as a man with all other male citizens—his access to the polis' *pornai*.

The pressure towards greater democracy came in waves, not in a single explosion, and it is quite possible that some historically later developments were read back into Solonian times. What matters for us is to see over the course of the sixth and fifth centuries the cumulative strategy of expressing a distinct political message in terms of the bodies of its eligible participants. One development, distinctive to Athens, can be dated to the late sixth century. It is a type of monument which regularly marked the sameness of all male citizens, and was deliberately indifferent to distinctions of class or achievement.¹³ It is the herm (fig. 6), a plain rectangular pillar, adorned only with a carved head and an erect penis, used to mark the boundaries of temples and houses. The invention of herms and their use to mark the halfway point on roads from Athens to its rural demes are attributed to Hipparchos (late sixth century), in the last, balmy days before democratic pressures were renewed and culminated in the reforms of Kleisthenes.¹⁴ The absence of herms in earlier Greek culture and their specific invention by an Athenian ruler indicate that this kind of phallos, at least, had more to do with political meanings than with rituals of agricultural fertility.

The democratic ideology of the herm is perhaps clearest in the celebrated Eion monument.¹⁵ When the Athenian generals defeated the Persians at Eion, probably in 476, they asked to be honored by the city with a public memorial. Their request was granted with a strict proviso: no individual leader was to be named.¹⁶ The honor was to be spread equally over the entire body of citizens.¹⁷ Three herms, inscribed with epigrams glorifying the military *andreia* of Athens, but mentioning no generals' names, were erected in the agora. This famous monument, probably the subject of figure 7, again suggests that the specific meaning of the herm in Athens was democratic, that it was a symbol of the sameness and equality of all its capable fighters.

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¹³ A suggestive analysis of the Attic herm, which several times approaches the points made here, is to be found in R. Osborne "The Erection and Mutilation of the Hermai," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 32(1985), p. 47–73. It is hard to illustrate stone herms, since so few have survived and those in poor condition. Very likely many of them were made of wood rather than stone.

¹⁴ Such is the chronology and interpretation of [Plato] *Hipparchos*, the main source for the invention of herms; a different but related account is found in [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 18.1.

¹⁵ Evelyn B. Harrison, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. 11, *Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture* (Princeton, 1965), p. 108–17.

¹⁶ Aiskhines 3.183–5, and Plutarch *Kimón* 7.3–5.

¹⁷ Plutarch remarks, however, that everyone knew that this monument was an extraordinary honor for Kimon, even though his name was nowhere mentioned on it (*Kimón* 8.1).



6. Three herms; fragment of pelike by the Pan Painter; Paris, Louvre

We can extend this analysis to the herms that stood by the doors of individual houses: in ancient democracy each male citizen represented not just his own interests but also those of a household, a group of dependents and social minors (women, children, slaves).¹⁸ In a political community whose atomic units are representatives of family groups, the herm expresses the notional equality of each household, represented in the person of its patriarch and symbolized by a simplified image of the man—a bearded face and an upright phallos.¹⁹ The herm is thus a levelling sign, or came to be such when it was widely used under the fuller democracy of Kleisthenes.²⁰

By contrast, the body languages of comedy and tragedy carry a different sort of meaning, since they continually mark the degrees of better and worse in corporeality, and so may be called class conscious. This accords well with the flourishing of comedy and tragedy in sixth century Athens, in what must have been more aristocratic than democratic contexts. Or rather, extending our terms a bit, the dialectic and debate between epic notions of heroic excellence and forces promoting

¹⁸ This is not to imply that each male citizen actually possessed a separate domicile; quarters could be rented in tenement blocks; but where the herm was used for private houses it had such a meaning.

¹⁹ As the modern Kabyle proverb for the fundamental equality of all men puts it, "I too have a mustache." See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 16, (Cambridge, 1977), p. 13; cf. Michael Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village*, (Princeton, 1985), pp. 1–5.

²⁰ It is unclear whether Hipparchos' motive was anti-democratic (to segregate the city's active political life from the majority of the rural residents) or a concession to democratic feeling, which was then taken over and exploited on a large scale by the Kleisthenic democracy. In either case what for our purposes was significant was that it could be taken over, appropriated by the fuller democracy, just as modern political symbols can become sites of disputation and quarrels over who owns them in our world—witness the American flag in the Vietnam era.

the inclusion of a wider population under the aegis of that excellence must have had a centuries-long history. One of its many venues was choral performances involving music, dancing, and costume, in both a serious, epic-based mode and in comic distortions. Such performances were controlled, according to Xenophon's *Constitution of the Athenians* 1. 13, by the wealthy and well-born, the best men in the city, whose traditional prerogatives were based not on the prestige of land and money (though they had plenty of that), but rather on their military role as defenders of the people's safety from external aggression. In the seventh and sixth centuries, fighting procedures and citizenship rules underwent a major restructuring—a reformulation of tactics and a redistribution of honors known as the Hoplite Revolution.²¹ I would associate the evidence, fragmentary as it is, about late seventh and sixth century costumed choruses with just such issues of military manhood and its deviations.²²

It appears that both tragedy and comedy in the sixth century were essentially aristocratic entertainments which, in the fifth century, were taken over by the democracy in stages, first tragedy, then comedy as well, and that both the serious and playful modes of representing the body politic antedate the full democracy and were incorporated into its series of self-representations.

The Design of the Theater

We might see a trace of this shift towards democracy in the design of the orchestra, which in the earliest surviving Attic theater, that at Thorikos from the late sixth or early fifth century, is not circular but rectangular or trapezoidal (fig. 7). The area contains not only a long, straight grandstand rounded at one end and angled at the other but also a temple of Dionysos located in a position analogous to that in the City Theater in Athens.²³ The earliest excavators of the City Theater were guided in their reconstructions by Vitruvius' description of the typical Greek theater (in his day) as having a circular orchestra. The famous theaters at Epidauros (fig. 8) and elsewhere lent support to the inherently powerful idea of a perfectly-rounded

²¹ This consisted in the replacement of the older heroic solo fighters and horsemen, such as those represented in the *Iliad*, by shield-to-shield masses of heavily armed infantry. Most analysts connect this development as cause and/or effect of the social revolution in which citizen rights in the polis were extended to a larger land-owning but not aristocratic class. See M. Detienne, "La phalange: problèmes et controverses," in *Problèmes de la guerre in Grèce ancienne*, ed. Jean-Pierre Vernant (Paris, 1968); A. Snodgrass, "The Hoplite Reform and History," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85 (1965), pp. 110-22; P. Cartledge, "Hoplites and Heresies: Sparta's Contribution to the Technique of Ancient Warfare," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97, (1977), pp. 11-27, esp. 21-4; J. Salmon, "Political Hoplites?" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977), pp. 84-101.

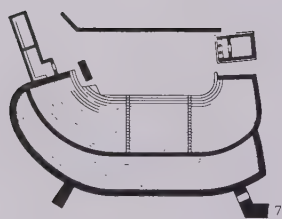
²² The dramatizing of the issues of hoplite bravery seems to have occurred not just in Athens, but in other cities too that experienced the hoplite revolution. A centuries long cultural dialogue took place not only in Athens but in Corinth, Thebes, and Sparta, where proto-dramatic performances are known to have taken place. In each locale there are distinctive variations, but they all can be subsumed in one way or another under the political interpretation offered here. For a survey of this evidence, see John J. Winkler, *Rehearsal's of Manhood: Athenian Drama and Social Identity*, (Princeton, forthcoming).

²³ From the Attic regional theaters at Ikaria and Rhamnous, dating to the fifth century, only front row seats survive, but these are placed in a straight line, evidently defining the front side of a rectangular orchestra. See E. Gebhard, "the Form of the Orchestra in the Early Greek Theater," *Hesperia* 43, pp. 434-6.



dancing area.²⁴ But the stone remains of the Athenian theater are mainly from the Lykourgan rebuilding of the late fourth century.²⁵ It appears that the original theater structures in Athens were mainly wooden and only were replaced by stone in phases lasting over two centuries.

The few traces of an archaic sub-level that are plausibly related to the oldest dancing area are not evenly rounded in a continuous arc: one segment forms a straight line, the other an unevenly rounded line.²⁶ Either or both of those foundation lines could be interpreted as part of an orchestra which was an irregular, rectilinear figure like the old orchestra at Thorikos.²⁷ In the late fifth century, the Athenians constructed new chambers for the Boulê, the Council that administered the daily political business of the city. The Old Bouleuterion had rectangular seating, the New one semicircular (figs. 9, 10).²⁸ The date when the orchestra and seating of the theater became circular is harder to determine, but it was certainly so by the late fourth century, when the massive Lykourgan building program petrified the entire complex and made it permanent for us to see today. In any case, so far from being the almost mystically primitive shape of a Greek dance floor, the circular orchestra now appears to be a later contrivance, obscuring for us the earlier nature and function of quasi-military dancing on four-cornered fields of action.²⁹



²⁴ See C. Ashby, "The Case for the Rectangular/Trapezoidal Orchestra," *Theatre Research International* 13 (1988), pp. 1-20. In reviewing the evidence for early rectangular orchestras, Ashby exclaims of the circular theater at Epidauros, "Here is what a theatre should be!" (15).

²⁵ An excellent summary of the state of the questions concerning the theater is in Wolfgang W. Wurster, "Die neuen Untersuchungen am Dionysostheater in Athen," *Architectura* 9 (1979), pp. 58-76.

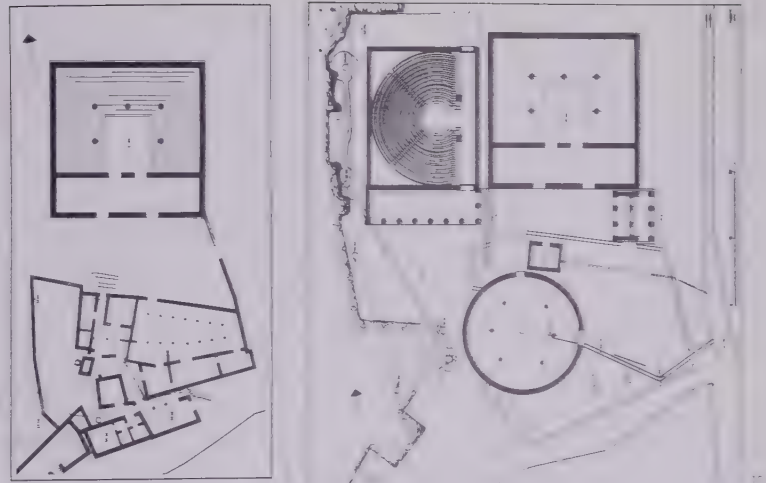
²⁶ The two segments are of different material and may not have been part of the same structure.

7. Plan of theater at Thorikos.

8. Theater at Epidauros.

9. Plan of Old Bouleuterion, Athens.

10. Plan of New Bouleuterion, Athens.



If one were to speculate on the attraction of a circular orchestra, one of its features is that it gives an equally good view of the dancing to all in the audience, right, left and center. It also enables the members of the audience to view one another. These are democratic principles, and the Athenians organized their seating in a way that showed the structure of Kleisthenic democracy, divided into ten tribes, and the fundamental equality of all its qualified participants. The layout of the auditorium formed (at least ideally) a kind of map of the civic corporation with its various tensions and balances.

Consider first the seating of the ten tribes. Three statue bases found at the foot of the thirteen seating sections (*kerkides*, wedges) correspond to the traditional order of the ten tribes (fig. 11), assuming that the central wedge was that of the Boulé and that the two outermost wedges were assigned to non-citizens, perhaps to citizen wives.³⁰ (I do think women were present in the audience, but that their presence was socially marginal and physically restricted to the upper and outer seating). Of course, the number of tribes did not remain constant over the years, and this fact too may be read in the light of theater and assembly seating. Changes to the tribes were made in 307, 224, 201 B. C. E. and in 126 C. E. An interesting feature of these rearrangements is that the added tribes are placed sometimes at the beginning of the list (Antigonas and Demetrias), sometimes at the end (Attalis), and twice in the very center (Ptolemais, Hadrianis).

²⁷ Perikles installed at least some stone seating for dignitaries. E. Pöhlmann argues from the shape of these stones that they must have been arranged in a straight line, marking the edge of a more or less right-angled orchestra, "Die Proedrie des Dionysostheaters im 5. Jahrhundert und das Bühnenspieler der Klassik," *Museum Helveticum* 38 (1981), pp. 129-46. W. B. Dinsmoor tried to save the possibility of a circular orchestra by reconstructing the blocks in a polygon enclosing the circle; see "The Athenian Theater of the fifth Century" in *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson*, vol. 1, (St. Louis, 1951), pp. 309-30.

²⁸ Peter J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boulé* (Oxford, 1972).

²⁹ Not that there was not circular dancing in early times, see Renate, *Frühgriechische Reigentänze* (Bayern, 1964).

³⁰ See Pickard-Cambridge, p. 270. (Tribal seating in the theater was first suggested by Pickard-Cambridge in his revision of Haigh (1907), p. 337 and n. 5. On citizen-wives in general, C. Patterson, "Hai Attikai: The Other Athenians," in *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity*, ed. Marilyn Skinner, special issue of *Helios*, no. 13/2 (1987), pp. 49-67.

One can understand the conservatism lying behind additions to the beginning or end, additions which keep the previous order internally untouched, but why on two occasions did the Athenian body-politic re-arrange itself with a new unit in the center? On both occasions it was an increase from twelve tribes to thirteen, and the additional tribe is located as number seven on the new list, dividing the previous twelve tribes into two groups of six. I would propose that the rationale for placing the new tribe in this position is that even though doing so may have meant a greater disturbance of the polis operations governed by tribal order, such a placement caused minimal disturbance to the seating plan in a thirteen-wedge theater, assuming that the central wedge in the ten- or twelve-tribe system had been occupied by the Boulê. (I do not want to insist that everyone always sat where they were supposed to, only that provisions existed for each tribe to have its own wedge.)

A similar seating arrangement into ten wedges for the ten tribes seems to have existed for the Pnyx in which the full citizen Assembly met four times a month.³¹ The homology between the citizens assembled in the theater and in the Pnyx should be pressed. Some Assembly meetings were actually held in the theater. Of the two theaters at Peiraieus, Athens' harbor town, the one at Mounichia, which is now entirely covered by modern buildings, was used for some assemblies, particularly in times of crisis, according to Thucydides and Lysias.³² The other theater, at Zea is still visible and its auditorium is divided into thirteen wedges. Theater attendance therefore can be seen as a properly political event: at the Great Panathenaia the money paid out to citizens to attend the festival was distributed by *deme* and was tied to registration on the *deme* census lists;³³ the same procedure of distributing attendance moneys presumably held good for the Dionysia.

If the citizens were seated (at least *grosso modo*) by tribal affiliation, these ten tribal blocks would inevitably have taken on the character of cheering sections during the dithyrambic competition, which unlike comedy and tragedy was a competition among the tribes. Each of the ten tribes entered a chorus of fifty men in the men's dithyrambic contest and another of fifty boys in the boys' contest. The two contests therefore represented a perfect homology with the Boulê, since it was composed of five hundred men, fifty from each tribe. The Council had a special block of seats in the theater and, to make the analogy complete, a prize was awarded at the end of the year to the tribe of Councillors who had best conducted the city's business.³⁴

³¹ W. A. MacDonald, *The Political Meeting Places of the Greeks* (Baltimore, 1943), pp. 71-5; E. S. Staveland, *Greek and Roman Voting and Elections* (London, 1972), pp. 81-2; Frank Kolb, *Agora and Theater, Volks- und Festversammlung* (Berlin, 1981), p. 93. Contra M. H. Hansen, "How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?" *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 18 (1977), pp. 135-6; (but citing Aischines 2. 64-8, where two members of tribes contiguous in the official order are seated adjacent to each other) and "The Athenian Ecclesia and the Pnyx" *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 23, (1982), pp. 244-9. My argument does not require that all citizens always sat in the wedge assigned to their tribe, either in the Pnyx or in the theater, only that the number of wedges in both cases was notionally related to the configuration of the citizen body into ten tribes. The argument for tribal (and trittys) seating has recently been extended to include Pnyx I and II by G. R. Stanton and P. J. Bicknell, "Voting in Tribal Groups in the Athenian Assembly," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 28 (1987), pp. 51-92, who note other tribally seated theaters on pp. 86-7.

³² Thuk. 8.93.1, 3; Lysias 13.32, 55; cf. Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.4.32.

11. Layout of the auditorium by tribal affiliation, Athens, 508 BCE – 7 C.E.



seating wedge	from 508(?)	from 307-6	from 224	from 210-200	from 126-7 C.E.	
1	visitors/women	ANTIGONAS	Antigonas	Erechtheis	Erechtheis	statue base foundation
2	Erechtheis	DEMETRIAS	Demetrias	Aigeis	Aigeis	
3	Aigeis	Erechtheis	Erechtheis	Pandionis	Pandionis	
4	Pandionis	Aigeis	Aigeis	Leontis	Leontis	
5	Leontis	Pandionis	Pandionis	Ptolemais	Ptolemais	
6	Akamantis	Leontis	Leontis	Akamantis	Akamantis	statue base foundation
7	Council	Council	PTOLEMAIS	Council	HADRIANIS	statue base foundation
8	Oineis	Akamantis	Akamantis	Oineis	Oineis	statue base foundation
9	Kekropis	Oineis	Oineis	Kekropis	Kekropis	
10	Hippothontis	Kekropis	Kekropis	Hippothontis	Hippothontis	
11	Aiantis	Hippothontis	Hippothontis	Aiantis	Aiantis	
12	Antiochis	Aiantis	Aiantis	Antiochis	Antiochis	
13	visitors/women	Antiochis	Antiochis	ATTALIS	Attalis	
10		12	13	12	13	

The lateral spread of the auditorium thus formed an axis of competition among the ten citizen groups, with the Boulê as its representatives and mediators at the center. But here too considerations of democratic equality were balanced by interests of wealth and position. The vertical axes up and down the blocks displayed relative prestige. *Prohedriâ*, front row seating, was one of the highest honors that could be paid to benefactors and special friends of the city, as is attested in numerous decrees and in one funny story about Demosthenes.³⁵ If the democratic polis was organized on principles of internal balance and competition, it did not entirely ignore the pre-eminence of its own best citizens, whether they held office by lot or had a traditional family claim to precedence. Whereas the dithyrambs were structured like the democratic Boulê, in ten tribal groups of fifty, tragedy and comedy had no discernible relation to the tribal structure, being older, pre-democratic modes of civic play. The democratic polis did not reject its best and brightest; it engaged their services. We may even say it featured them as the star attraction of the festival and used those older traditions of representing and parodying *andragathiê* as a device for enhancing its own self-awareness.

In sum, then, the entire audience was organized in a way which demonstrated its corporate manliness as a polis to be reckoned with, comprised of individuals who were both vigilant to assert excellence against other members of the democratic city (tribe versus tribe) but still ranked to show orders of excellence. The city thus saw itself and showed itself on the days of Dionysan festival as an entity which maintained all the traditional forms of heroic manhood and spread them out over a larger population of male citizens.

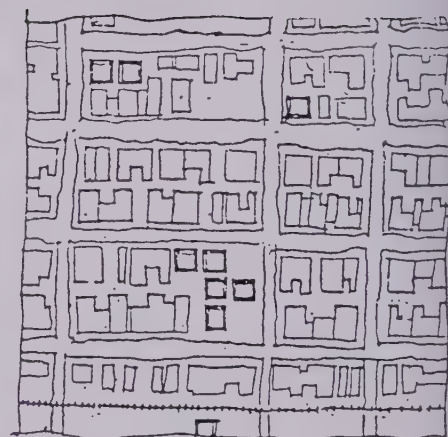
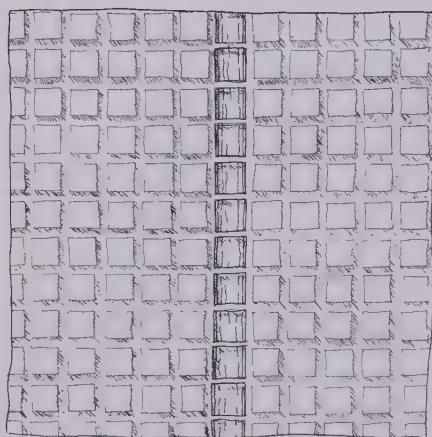
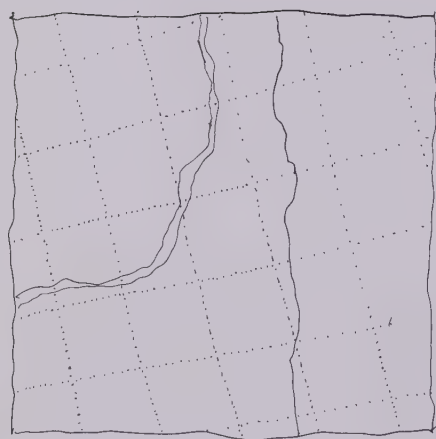
³³ Demosthenes 44.37.

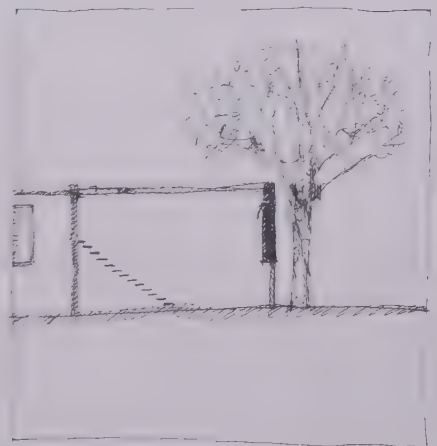
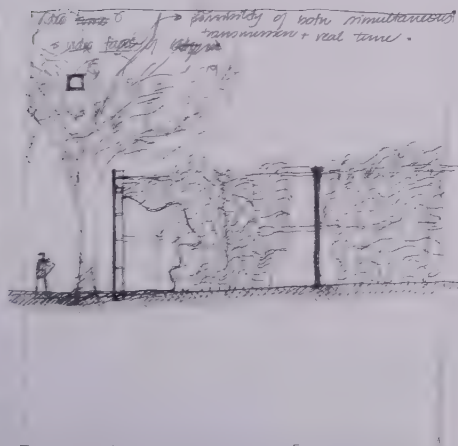
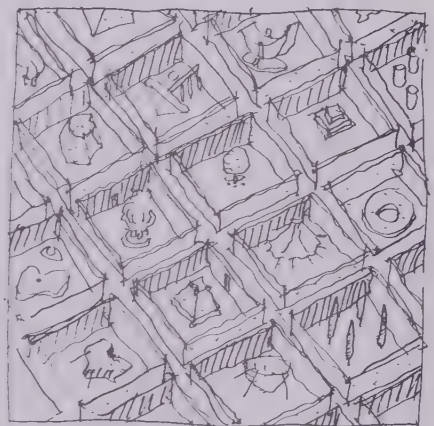
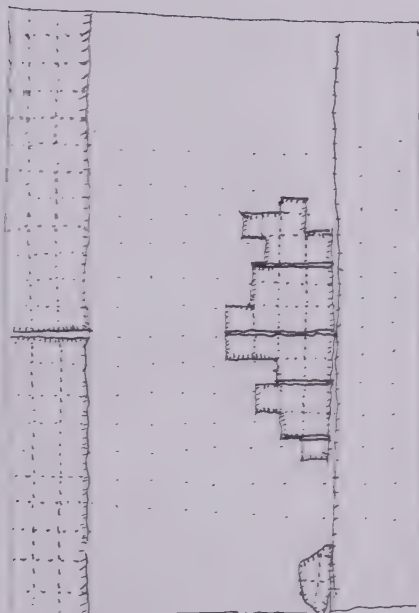
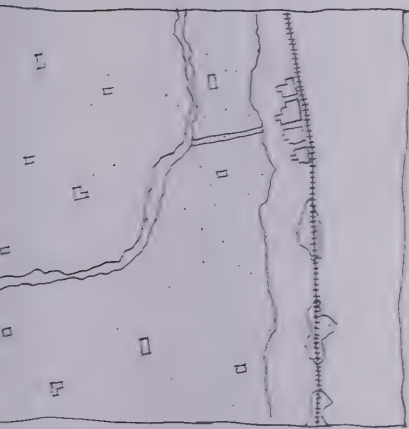
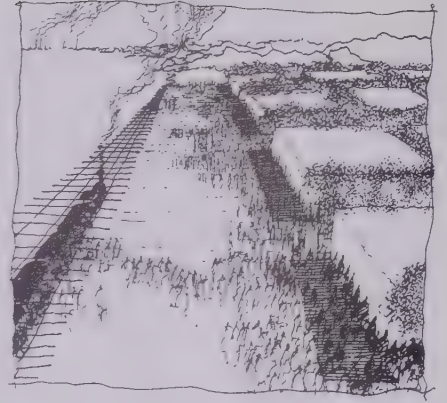
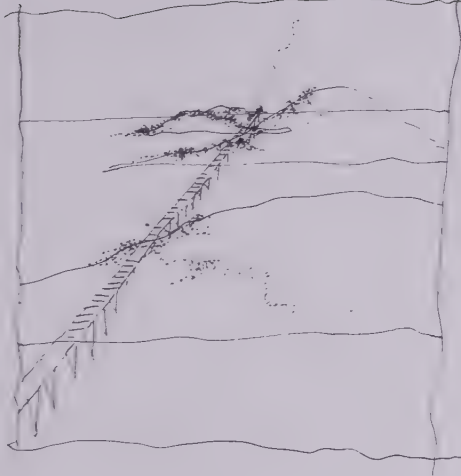
³⁴ Aristophanes *Birds* 794 and scholion (= *Souda* s. v. Bouleutikos"); Pollux *Lexikon* 4.122; Hesychios s. v. "Bouleutikon;" Trugaios at Aristophanes *Peace* 887 addresses the Boulê and prytaneis directly as audience members; the scholiast on *Peace* 882 confirms the seating arrangement.

³⁵ The inscriptional evidence is surveyed in chapter 4 of Michael Maass, *Die Prohedrie des Dionysostheaters in Athen* (Munich, 1972). See also Pöhlmann. The Demosthenes anecdote can be found in Aischines *Against Ktesiphon* 76. When the Athenians took over control of Delos in the mid-second century B. C. E., they transferred the announcement of civic honors from the Apollonia to the Dionysia. See G. M. Sifakis, *Studies in the History of Hellenistic Drama* (London, 1967), p. 14.

Sketches for the 1992 Chicago World's Fair

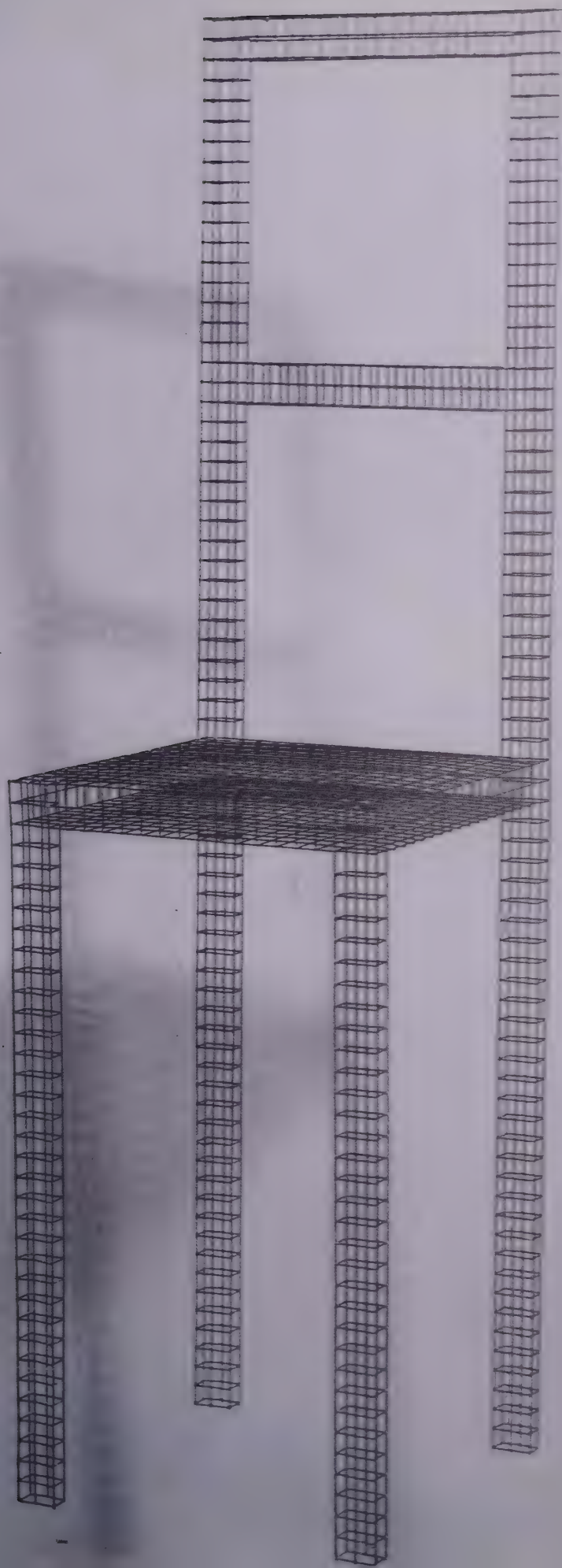
John Hejduk and Thomas Beeby





Chairs

Robert Wilson

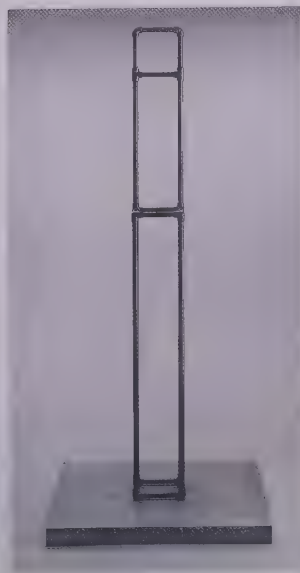
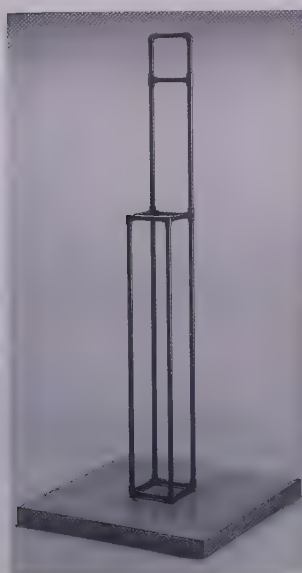








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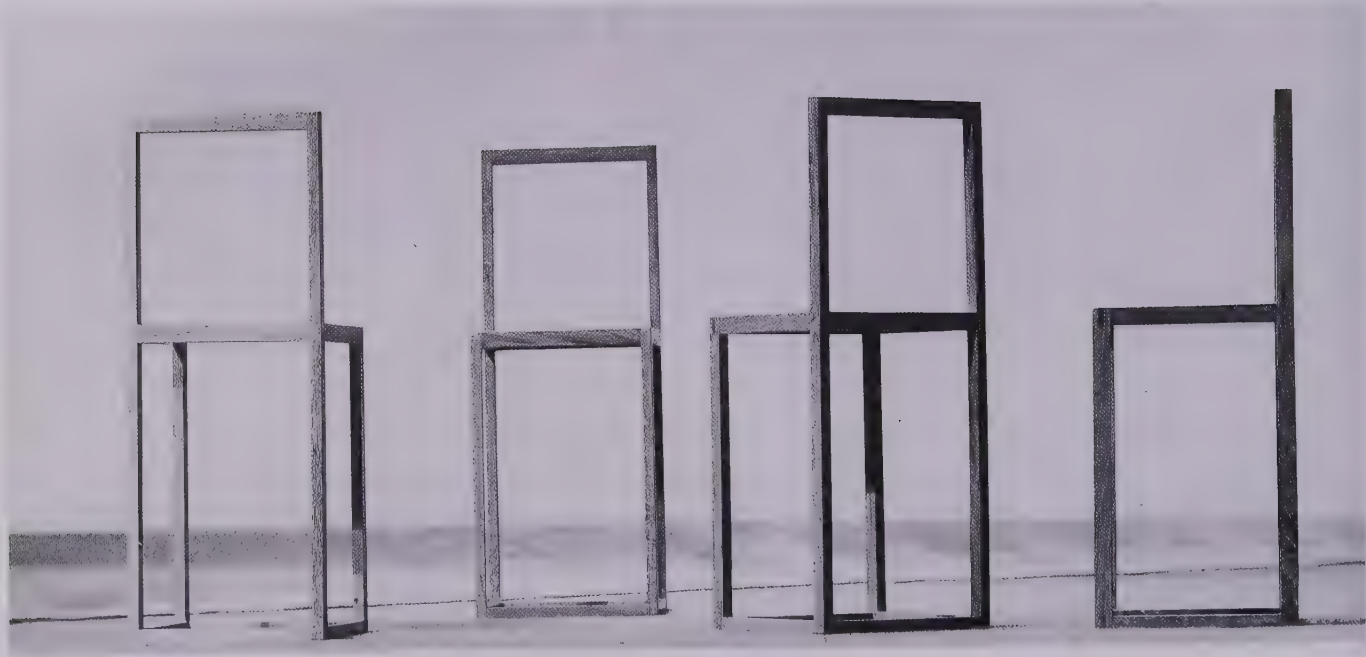


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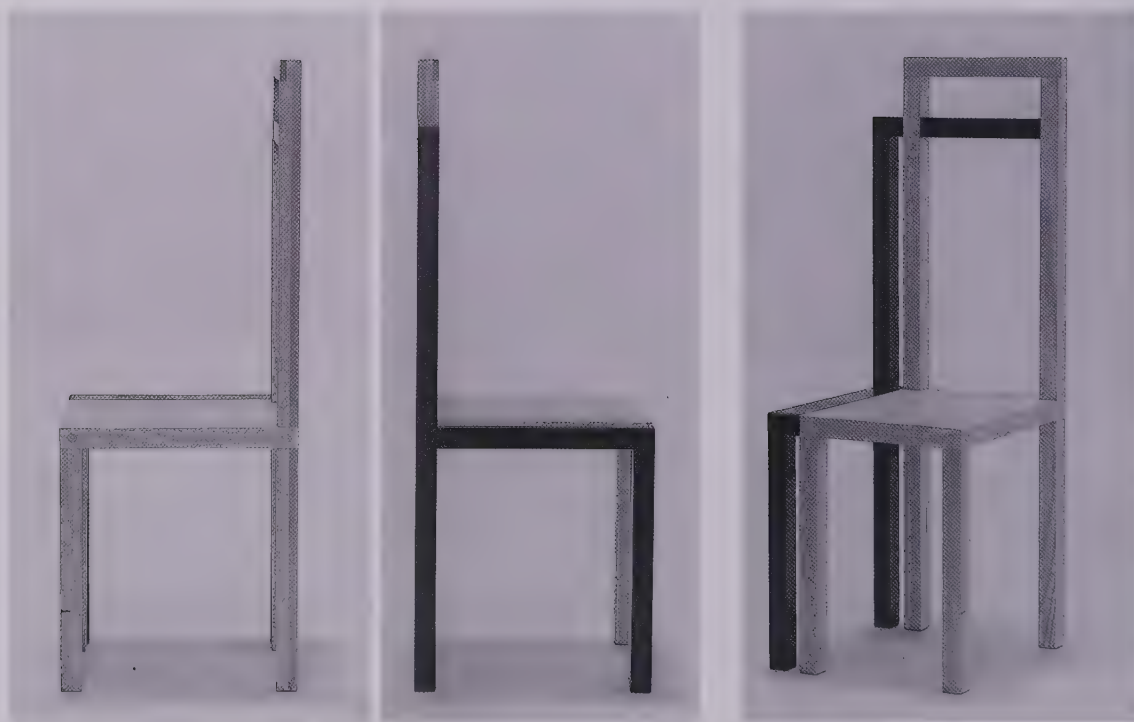


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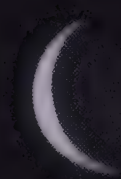




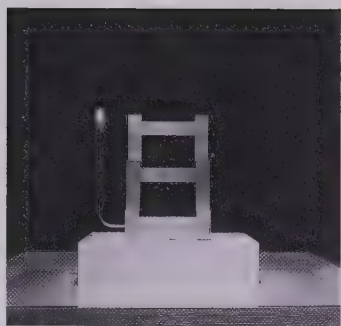




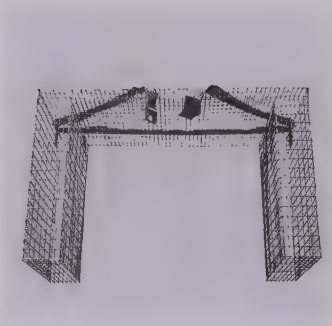








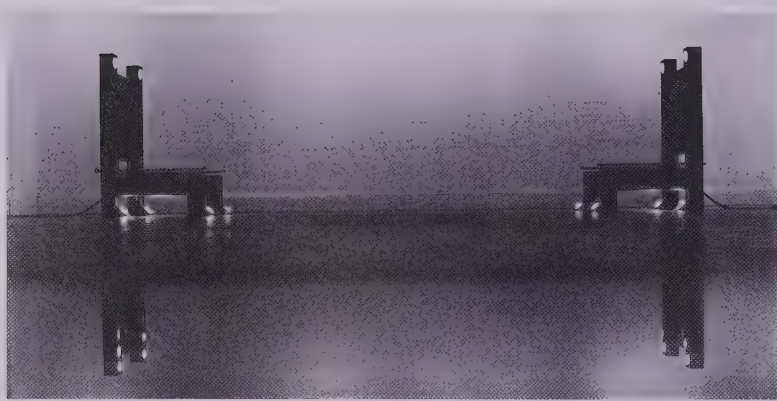
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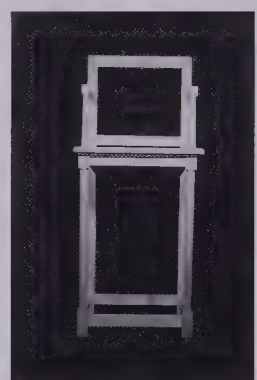
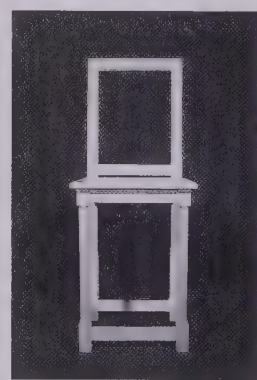
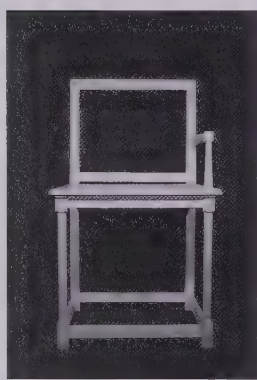
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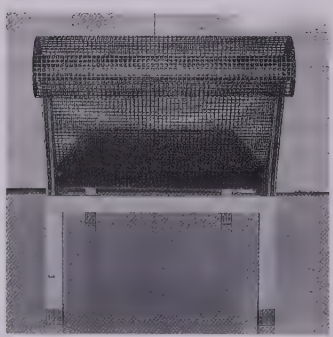
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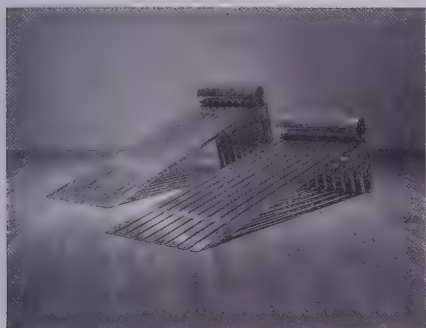
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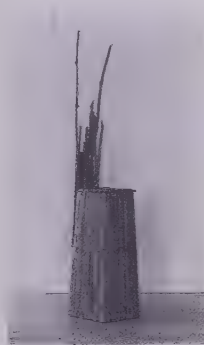
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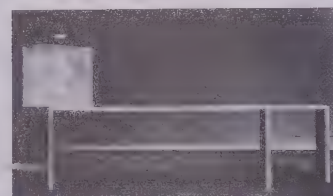
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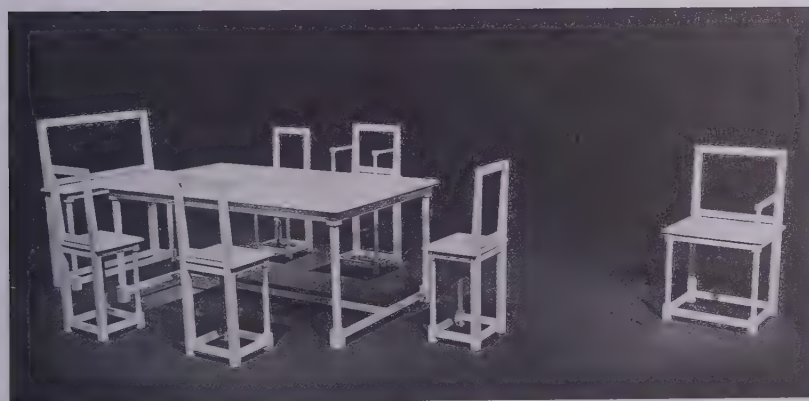
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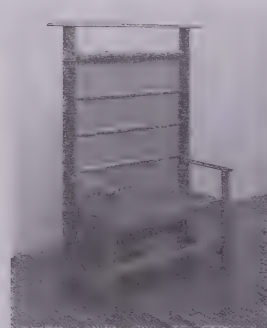
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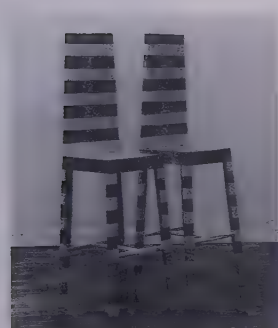
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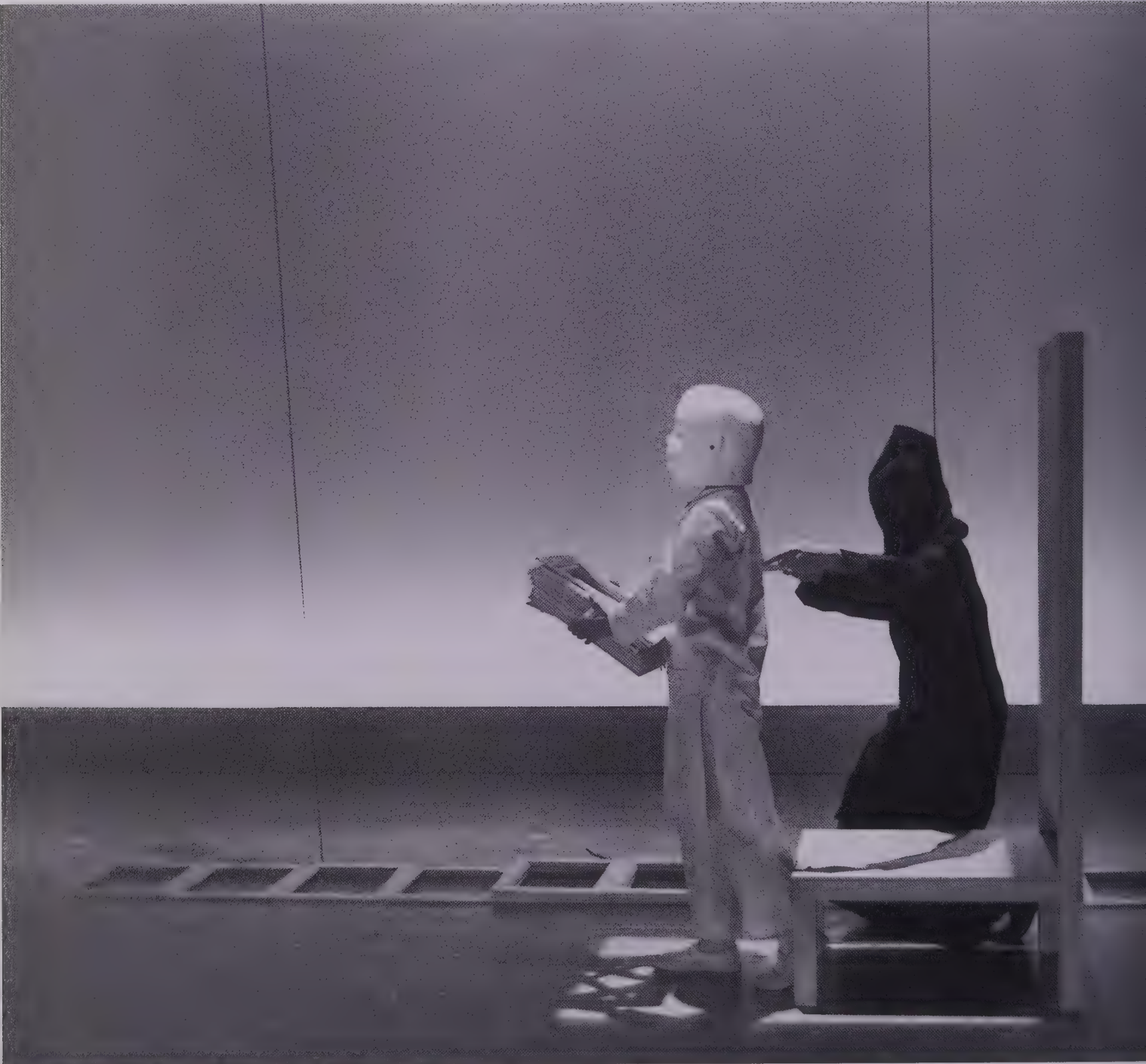
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1. Hanging Chair (Freud Chair), 1977, wire mesh; from *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, 1969.
2. *Deafman Glance*, Act 1; Sheryl Sutton in the production at the Théâtre de la Musique, Paris, 1971.
3. Stalin Chairs, 1977, lead over fiberglass armature; from *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*, 1973.
4. *Einstein on the Beach*, an opera in 4 acts, by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass; Sheryl Sutton and Lucinda Childs in the production at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, 1976.
5. *Quartet*, by Heiner Müller; Scott Rabinowitz, Bill Moor and Lucinda Childs in the production at the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988.
6. Einstein Chair, 1976, galvanized pipe, originally designed for *Einstein on the Beach*, an opera in 4 acts; collection of the Museum of fine Arts, Boston, H. E. Bolles Fund.
7. *Pierre and Marie Curie Bench*, 1989, steel; from *Die Materie*.
8. *Pierre Curie Chair*, 1989, steel; from *Die Materie*.
9. *Quartet*, by Heiner Müller; Jeremy Geidt, Jennifer Rohn, Bill Moor, and Scott Rabinowitz in the production at the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988.
10. Chairs, 1988, wood; from *Quartet*.
11. Table and chairs, 1988, wood; from *Quartet*.
12. Chair, 1987, wood and laquered wood; from *Parzival*.
13. *Deafman Glance*, a play in 4 acts; Raymond Andrews in the production at The Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam, 1971.
14. *Great Day in the Morning*, Jessye Norman in the production at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, 1982.
15. *Overture Chair*, 1980, wood and metal; from *Overture*.
16. *Flying Bench*, 1977, wire mesh and safety belt.
17. Table and chairs, 1986, painted steel; from *Hamletmachine*.
18. Queen Victoria Chairs, 1977, lead and brass; from *A Letter for Queen Victoria*.
19. Chairs, 1985, wood; from *CIVIL warS*.
20. Sofa, 1987, metal mesh and wood; from *Parzival*.
21. *Society Chair*, 1987, aluminum; from *Parzival*.
22. *Beach Chairs*, 1979, aluminum; from *Death Destruction and Detroit*, collection of the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer.
23. *Death Destruction and Detroit*; production at the Schaubühne Theater, Berlin, 1979.
24. Chair, 1987, steel; from *Death Destruction and Detroit*.
25. Bamboo chair, 1987, bamboo and wood.
26. *Patio Sofa*, 1977, stainless steel; from *I Was Sitting on My Patio This Guy Appeared I Thought I Was Hallucinating*.
27. Table and chairs, 1985, wood; from *CIVILwarS*.
28. Chair, 1986, bamboo, wood and horsehair.
29. Jamaica chairs, 1987, painted wood.
30. Paul Walter Dining Chair, wood, pipe, aluminum & gold; from the collection of Paul F. Walter.
31. Einstein Chair, 1985, galvanized pipe; from *Einstein on the Beach*, an opera in 4 acts, 1976.
32. Chair, 1974, wood, metal and electric lights; from *A Letter for Queen Victoria*.
33. *Knee Play 12*, 1984; from the *Knee Plays* by Robert Wilson and David Byrne from the *CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down* by Robert Wilson, produced at the Walker Art Center.







Flexible Accumulation Through Urbanization

Reflections on "Post-Modernism" in the American City

David Harvey

Proletarian revolution is the critique of human geography through which individuals and communities have to create places and events suitable for their own appropriation, no longer just of their labour, but of their total history.

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*.

Times are hard, but (post) modern.

Adaptation of an Italian saying.

Introduction

Charles Jencks dates the symbolic end of modernist architecture and the passage to the post-modern as 3:32 p.m. on July 15th, 1972, when the Pruitt-Igoe housing development (a version of Le Corbusier's "machine for modern living") was dynamited as an unlivable environment for the low-income people it housed.¹ Shortly thereafter, President Nixon officially declared the urban crisis over.

Nineteen seventy-two is not a bad date for symbolizing all kinds of other transitions in the political economy of advanced capitalism. It is roughly since then that the capitalist world, shaken out of the suffocating torpor of the stagflation that brought the long postwar boom to a wimpering end, has begun to evolve a seemingly new and quite different regime of capital accumulation. Set in motion during the severe recession of 1973-5 and further consolidated during the equally savage deflation of 1981-2 (the "Reagan" recession), the new regime is marked by a startling flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption.² It has, at the same time, entrained rapid shifts in the patterning of uneven development, both between sectors and geographical regions—a process aided by the rapid evolution of entirely new financial systems and markets. These enhanced powers of flexibility and mobility have permitted the new regime to be imposed upon a labour force already weakened by two savage bouts of deflation that saw unemployment rise to unprecedented post-war levels in all the advanced capitalist countries (save, perhaps, Japan). Rapid displacements, for example, from the advanced capitalist countries to the newly industrializing countries, or from skilled manufacturing to unskilled service jobs, hammered home the weakness of labour and its inability to resist sustained levels of high unemployment, rapid destruction and reconstruction of skills, and modest (if any) increases in the real wage. Political economic circumstances also undermined the power of the state to protect the social wage, even in those countries with governments seriously committed to defense of the welfare state. Although the politics of resistance may have varied, austerity and fiscal retrenchment, sometimes accompanied by the resurgence of a virulent neo-conservatism, have become widespread in the advanced capitalist world.

What is remarkable about cultural and intellectual life since 1972 is how it, too, has been radically transformed in ways that appear to parallel these political-economic transformations. Consider, for example, the practices of "high modernity of the international style" as practiced in 1972. Modernism had by then lost all semblance of social critique. The protopolitical or Utopian program (the transformation of all social life by way of the transformation of space) had failed and modernism had

¹ Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, 4th ed. (London: Academy Editions, 1984), p. 9.

² See P. A. Armstrong, A. Glyn, and J. Harrison, *Capitalism Since World War Two* (London: Fontana, 1984); M. A. Aglietta, *A Theory of Regulation* (London: NLB, 1974); M. Piore and C. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); A. Scott and M. Storper, eds., *Production, Work, Territory: The Geographical Anatomy of Industrial Capitalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986); and Harvey, "The Geographical and Geopolitical Consequences of the Transition From Fordist to Flexible Accumulation" (Presented at the Conference on America's New Economic Geography, Washington, D. C., April 29-30, 1987).

become closely linked to capital accumulation through a project of Fordist modernization characterized by rationality, functionality, and efficiency.³ By 1972, modernist architecture was as stifling and torporous as the corporate power it represented. Stagflation in architectural practice paralleled the stagflation of capitalism (perhaps it was no accident that Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour published *Learning from Las Vegas* in 1972).⁴ Critics of modernity had been around for a very long time (think of Jane Jacobs's *Life and Death of Great American Cities*, published in 1961) and there was a sense, of course, in which the revolutionary cultural movement of the 1960s was fashioned as a critical response to rationality, functionality, and efficiency in everything. But it took the 1973 crisis to shake up the relationship between art and society to allow post-modernism to become both accepted and institutionalized.

"Post-modernism" is, however, a most contentious term. Most agree that it entails some kind of reaction to "modernism." But since the meaning of that term is a muddle, the reactions to it are doubly so. There appears, however, to be some kind of consensus "that the typical post-modernist artifact is playful, pluralist, self-ironizing and even schizoid; and that it reacts to the austere autonomy of high modernism by impudently embracing the language of commerce and the commodity." Furthermore, "its stance towards cultural tradition is one of irreverent pastiche, and its contrived depthlessness undermines all metaphysical solemnities, sometimes by a brutal aesthetics of squalor and shock."⁵ But even in a field like architecture, where the "artifact" is clearly in view and where writers like Jencks have sought to define what post-modernism is about, the meaning and definition of the term still remains in contention.⁶ In other fields, where post-modernism has become intertwined with post-structuralism, deconstruction, and the like, matters have become even more obscure.⁷ In the urban context, therefore, I shall simply characterize post-modernism as signifying a break with the idea that planning and development should focus on large-scale, technologically rational, austere and functionally efficient "international style" design, and that vernacular traditions, local history, and specialized spatial designs ranging from functions of intimacy to grand spectacle should be approached with a much greater eclecticism of style.

This kind of post-modernism, it seems to me, seeks some kind of accommodation with the more flexible regime of accumulation that has emerged since 1973. It has sought a creative and active, rather than a passive, role in the promotion of new cultural attitudes and practices consistent with flexible accumulation, even though some of its defenders, such as Frampton, see it as containing potentialities for resistance as well as conformity to capitalist imperatives.⁸ The institutionalization and hegemony of "post-modernism" rests, therefore, upon the creation of a distinctive "cultural logic" in late capitalism.⁹

3 F. Jameson, "The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Post modern Debate," *New German Critique* 33: pp. 53-65.

4 R. Venturi, D. Scott-Brown, and S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

5 T. Eagleton, "Awakening from Modernity," *Times Literary Supplement* February 20, 1987.

6 Jencks, *Post-Modern Architecture*.

One other element to the picture must be considered. Not only have capitalism and its associated cultural and ideological practices together undergone a sea change, but our “discourses” (to use the current buzz-word) have likewise shifted. The deconstruction of structuralist interpretations, the abandonment of theory for empiricism in much of social science, the general backing away from Marxism (for both political and intellectual reasons) and the sense of futility in the realm of real representation (the impenetrability of “the other” and the reduction of all meaning to a “text”) make it very difficult to preserve any sense of continuity to our understanding of that transformation that set in around 1972. We talked about the world in a different way, used a different language then, compared to now. Yet here, too, I think a case can be made that the political-economic transformation achieved through a succession of economic crises and working class defeats have affected discourses as well as cultural and ideological practices.¹⁰ That sounds like, and is, old-fashioned Marxian argument. But I cannot help but be impressed at the way in which a whole world of thought and cultural practice, of economy and institutions, of politics and ways of relating, began to crumble as we watched the dust explode upwards and the walls of Pruitt-Igoe come crashing down.

Flexible Accumulation Through Urbanization

An understanding of urbanization, I have argued elsewhere, is critical for understanding the historical geography of capitalism.¹¹ It has partly been through shifts in the urban process that the new systems of flexible accumulation have been so successfully implanted. But also, as various historians of the rise of modernism have pointed out, there is an intimate connection between aesthetic and cultural movement and the changing nature of the urban experience.¹² It seems reasonable, therefore, to look at transitions in the urban process as a key point of integration of the political-economic move towards flexible accumulation and the cultural-aesthetic trend towards post-modernism.

Urbanization has, like everything else, dramatically changed its spots in the United States since 1972. The global deflation of 1973-5 put incredible pressure on the employment base of many urban regions. A combination of shrinking markets, unemployment, rapid shifts in spatial constraints and the global division of labour, capital flight, plant closings, technological and financial reorganization, lay at the

⁷ See A. Huyssen, “Mapping the Post Modern,” *New German Critique* 33: pp. 5-52.

⁸ K. Frampton, “Critical Regionalism: Speculations on an Architecture of Resistance.” in C. Johnson, ed., *The City in Conflict* (London: Mansell, 1985).

⁹ Jameson, “Post Modernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review* 146: pp. 53-92.

¹⁰ See D. Harvey and A. Scott, “Practice of Human Geography, Theory, and Specificity in the Transition from Fordism to flexible Accumulation” in W. MacMillan, ed *Remodelling Geography* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, forthcoming).

¹¹ Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); idem, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

¹² M. Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), M. Bradbury and J. McFarlane, *Modernism* (Hammondsworth: Pelican, 1976) T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1985) and D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1986).

root of that pressure. The geographical dispersal was not only to other regions and nations, it included yet another phase of urban deconcentration of populations and production beyond the suburbs and into rural and small-town America in a way that almost seemed like the fulfillment of Marx's prediction of the "urbanization of the countryside". Fixed capital investments and physical infrastructures in existing locations were consequently threatened with massive devaluation, thus undermining the property tax base and fiscal capacity of many urban governments at a time of increasing social need. To the degree that federal redistributions also became harder to capture (this was the import of Nixon's declaration in 1973), so social consumption was reduced, forcing more and more governments to a political economy of retrenchment and disciplinary action against municipal employees and the local real wage. It was exactly in such a context that New York City went into technical bankruptcy in 1975, presaging a wave of fiscal distress and radical restructuring for many U.S. cities.¹³

Ruling class alliances in urban regions were willy-nilly forced (no matter what their composition) to adopt a much more competitive posture. Managerialism, so characteristic of urban governance in the 1960s, was replaced by entrepreneurialism as the main motif of urban action.¹⁴ The rise of the "entrepreneurial city" meant increased inter-urban competition across a number of dimensions. I have elsewhere argued that the competition can best be broken down into four different forms: (a) competition for position in the international division of labour; (b) competition for position as centers of consumption; (c) competition for control and command functions (financial and administrative powers in particular); and (d) competition for governmental redistributions (which in the United States, as Markusen has shown,¹⁵ focused heavily these last few years on military expenditures).¹⁶ These four options are not mutually exclusive, and the uneven fortunes of urban regions have depended upon the mix and timing of strategies pursued in relation to global shifts.

It was in part through this heightened inter-urban competition that flexible accumulation took such firm hold. However, the result has been rapid oscillations in urban fortunes and in the patterning of uneven geographical development.¹⁷ Houston and Denver, both boom towns in the mid-1970s, were suddenly caught short in the collapse of oil prices after 1981; Silicon Valley, the high-tech wonder of new products and new employment in the 1970s, has suddenly lost its competitive edge;

¹³ I. Szelenyi, ed., *Cities in Recession: Critical Responses to the Urban Policies of the New Right* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1984); P. Clavel, J. Forester, and W. Goldsmith, *Urban and Regional Planning in an Age of Austerity* (New York: Pergamon, 1983); S. Fainstain, N. Fainstain, R. Hill, D. Judd, and M. Smith, *Restructuring the City* (New York: Longman, 1986); and W. Tabb, *The Long Default* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982).

¹⁴ R. Hanson, ed., *Rethinking Urban Policy: Urban Development in an Advanced Economy* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1983) and J. Bouinot, ed., *L'Action Economique des Grandes Villes en France et a l'Etranger* (Paris: Economica, 1987).

¹⁵ A. Markusen, "Defense Spending: A Successful Industrial Policy," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 10 (1986): pp. 105-22.

¹⁶ Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), chapter 8.

¹⁷ N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

while New York and the once-jaded economies of New England are rebounding vigorously in the 1980s on the basis of expanding command and control functions and even new-found manufacturing strength. Two other more general effects have then followed.

First, inter-urban competition has opened spaces within which the new and more flexible labour processes could be more easily implanted and has opened the way to much more flexible currents of geographical mobility than was the case before 1973. Concern for a favorable "business climate," for example, has pushed urban governments to all kinds of measures (from wage-disciplining to public investments) in order to attract economic development, but in the process this concern has lessened the cost of change of location to the enterprise. Much of the vaunted "public-private partnership" of today amounts to a subsidy for affluent consumers, corporations, and powerful command functions to stay in town at the expense of local collective consumption for the working class and the impoverished. Second, urban governments have been forced into innovation and investment to make their cities more attractive as consumer and cultural centers. Such innovations and investments (convention centers, sports stadia, disney-worlds, down-town consumer paradises, etc.) have quickly been imitated elsewhere. Inter-urban competition thus has generated leap-frogging urban innovations in life-styles, cultural forms, products, and even political and consumer based innovation, all of which have actively promoted the transition to flexible accumulation. And herein, I shall argue, lies part of the secret of the passage to post-modernity in urban culture.

This connection can be seen in the radical reorganization of the interior spaces of the contemporary U.S. city under the impulsions of inter-urban competition. I shall preface the account, however, with some general remarks on the class content of spatial practices in urban settings.

The Class Content of Spatial Practices in Urban Settings

Spatial practices in any society abound in subtleties and complexities. Since they are not innocent with respect to the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of class relations under capitalism, they are a permanent arena for social conflict and struggle. Those who have the power to command and produce space possess a vital instrumentality for the reproduction and enhancement of their own power. Any project to transform society must, therefore, grasp the complex nettle of the transformation of spatial practices.

I shall try to capture some of the complexity through construction of a "grid" of spatial practices (Table 1). Down the left hand side I range three dimensions identified in Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*:¹⁸

¹⁸ H. Lefebvre, *La Production de l'Espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974), forthcoming in English as *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

A “Grid” of Spatial Practices

	Accessibility & Distanciation	Appropriation & Use of Space	Domination & Control of Space
Material spatial practices (experience)	Flows of goods, money, people, labour power, information, etc.; transport & communications systems; market and urban hierarchies; agglomeration	Urban built environments, social spaces of the city & other ‘turf’ designations; social networks of communication & mutual aid	Private property in land, state, & administrative divisions of space; exclusive communities & neighborhoods; exclusionary zoning & other forms of social control (policing and surveillance)
Representations of space (perception)	Social, psychological and physical measures of distance; mapmaking; theories of the ‘friction of distance’ (principle of least effort, social physics, range of a good, central place & other forms of location theory)	Personal space; mental maps of occupied space; spatial hierarchies; symbolic representation of spaces	Forbidden spaces; “territorial imperatives;” community; regional culture; nationalism; geopolitics; hierarchies
Spaces of representation (imagination)	“Media is the message” new modes of spatial transaction (radio, t.v., film, photography, painting, etc.); diffusion of “taste”	Popular spectacles—street demonstrations, riots; places of popular spectacle (streets, squares, markets); iconography and graffiti	Organized spectacles; monumentality & constructed spaces of ritual; symbolic barriers and signals of symbolic capital

Material spatial practices refer to the physical and material flows, transfers, and inter-actions that occur in and across space in such a way as to assure production and social reproduction.

Representations of space encompass all of the signs and significations, codes and knowledge, that allow such material practices to be talked about and understood, no matter whether in terms of everyday common sense or through the sometimes arcane jargon of the academic disciplines that deal with spatial practices (engineering, architecture, geography, planning, social ecology, and the like).

Spaces of representation are social inventions (codes, signs, and even material constructs such as symbolic spaces, particular built environments, paintings, museums and the like) that seek to generate new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices.

Lefebvre characterizes these three dimensions as the *experienced*, the *perceived*, and the *imagined*. He regards the dialectical relations between them as the fulcrum of a dramatic tension through which the history of spatial practices can be read. The

relations are, however, problematic. A “vulgar Marxist” position would presumably hold that material spatial practices directly determine both the representations of space and the spaces of representation. Marx did not hold such a view.¹⁹ He depicts knowledge as a material productive force in the *Grundrisse* and writes in a justly famous passage in *Capital*: “What distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.”²⁰ The spaces of representation, therefore, have the potential not only to affect representation of space but also to act as a material productive force with respect to spatial practices.

But to argue that the relations between the experienced, the perceived, and the imagined are dialectically, rather than causally, determined leaves things much too vague. Bordieu provides a clarification. He explains how “a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” can at one and the same time be put to work flexibly to “achieve infinitely diversified tasks,” while at the same time being “in the last instance” (Engels’s famous phrase) engendered out of the material experience of “objective structures” and therefore “out of the economic basis of the social formation in question.”²¹ Bordieu accepts the “well-founded primacy of objective relations” without, however, making the false inference that the objective or structures are themselves endowed with a power of autonomous development independent of human agency.

The meditating link is provided by the concept of “habitus”—a “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” which “produces practices” that in turn tend to reproduce the objective conditions which produced the generative principle of habitus in the first place. The circular (even cumulative?) causation is obvious. Bordieu’s conclusion is, however, a very striking depiction of the constraints to the power of the imagined over the experienced:

Because the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioning and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings.²²

I accept that theorization and will later make considerable use of it.

Across the top of the grid (Table 1) I list three other aspects to spatial practice drawn from more conventional understandings:

Accessibility and distancing speak to the role of the “friction of distance” in human affairs. Distance is both a barrier to and a defense against human interaction. It imposes transaction costs upon any system of production and reproduction (particularly those based on any elaborate social division of labour, trade, and social

19 K. Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

20 Marx, *Capital*, volume 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967).

21 P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

differentiation of reproductive functions). Distanciation is simply a measure of the degree to which the friction of space has been overcome to accommodate social interaction.²³

The appropriation of space examines the way in which space is used and occupied by individuals, classes, or other social groupings. Systemitized and institutionalized appropriation may entail the production of territorially founded forms of social solidarity.

The domination of space reflects how individuals or powerful groups dominate the organization and production of space so as to exercise a greater degree of control either over the friction of distance or over the manner in which space is appropriated by themselves or others.

These three dimensions to spatial practice are not independent of each other. The friction of distance is implicit in any understanding of the domination and appropriation of space, while the persistent appropriation of a space by a particular group (say the gang that hangs out on the street corner) amounts to a *de facto* domination of that space. Furthermore, the attempt to dominate space, insofar as it requires reductions in the friction of distance (capitalism's "annihilation of space through time" for example) alters distanciation.

This grid of spatial practices tells us nothing important in itself. Spatial practices derive their efficacy in social life only through the structure of social relations within which they come into play. Under the social relations of capitalism, spatial practices become imbued with class meanings. To put it this way is not, however, to argue that spatial practices are derivative of capitalism. These spatial practices take on specific meanings and these meanings are put into motion and spaces are used in a particular way through the agency of class, gender, or other social practices.²⁴ When placed in the context of capitalist social relations and imperatives (the accumulation of capital), the grid can help us unravel some of the complexity that prevails in the field of contemporary spatial practices.

My purpose in setting up the grid was not, however, to set about a systematic exploration of the positions within it, although such an examination would be of considerable interest (and I have penned in a few controversial positionings within the grid for purposes of illustration). My purpose is to find a way to characterize the radical shifts in the class content and the nature of spatial practices that have

²² Ibid., p. 95.

²³ A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1984), p. 258-9.

²⁴ The gender, racial, ethnic, and religious contents of spatial practices also need to be considered in any full account of community formation and the production of social spaces in urban settings. A beginning has been made on the gender aspect in works by C. Stimson, ed., *Women and the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); D. Rose, "Rethinking Gentrification: Beyond the Uneven Development of Marx's Urban Theory" in *Society and Space* II (1984): p. 47-74; Shlay A. and Di Gregorio, D. "Same City, Different Worlds: Examining Gender and Work-base Differences in Perception of Neighborhood Desirability", in *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, no. 21 (1985): p. 66-86; and Smith, N., "Of Yuppies and Housing: Gentrification, Social Restructuring, and the Urban Dream," in *Society and Space*, vol. V (2, 1987): p. 151-172.

occurred over the last two decades. The pressure to reorganize the interior space of the city, for example, has been considerable under the conditions of flexible accumulation. The vitality of the central city core has been re-emphasised, themes such as the quality of urban living (gentrification, consumption palaces, and sophisticated entertainment) and enhanced social control over both public and private spaces within the city, have been of widespread significance. But the urban process has also had to cope with increasing impoverishment and unemployment, under conditions where the social wage could not be increased. Here, too, spatial practices have shifted in part towards an increasing control through a return to ghettoization (a practice that was never, of course, severely dented, let alone overcome) and the rise of new spaces where the homeless wander, the schizophrenics and discharged mental patients hang out, and the impoverished practice both new and well-tried survival strategies. How, then, are we to make sense of all this shifting and conflict-prone spatialization of class polarities? Are there ways, furthermore, to address the question of spatial empowerment of the segregated, oppressed, and impoverished populations increasingly to be found in all urban areas?

Class Practices and the Construction of Community

Different classes construct their sense of territory and community in radically different ways.²⁵ This elemental fact is often overlooked by those theorists who presume a priori that there is some ideal-typical and universal tendency for all human beings to construct a human community of a roughly similar sort, no matter what the political or economic circumstances. A study of class agency with respect to community construction under conditions of contemporary urbanization illustrates how essentially similar spatial practices can have radically different class contents.

Let us look more closely, for example, at the class practices through which communities are typically constructed in urban settings. We encounter here all the flexibility and adaptability of perceptions, appreciations, and actions that Bordieu insists upon. But the contrast between community construction in the low-income and disempowered strata of the population and in the affluent and empowered strata is indeed striking.

Low-income populations, usually lacking the means to overcome and hence command space, find themselves for the most part trapped in space. Since ownership of even basic means of reproduction (such as housing) is restricted, the main way to dominate space is through continuous appropriation. Exchange values are scarce, and so the pursuit of use values for daily survival is central to social action. This means frequent material and interpersonal transactions and the formation of very small scale communities. Within the community space, use values get shared through some mix of mutual aid and mutual predation, creating tight but often highly conflictual interpersonal social bonding in both private and public spaces. The result is an often intense attachment to place and "turf" and to an exact

²⁵ I am here deeply indebted to the research work of Phillip Schmandt.

sense of boundaries because it is only through active appropriation that control over space is assured.

Successful control presumes a power to exclude unwanted elements. Fine-tuned ethnic, religious, racial, and status discriminations are frequently called into play within such a process of community construction. Furthermore, political organization takes a special form, generally expressive of a culture of political resistance and hostility to normal channels of political incorporation. The state is largely experienced as an agency of repressive control (in police, education, etc.) rather than as an agency that can be controlled by and bring benefits to them.²⁶ Political organizations of a participatory sort are, as Crenson observes,²⁷ weakly developed, and politics of the bourgeois sort understood as irrelevant to the procuring of the use values necessary for daily survival. Nevertheless, the state intervenes in such communities since they are vital preserves of the reserve army of the unemployed—spaces of such deprivation that all sorts of contagious social ills (from prostitution to tuberculosis) can flourish, and spaces that appear dangerous precisely because they lie outside of the normal processes of social incorporation.

Contrast this with the practices of affluent groups, who can command space through spatial mobility and ownership of basic means of reproduction (houses, cars, etc.). Already blessed with abundant exchange values with which to sustain life, they are in no way dependent upon community-provided use values for survival. The construction of community is then geared mainly to the preservation or enhancement of exchange values. Use values relate to matters of accessibility, taste, tone, aesthetic appreciation, and the symbolic and cultural capital that goes with possession of a certain kind of “valued,” built environment. Interpersonal relations are unnecessary at the street level, and the command over space does not have to be assured through continuous appropriation. Money provides access to the community, making it less exclusionary on other grounds (residential segregation by ethnicity and even race tends to weaken the further up the income scale one goes). Boundaries are diffuse and flexible, mainly dependent upon the spatial field of externality effects that can effect individual property values. Community organizations form to take care of externality effects that can effect individual property values and maintain the “tone” of the community space. The state is seen as basically beneficial and controllable, assuring security and helping keep undesirables out, except in unusual circumstances (the location of “noxious” facilities, the construction of highways, etc.).

Distinctive spatial practices and processes of community construction—coupled with distinctive cultural practices and ideological predispositions—arise out of different material circumstances. Conditions of economic oppression and socio-political domination generate quite different kinds of spatial practices and styles of community formation than will typically be found under other class circumstances.

²⁶ P. Willis, *Learning to Labor* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).

²⁷ M. Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Informalization, the Production of Symbolic Capital, and the Mobilization of the Spectacle

Flexible accumulation has deeply affected class structures and political-economic possibilities so as to modify the processes of community production, while re-emphasising the importance of the class content of spatial practices. I will look briefly at three aspects of this transformation.

Impoverishment and Informalization

The United States have experienced an increase in the sheer numbers of the urban poor since 1972. The composition of this poverty population has also changed. Unemployed blue-collar workers thrown on the street by de-industrialization, and the flood of displaced people out of depressed rural or regional economies or from third-world countries, have been piled on top of what Marx called the "hospital" of the working class, left to fend for itself in the cities. In some cases, particular urban communities tied to a dominant local employment source have been plunged as a whole into a condition of impoverishment by a single plant closing. In other instances, particularly vulnerable groups, such as female-headed households, have been plunged deeper into the mire of poverty, thus creating zones where phenomena like the feminization of poverty become dominant. Fiscal constraints, of which neo-conservatism has made a political virtue rather than an economic necessity, at the same time have undercut the flow of public services, and hence the life-support mechanisms, for the mass of the unemployed and the poor.

Learning to cope and survive in urban settings on almost no income is an art that takes a while to learn. The balance between competition, mutual predation, and mutual aid has consequently shifted within low income populations. The growth of impoverishment has led, paradoxically, to a diminution of the power of some of the more positive mechanisms to cope with it. But there has also been one other dramatic response: the rise of what is known as the "informal sector" in American cities, a sector that focusses on illegal practices such as drug-trafficking, prostitution, and legal production and trading of services. Most observers agree that these practices expanded in scope and form after 1972.²⁸ Furthermore, the same phenomena were observed in European cities, thus bringing the urban process in the advanced capitalist countries as a whole much closer to the third-world urban experience.²⁹

The nature and form of informalization varies greatly, depending upon the opportunities to find local markets for goods and services, the qualities of the reserve army of labour power (its skills and aptitudes), gender relations (for women play a very conspicuous role in organizing informal economies), the presence of small-scale entrepreneurial skills, and the willingness of the authorities (regulatory and oversight

²⁸ M. Castells and A. Portes, "World Underneath: The Origins, Dynamics, and Effects of the Informal Economy," *Conference on the Comparative Study of the Informal Sector* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University).

²⁹ N. Redclift and E. Mingione eds., *Beyond Unemployment: Household, Gender, and Subsistence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

powers like the unions) to tolerate practices that are often outside the law. Low-income communities present, in the first place, a vast reserve of labour power under strong pressure in these times to find a living of almost any sort.

Under conditions of government laxness and trade union weakness, new kinds of production of goods and services can arise, sometimes organized from outside the community, but in other instances organized by entrepreneurs within the low-income community itself. Homework has become much more prominent, allowing women, for example, to combine the tasks of child-rearing and productive labour in the same space, while saving entrepreneurs the costs of overhead (plant, lighting, etc.). Sweatshops and the informal provision of services began to emerge as vital aspects of the New York and Los Angeles economies in the 1970s and by now have become important throughout the U.S. urban system. These have been paralleled by an increasing commodification of traditional mutual aid systems within low-income communities. Baby-sitting, laundering, cleaning, fixing up, and odd jobs, which used to be swapped more as favours, are now bought and sold, sometimes on an entrepreneurial basis.

Social relations within many low-income communities have, as a consequence, become much more entrepreneurial, with all of the consequences of excessive and often extraordinary exploitation (particularly of women) in the labour process. The flow of incomes into such communities has increased, but at the expense of traditional mutual aid systems and the stronger implantation of social hierarchies within the communities themselves. The flow of value out of such communities has also increased substantially. This has led many to look with surprise at the local dynamics of urban development and to argue for the toleration, acceptance, and even encouragement of informalization, thus lending credence to the neo-conservative argument that private entrepreneurial activity is always the path to economic growth and success—as if that could solve the problems of all the poor rather than those of just a select few. Nevertheless, the growth of informalization—and the emergence of unregulated urban spaces within which such practices are tolerated—is a phenomenon thoroughly consistent with the new regime of flexible accumulation.

The Production of Symbolic Capital

The frenetic pursuit of the consumption dollars of the affluent has led to a much stronger emphasis upon product differentiation under the regime of flexible accumulation. Producers have, as a consequence, begun to explore the realms of differentiated tastes and aesthetic preferences in ways that were not so necessary under a Fordist regime of standardised accumulation through mass production. In so doing, they have re-emphasised a powerful aspect of capital accumulation: the production and consumption of what Bourdieu calls “symbolic capital.”³⁰ This has had important implications for the production and transformation of the urban spaces in which upper-income groups live.

³⁰ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp 177–97; idem, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

"Symbolic capital" is defined by Bourdieu as "the collection of luxury goods attesting the taste and distinction of the owner." Such capital is, of course, a transformed kind of money capital, but "produces its proper effect inasmuch, and only inasmuch, as it conceals the fact that it originates in "material" forms of capital which are also, in the last analysis, the source of its effects." The fetishism involved is obvious, but it is here deliberately deployed to conceal, through the realms of culture and taste, the real bases of economic distinctions. Since "the most successful ideological effects are those which have no words, and ask no more than complicitous silence," the production of symbolic capital serves ideological functions because the mechanisms through which it contributes "to the reproduction of the established order and to the perpetuation of domination remain hidden."³¹

It is instructive to bring Bourdieu's theorizations to bear upon the production of upper-class communities and their built environments. It has a lot to tell us about the material processes of gentrification, the recuperation of "history" (real, imagined, or simply re-created as pastiche) and of "community" (again, real, imagined, or simply packaged for sale by producers), and the need for embellishment decoration, and ornamentation that could function as so many codes and symbols of social distinction.³² I do not mean to argue that such phenomena are in any way new — they have been a vital feature to capitalist urbanization from the very beginning and, of course, bear more than a few echoes of distinctions passed on from older social orders. But they have become of much greater significance since 1972, in part through their proliferation into layers of the population that were hitherto denied them. Flexible accumulation permits a profitable response to the cultural discontents of the 1960s, which implied rejection of standardised accumulation and a mass culture that provided too few opportunities to capture symbolic capital. To the degree that political economic crisis encouraged the exploration of product differentiation, so the repressed market desire to acquire symbolic capital could be captured through the production of built environments.³³ And it was, of course, exactly this kind of desire that post-modernist architecture set out to satisfy. "For the middle class suburbanite," Venturi *et al* observe, "living, not in an antebellum mansion, but in a smaller version lost in a large space, identity must come through symbolic treatment of the form of the house, either through styling provided by the developer (for instance, split-level Colonial) or through a variety of symbolic ornaments applied thereafter by the owner."³⁴

Symbolic capital is, however, open to devaluation or enhancement through changes in taste. If symbolic capital contains a hidden power of domination, then power

³¹ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 188.

³² G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); W. Firey, "Sentiment and Symbolism as Ecological Variables", *American Sociological Review* 10: 145-60 (1945); and M. Jager, "Class Definition and the Aesthetics of Gentrification" in N. Smith and P. Williams eds., *The Gentrification of the City* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986).

³³ N. Smith and M. Lefavre, "A Class Analysis of Gentrification," in J. Palen and B. London eds., *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

³⁴ Venturi, Scott-Brown, and Izenour, *Las Vegas*, p. 154.

relations are themselves vulnerable to mutations in taste. Since competition between producers and the machinations of consumers render taste insecure, struggles over fashion acquire a certain significance within the urban scene.³⁵ The power to dominate, as well as the ability to convert symbolic into money capital, becomes embedded in the cultural politics of the urban process. But that also implies that domination of space within the urban process has an even more vital cultural edge to it under a regime of flexible accumulation. To the degree that domination of whatever sort contains the potentiality of violent response on the part of the dominated, so here, too, a latent domain of conflict has been opened up for explicit articulation.

The Mobilization of the Spectacle

"Bread and Festivals" was the ancient Roman formula for social pacification of the restless plebs. The formula has been passed on into capitalist culture through, for example, Second Empire Paris, where festival and the urban spectacle became instruments of social control in a society riven by class conflict.³⁶

Since 1972, the urban spectacle has been transformed from counter-cultural events, anti-war demonstrations, street riots, and the inner-city revolutions of the 1960s. It has been captured as both a symbol and an instrument of community unification under bourgeois control in conditions where unemployment and impoverishment have been on the rise and where objective conditions of class polarization have been increasing. As part of this process, the modernist penchant for monumentality—the communication of the permanence, authority, and power of the established capitalist order—has been challenged by an "official" post-modernist style that explores the architecture of festival and spectacle, with its sense of the ephemeral, of display, and of transitory but participatory pleasure. The display of the commodity has become a central part of the spectacle, as crowds flock to gaze at them and at each other in intimate and secure spaces like Baltimore's Harbor Place, Boston's Faneuil Hall, and a host of enclosed shopping malls that have sprung up all over America. Even whole built environments have become centerpieces of urban spectacle and display.

This phenomenon deserves more detailed scrutiny than I can give here. It fits, of course, with urban strategies to capture consumer dollars to compensate for de-industrialization. Its undoubted commercial success rests in part on the way in which the act of buying connects to the pleasure of the spectacle in secured spaces, safe from violence or political agitation. Baltimore's Harbor Place combines all of the bourgeois virtues that Benjamin attributed to the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris with the sense of the festival that attached to world expositions, "places of pilgrimage to the fetish Commodity."³⁷ Debord would take it further: "the spectacle is the developed modern complement of money where the totality of the

³⁵ See S. Zurkin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

³⁶ Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

³⁷ W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1973), pp 158–65.

commodity world appears as a whole, as a general equivalence for what the entire society can be and can do.” To the degree that the spectacle becomes “the common ground of deceived gaze and of false consciousness,” so it can also present itself as “an instrument of unification.”³⁸ In Baltimore, Mayor Schaefer and the urban class alliance ranged behind him, have consciously used the spectacle of Harbor Place precisely in that way, as a symbol of the supposed unity of a class-divided and racially-segregated city. Professional sports activities and events like the Los Angeles Olympic Games perform a similar function in an otherwise fragmented urban society.

Urban life, under a regime of flexible accumulation, has thus come increasingly to present itself as an “immense accumulation of spectacles,” American downtowns no longer communicate exclusively a monumental sense of power, authority, and corporate domination. Instead they express the idea of spectacle and play. It is on this terrain of the spectacle that the break into the post-modern, urban culture that has accompanied flexible accumulation has partially been fashioned, and it is in the context of such mediating images that the oppositions of class consciousness and class practices have to unfold.³⁹ But, as Debord observes, the spectacle “is never an image mounted securely and finally in place; it is always an account of the world competing with others, and meeting the resistance of different, sometimes tenacious forms of social practice.”⁴⁰

Urban Stress Under Flexible Accumulation

Flexible accumulation has had a serious impact upon all urban economies. The increasing entrepreneurialism of many urban governments (particularly those that have emphasised “public-private partnership”) has tended to reinforce it and the neoconservatism and post-modernist cultural trends that went with it. The use of increasingly scarce resources to capture development has meant that the social consumption of the poor was neglected in order to provide benefits to keep the rich and powerful in town. This was the switch in direction that President Nixon signalled when he declared the urban crisis over in 1973. What that meant, of course, was the transmutation of urban stresses into new forms.

The internal adaptations within the city likewise played their part in facilitating and fomenting flexible accumulation. Poor populations had to become much more entrepreneurial, adopting, for example, “informal” economic means to survive. Increasing competition for survival under conditions of increasing impoverishment meant serious erosion of traditional mutual aid mechanisms in urban communities that had little capacity to dominate space and were often disempowered with respect

³⁸ G. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: : Black and Red Books, 1983).

³⁹ I can not resist drawing attention to the way in which Barthes (*The Pleasure of the Text* [New York: Hill and Wang, 1975]) brought the concept of *jouissance* into philosophical respectability at the same time as the exploration of the city as a theater, as a spectacle, full of play spaces became more prominent in both the theory and practice of urban design. I also suspect that the appreciation of the urban fabric as a “text” to be read and interpreted with pleasure had something to do with the tax advantages that derived to the real estate industry declaring whole segments of the city “historic preservation districts”.

⁴⁰ Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*.

to normal processes of political integration. The ability to dominate space through communal solidarity and mutually supportive patterns of appropriation weakened at the very moment that many spaces became vulnerable to invasion and occupation by others. A tension arose between increasing unemployment of workers in traditional occupations and the employment growth triggered by downtown revivals based on financial services and the organization of spectacles. A new and relatively affluent generation of professional and managerial workers, raised on the cultural discontents with modernism in the 1960s, came to dominate whole zones of inner-city urban space seeking product differentiation in built environments, quality of life, and command of symbolic capital. The recuperation of "history" and "community" became essential selling gimmicks to the producers of built environments. Thus the turn to post-modernist styles was institutionalized.

There are serious social and spatial stresses inherent in such a situation. To begin with, increasing class polarization (symbolized by the incredible surge in urban poverty surrounding islands of startling and conspicuous wealth) is inherently dangerous, and given the processes of community construction available to the poor, it also sets the stage for increasing racial, ethnic, religious, or simply "turf" tensions. Fundamentally different class mechanisms for defining the spatiality of community come into conflict, thus sparking running guerilla warfare over who appropriates and controls various spaces of the city. The threat of urban violence, although not of the massive sort experienced in the 1960s, looms large. The breakdown of the processes that allow the poor to construct any sort of community of mutual aid is equally dangerous since it entails an increase in individual anomie, alienation, and all of the antagonisms that derive therefrom. The few who "make it" through informal sector activity cannot compensate for the multitude who won't. At the other end of the social scale, the search for symbolic capital introduces a cultural dimension to political economic tensions. The latter feed inter-class hostilities and prompt state interventions that further alienate low-income populations (I am thinking, for example, of the way street-corner youths get harassed in gentrifying neighborhoods). The mobilization of the spectacle has its unifying effects, but it is a fragile and uncertain tool for unification, and to the degree that it forces the consumer to become "a consumer of illusions" it contains its own specific alienations. Controlled spectacles and festivals are one thing, but riots and revolutions can also become "festivals of the people."

But there is a further contradiction. Heightened inter-urban competition produces socially wasteful investments that contribute to, rather than ameliorate, the over-accumulation problem that lay behind the transition to flexible accumulation in the first place.⁴¹ Put simply, how many successful convention centers, sports stadia, disney worlds, and harbor places can there be? Success is often short-lived or rendered moot by competing or alternative innovations arising elsewhere. Over-investment in everything from shopping malls to cultural facilities makes the values embedded in urban space highly vulnerable to devaluation. Down-town revivals

⁴¹ Harvey and Scott, "Human Geography".

built upon burgeoning employment in financial and real estate services where people daily process loans and real estate deals for other people employed in financial services and real estate, depend upon a huge expansion of personal, corporate, and governmental debts. If that turns sour, the effects will be far more devastating than the dynamiting of Pruitt-Igoe ever could symbolize. The rash of bank failures in Texas, Colorado, and even California (many of them attributable to over-investment in real estate) suggests that there has been serious over-investment in urban re-development.

Flexible accumulation, in short, is associated with a highly fragile patterning of urban investment, as well as with increasing social and spatial polarization of urban class antagonisms.

Political Responses

“Every established order tends to produce,” Bordieu writes, “the naturalization of its own arbitrariness” the “most important and best concealed” mechanism for so doing is “the dialectic of the objective chances and the agent’s aspirations, out of which arises the *sense of limits*, commonly called the *sense of reality*” which is “the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order.” Knowledge (perceived and imagined) thereby “becomes an integral part of the power of society to reproduce itself.” The “symbolic power to impose the principles of construction of reality—in particular, social reality—is a major dimension of political power.”⁴²

This is a key insight. It helps explain how even the most critical theorist can so easily end up reproducing “adherence to the established order.” It explains Tafuri’s conclusion (based on the history of avant-gardism and modernity in architecture) of the impossibility of any radical transformation of culture and therefore of any radical and transforming architectural practice in advance of any radical transformation in social relations.⁴³ This insight compels scepticism towards those who have recently embraced post-modernism (or radical individualism or some other aspect of contemporary practice) as a radical and liberating break with the past. There is strong evidence that post-modernity is nothing more than the cultural clothing of flexible accumulation. “Creative destruction”—that centerpiece of capitalist modernity—is just as central in daily life as it ever was. The difficulty, therefore, is to find a political response to the invariant and immutable truths of capitalism in general while responding to the particular forms of appearance that capitalism now exhibits under conditions of flexible accumulation. From that standpoint, therefore, let me explore some modest proposals.

Consider, first, exploring the interstices of present processes for points of resistance and empowerment. Decentralization and deconcentration taken together with the cultural concern with qualities of place and space, create, a political climate in which the politics of community, place, and region can unfold in new ways, at the very moment when the cultural continuity of all places is seriously threatened by flexible

⁴² Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 164.

⁴³ M. Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976).

accumulation. It is out of that sort of tension that Frampton advocates a regional architecture of resistance to the homogenizing forces of global capitalism,⁴⁴ and Rossi pursues an architecture expressive of the continuity of neighbourhood tradition and collective memory.⁴⁵ The cultural theses of post-modernity are, evidently, open to radical interpretation in the cause of greater empowerment of the poor and underprivileged. But that is small beer compared to the “creative destruction” with which flexible accumulation typically scars the fabric of the city.

Flexible accumulation also opens up new paths of social change. Spatial dispersal means much greater geographical equality of opportunity to lure in new activities to even the smallest towns in the remotest region. Position within the urban hierarchy becomes less significant, and large cities lose their inherent political-economic power to dominate. Small towns that have managed to lure in new activities have often improved their position remarkably. But the chill winds of competition blow hard here too. It proves hard to hang on to activities even recently acquired. As many cities lose as gain by this. The ferment in labour markets has also undermined traditional union powers and opened up opportunities for migration, employment, and self-employment for layers in the population once denied them (although under much more competitive circumstances leading to low wages and deteriorated work conditions for women, new migrants, and ghettoized minorities). Flexible production opens up the possibility of cooperative forms of labour organization under a modicum of worker control. Piore and Sabel emphasize this argument and see this as a decisive moment in the history of capitalism when totally new and much more democratic forms of industrial organization can be implanted.⁴⁶ This style of organization can also arise through the social consolidation of “informal sector” activities as cooperative and worker-controlled endeavours.

Conditions of flexible accumulation, in short, make worker and community control appear as a feasible alternative to capitalism. The emphasis of political ideology on the left therefore has shifted towards a “feasible,” decentralized socialism, thus drawing much more inspiration from social democracy and anarchism than from traditional Marxism. This shift corresponds with the vigorous external attack and internal critique of centralized planning mechanisms in the socialist countries.⁴⁷

Political practices on the left have evolved in much the same direction. Municipal socialism in Britain, economic democracy and community control in the United States, and community mobilization by the “Greens” in West Germany illustrate the trend. There is plainly much that can be done, at both local and regional levels,

⁴⁴ Frampton, “Critical Regionalism.”

⁴⁵ A. Rossi, *Architecture and the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984). Rossi, it is interesting to note, bases his theory of architectural practice on ideas of several geographers, notably Vidal de la Blanche, regarding the importance of neighbourhoods as settings for the continuity of “genres de vie” and sites of collective memory. From my standpoint, Rossi chose the wrong geographer because Vidal was notoriously reluctant, at least until the very end of his life and his seminal but much neglected *Geographie de l'Est*, to explore the dynamic transformations of social and physical landscapes wrought under capitalist social relations.

⁴⁶ M. Piore and C. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

⁴⁷ For example see A. Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983).

to defend and empower local interests. Community and religious organizations actively support plant buy-outs, fight plant closure, and otherwise support the mutual aid mechanisms of traditional, low-income community solidarity. Institutions can also be persuaded to support the thrust for greater empowerment of the populations that surround them. A sympathetic state apparatus can find ways to support cooperatives (in service provision, housing provision, and production) and perhaps can also find ways to encourage the formation of skills through the tapping of local talent. Financial institutions can be pressured into supporting community reinvestment, cooperative endeavours, and neighbourhood development corporations. Even spectacles can be organized in a political cause. Planners can try to ensure that the transformations of neighbourhood will preserve rather than destroy collective memory. Far better that a deserted factory be turned into a community center where the collective memory of those who lived and worked there is preserved, rather than that it be turned into boutiques and condos that permit the appropriation of one people's history by another.

But there are acute dangers. Both the theory and the practices have the effect of reinforcing the fragmentations and reifications. It is invidious to regard places, communities, cities, regions, or even nations as "things in themselves" at a time when the global flexibility of capitalism is greater than ever. To follow that line of thinking is to be increasingly, rather than decreasingly, vulnerable in aggregate to the extraordinary centralized power of flexible accumulation. It is just as geographically unprincipled and naive to ignore the qualities of a global process as it is to ignore the distinctive qualities of place and community. Practices fashioned only in the latter terms define a politics of adaptation and submission rather than of active resistance and of socialist transformation.

Yet a global strategy of resistance and transformation has to begin with the realities of place and community. The problem is to discover a centralized politics that matches the increasingly centralized power of flexible accumulation while remaining faithful to the grass-roots of local resistances. The "Greens" in West Germany and the Rainbow Coalition in the United States appear to be taking up such questions. The difficulty is to merge these freshly-minted ideologies with a more traditional, oppositional politics shaped in response to a previous regime of accumulation (without, however, embracing radical individualism, neo-conservatism, or post-modernism as signs of liberation). There is plenty of scope here for progressive forces at local, regional, and national levels to do the hard practical and intellectual work of creating a more-unified oppositional force out of the maelstrom of social change that flexible accumulation has unleashed.

This is mainly to speak, however, of the politics of resistance. What of the politics of some more radical transformation? While capitalism is always in a state of pre-socialism, it is scarcely on anyone's agenda these days to think about something as daring as the transition to socialism. Bordieu, perhaps, provides a clue as to why:

The critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility objective crisis, which in breaking the immediate fit between subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically.⁴⁸

Only under conditions of crisis do we have the power to think radically new thoughts because it then becomes impossible to reproduce “the naturalization of our own arbitrariness.” All major social revolutions have been wrought in the midst of breakdown in the bourgeois ability to govern.

There are abundant cracks in the shaky edifice of modern capitalism, not a few of them generated by the stresses inherent in flexible accumulation. The world’s financial system—the central power in the present regime of accumulation—is in turmoil and weighed down with an excess of debt that puts such huge claims on future labour that it is hard to see any way to work out of it except through massive defaults, rampant inflation, or repressive deflation. The insecurity and power of creative destruction unleashed by flexible accumulation takes a terrible toll, often on many segments of a population, thus generating acute geopolitical rivalries. These could easily spin out of control (as they did in the 1930s) and break up the West as a coherent political-economic unit (protectionist and financial “wars” have been part of our daily diet of news for some time now). Though crisis prone, however, the capitalist system is not *in* crisis, and few of us care to consider how life would be if it were. Indeed, the system is so shaky that even to talk about its shakiness is seen as rocking it in unseemly ways.

This brings me to my second major point. Objective crisis may be a necessary, but never a sufficient, condition for major social transformations. The latter depend upon the rise of some political force capable of stepping into the vacuum of power and doing something truly creative with it. The nature of that political force does indeed make a difference in, to use Marx’s own polarities, the transition to barbarism or socialism. If the presently disempowered are to have a voice in that, they must first possess “the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them.”⁴⁹ As Willis shows, however, the disempowered evolve their own means of symbolic representation that in many respects represent their social world more accurately than that which educators would impose upon them.⁵⁰ “Drop-out” and oppositional inner-city subcultures, with their distinctive languages, are as widespread and vibrant as they have ever been. But that language, if only because it is the language of those trapped in space, is adaptive rather than transformative with respect to global processes that preclude empowerment for the mass of the population.

Critical theory here has a role. But only if it, too, is self-critical. To begin with, all critical theory emerges as the practice of a group of “organic intellectuals” (to use Gramsci’s phrase) and its qualities therefore depend upon the class and territory in

⁴⁸ Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁵⁰ Willis, *Learning to Labor* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).

which the practitioners have their being. Academics and professionals are not exempt. Our critical theory therefore has certain qualities that differentiate it from the critical theory expressed in working-class cultural and political practices. True empowerment for the presently disempowered must be won by struggle from below and not given out of largesse from above. The modes of class and under-class opposition to flexible accumulation therefore must be taken seriously. The problem, on all sides, is to find practices that define a language of class and territorial alliances from which more global oppositional strategies to flexible accumulation can arise.

Even that kind of critical theory cannot contain the answers. But it can at least pose the questions and in so doing reveal something of the material realities with which any transition has to cope. That is, to be sure, a small contribution. But it is out of the assemblage of such small contributions that meaningful transformations must be wrought. A critical appraisal of the current regime of flexible accumulation, of the cultural practices of post-modernity, and of the re-shaping of physical and social space through urbanization, together with reflection on the ideologies through which we understand such processes, appears as one small but necessary preparatory step towards the reconstitution of a movement of global opposition to a plainly sick and troubled capitalist hegemony.

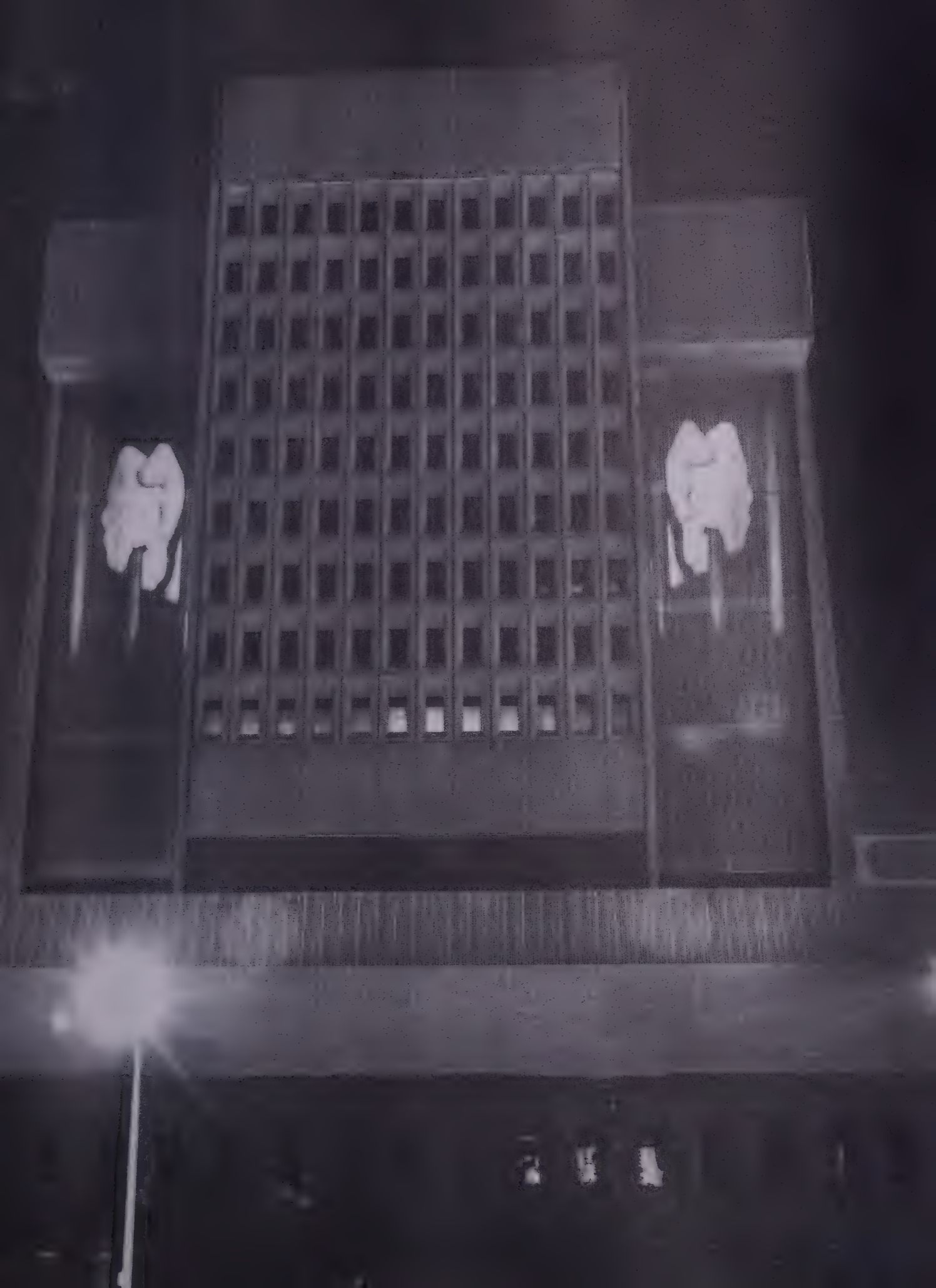
1. Projection. Federal
Courthouse, London,
Ontario, 1984.

Projections

Krzysztof Wodiczko

I try to understand what is happening in the city, how the city can operate as a communicative environment. We must take into consideration the city as individual experience and the sociology and geography of the city as it develops and transforms. It is important to understand the circumstances under which communication is reduced or destroyed, and under what possible new conditions it can be provoked to reappear. How can aesthetic practice in the built environment contribute to critical discourse between the inhabitants themselves and the environment? How can aesthetic practice make existing symbolic structures respond to contemporary events?

My projections are a series of individual acts, however complex they are in terms of engaging institutions and groups, of gaining access to the city. But this does not mean that on occasion even a single act cannot be remembered for years. In London, a year and a half after I did the South African Embassy projection, it was listed in a popular magazine as one of the most important events of 1985. I was encouraged to learn that even a short-lived (in this case two hours) individual act, if exercised against a strategic urban site at a precise moment, can carve itself into the memory of the city.





I heard that someone produced postcards of this projection, which people bought as tourist postcards. When people look at this pediment, they will see a swastika there as long as the situation in South Africa and British policy remain unchanged.

As a result of gentrification, monuments are being separated from urban life. Tadeusz Kosciuszko fought for radical social reforms in Poland and America; certainly he would have been astonished to see hundreds of thousands of homeless inhabiting his statue. If monuments ten years ago were horrified by what was happening in front of them, they might be even more disturbed today. Reality is being removed from their sight. As they are cleaned and “adopted” by the corporate world, they become mere decoration, statuettes in the private parks of the newly-built real estate citadels (in New York, Battery Park City and Zeckendorf Towers at Union Square). In this way, monuments become evicted from history *and* from the present.

When the contexts of monuments change, there is no way we can expect them to be effective and connected with contemporary concerns without our help. Alois Riegl has called such monuments the “homeless of history.” We are responsible for making sense of our monuments. If we cannot do this, we reject them, in a sense deport them to the “past;” we can also abandon or destroy them, or impose completely new meanings on them if necessary. But that’s not your job or my job. That’s the business of historic action. The monuments should be accessible to us in some way so we can speak through them, in front of them. We have to see them

2. Projection. South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London, England, 1985.

3. Projection. New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1984.



in the context of critical circumstances: if social tensions explode, crowds of people are sitting on their steps or on the heads, shoulders, breasts of these monuments. Between these more extreme actions, it must be possible to think in front of the monuments about contemporary issues; to take them as moral, political partners. It should be possible to invest their bodies with new meanings. When no new meaning is projected onto monuments they become like graveyards or decorations. Without our efforts to create a dialogue with them they become irrelevant. In this time of outrageous urban development, architects, artists, activists and researchers, whoever is interested in the struggle for public life, should collaborate to rescue a critical relation to the environment. Hopefully, these different groups would concentrate on alternative, aesthetic structures and events. I don't see much difference between the goals of critical public artists and critical architects. Public discourse must occur exactly at the site of the crime, not somewhere else.

A heightened level of discourse within the city might actually prevent the most dangerous situations. If through communication, criticism of urban change was made possible without bloody confrontation, I might feel "useful" as an artist. At this point, I am scared when there is silence. There is not much discussion in the media about the actual mechanisms of transformation in New York City, so when the situation explodes, it explodes the way it did in Tompkins Square, in the summers of 1988 and 1989.

The New Museum is interesting because it's not a monument, it's the Astor Building, a loft building. This building is a perfect example of Alois Riegl's "unintentional monument." It had been empty for several years when it became clear that the presence of a museum would transform the status of the entire district. The property value of every other building around was changing; people were losing their small businesses. Sweatshops and small stores were gradually being replaced by large and professional services and galleries. I was angered by the fact that there were so many homeless people living on the street, while the biggest building in the entire district, the Astor Building, was empty. Only people on the streets understood this projection very well.

The Venice piece dealt with the whole city, not just a single building. Four projections were officially announced, along with a fifth in the shipyard. They were projected one at a time for technical reasons and, as a result, it was easy to find them. They were each repeated twice. If I had had more equipment I think I would have done them simultaneously.

The threat of international terrorism was a constant presence in Venice that season. The connection between tourism and terrorism is an integral part of Venetian history. The Biennale projections explored the relation between the terrorist threat to the city and the tourist as terrorist. The arrival of the American warships in the lagoon (apparently one of them had been used in the invasion of Grenada) to "protect" the Venice Biennale from terrorist attacks heightened this relationship.



4. Map of Venice showing projection locations.

5 & 6. Projection. Campanile, Piazza San Marco, Venice, 1986.



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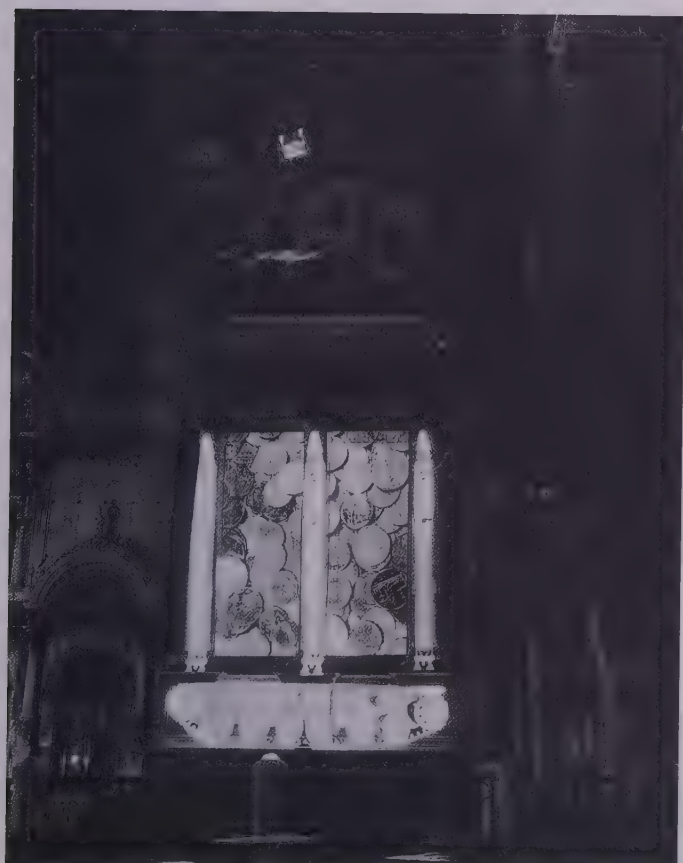
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7. Projection. Campo Santa
Maria Formosa, Venice, 1986.

8. Projection. Arsenale,
Venice, 1986.

9. Projections. Monument of
Condottiere Colleoni, Venice,
1986.





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10. Projection. Duke of York column and steps, Waterloo Place, London, England, 1985.

The last war which engaged cities on United States soil was the Civil War. For Europeans it is, unfortunately, a normal thing to see tanks driving through the city. I like the idea of a mobile monument. There is nothing more frightening than making a monument mobile. It's comical but it's also frightening. The monument becomes the war machine. Every generation has taken its war machines and turned them into monuments—and taken its existing war memorials and turned them into war machines. The missiles in Europe, at least until the Pershing 2's are dismantled, are present as monuments. In West Germany you can see them. Even if you don't see them from the highway, they are present in the media—like *Stern* or *Spiegel*. People demonstrate. They form human chains around them. People are very close to weapons.

The city is not something to be understood or experienced only by walking through the streets. We see it equally through television and newspapers. In order to understand a public projection it must be recorded and announced as any significant urban event is. Events that project themselves on the city, even if they take place outside it, are part of the experience of the city.

I decided to treat the Hirshorn as one of the buildings on the Mall. Conceptually, this projection had nothing to do with the building's function as a museum, but with the building's role as part of an enormous political museum, the Mall itself. It is also a particular architectural form which I found suitable for what I wanted to say about the 1988 Presidential election. Its position in relation to the White House, the Capitol, and the Washington Monument was very good. At first it seemed easy, but then I realized that the very fact of planning anything in front of this building meant working in a museum which is even more guarded. The federal part of Washington D.C. is a monument *against* the city of Washington as well as the rest of America.

The museum commissioned me to do the projection as an independent contractor. I had a verbal agreement with them that I wouldn't project pornography or direct political imagery. I did not know myself what was going up until the day before the projection.

It is very difficult to describe how a projection works. I can only confess how it worked in my mind, how all of the issues were connected in the context of the Bush campaign. It was projected ten days before the election. It refers to the contradictory images of Bush's "kinder, gentler nation" and the deployment of military force to resolve problems inside and outside of the country. For many people it generally signified the vigilante attitude of the politics of this election.

This projection depended heavily on media coverage. After the *Washington Post* story on the first night, the following two evenings of the projection drew large crowds. The accidental connections, debates, and discussions in front of the projections are evidence of a multiplicity of readings evoked by my work. The symbolic icons I project are usually very well known. The relations between these icons and the relation of all of them to the architecture construct new meanings. Time in front of the projections is time to see and hear these new meanings.

I embraced the distortion caused by the circular front of the Hirshorn; that's the strongest part of the work. Distortions can be very positive. I normally compensate for unwelcome perspective distortion by photographing images at the angle from which they will be seen. I usually photograph everything myself and bring all the props with me. This time I couldn't because I don't own a revolver. I had to borrow one—a Smith and Wesson.

The technical process is very difficult. I cannot see a piece before it's projected. I cannot make a model, because the conditions are so complicated. There are so many factors which affect the power, strength, and integrity of this work that I can't



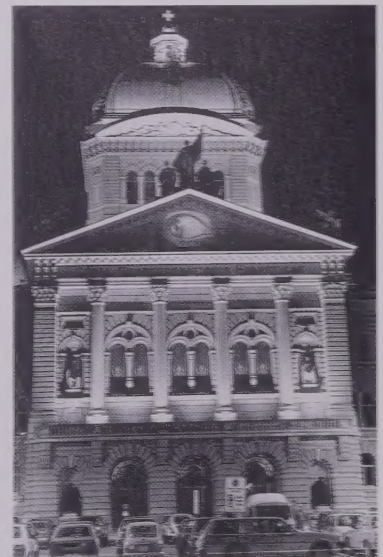
11. Projection. Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., 1988.

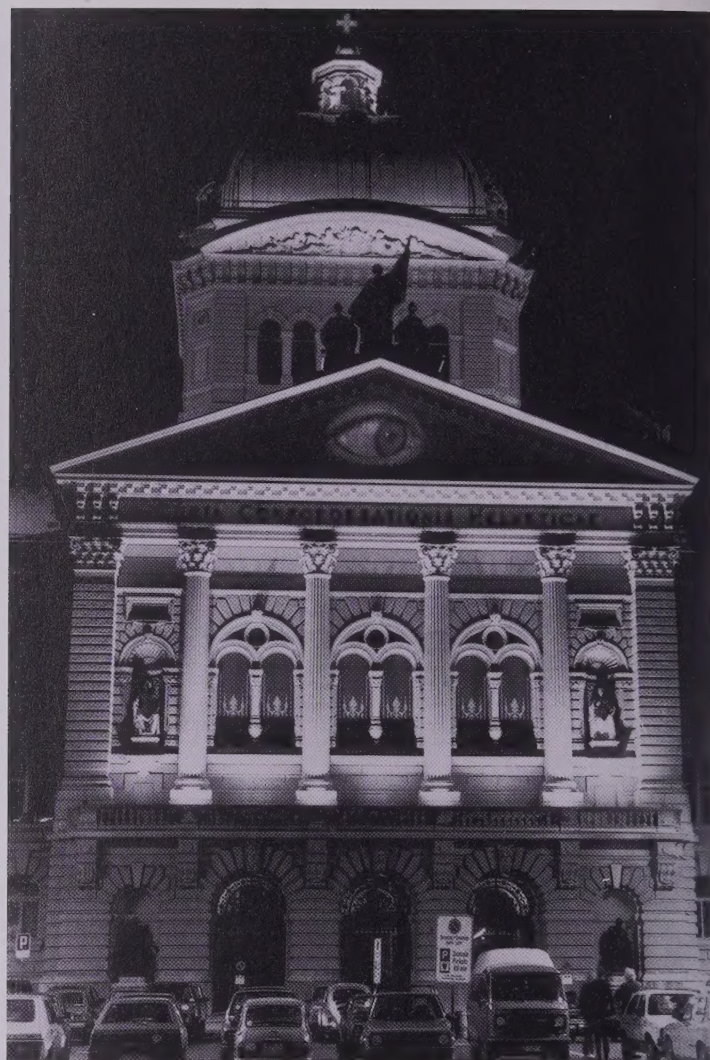
calculate. I can only do a test very close in time to the actual projection because of the money required for equipment rental, travel, and crew. There is only emergency time between the test and the actual event to re-photograph in case something is really wrong. I have to bring several options to the site. Sometimes those alternatives differ substantially—that is, they are completely different images. I decide very quickly whether it's working or not.

The image has to be very clear, very quick. It has to relate to an architecture that is also clear and quick. It's a cliché in a sense; you either see it in the first fifteen seconds or you won't stay. At the least you have to recognize the images and what the relationships are between the images and the architectural form. I complete the body (the architectural form) after I learn what that body can do, what the ability of the body to speak is. This is a kind of phenomenological investigation. In Washington I had to wait to see what the most important thing to say would be within the limitations of this cylindrical body, within the limitation of the medium itself. I cannot project all the things I would like to say. I need to assign speech to each part of a particular building, so that it will be able to speak in my terms, to speak in a more specific way than it already does. I think that completing the symmetrical, neoclassical Hirshhorn by referring to its big balcony, this gap or crack or leak, as the mouth was the only thing to do.

I learned from surrealism—and from Hartfield photomontages—how much architecture and the built environment are connected with bodies. Our position in society is structured through bodily experience with architecture. As Michel Foucault taught us, extensive experience and intensive disciplining processes have, since the eighteenth century, transformed our bodies from rural to urban, from undisciplined to disciplined, from uneducated in democracy to educated in democracy. Architecture was a didactic mission in the eighteenth century. Public architecture developed with the deployment of institutions which had never existed before, such as libraries, train stations, schools, and prisons. Bureaucracies, the distribution of taxes, public parks and just about everything that we think the modern city is, were invented in the eighteenth century.

It's one thing to imagine certain things and another to actually see them. Through a large-image projection, it's possible to examine in great depth the relationships between surfaces; you see lots of details that you could not predict. You can really match part of the body with part of the building, something that is hard to imagine without seeing it. The image is like a photomontage, but a darkroom photomontage. It's not like pasting something on the building. It's possible to see projected images as though they were projected from inside the body out, onto the building. On some occasions they get into the bones; we get into the bones of neoclassicism. If you get to the bones of the whole thing you really understand that body better.





12. Projections. Swiss National Parliament, Bundesplatz, Bern, Switzerland, 1985.

There are three banks on the Bundesplatz: the Bank of the City of Bonn, the Canton Bank and the National Bank. The Bundeshaus projection was, in fact, about this entire plaza. The Swiss Treasury's gold is stored under the plaza, like a Swiss Fort Knox. The projected eye was consciously directed to each of those points. The building became like the legislature it houses, very much aware of the situation around itself. I wanted this building to be looking at the other buildings. It also questions their Calvinist ethics.

The movement of the projected eye was not very fast, the image had to integrate with the static nature of the building. It was the same image, only the eyeball was moving. It was a cycle and, in that sense, quite static. It was a very small change. You could imagine the body of someone almost dead, in the hospital, completely incapacitated, only the eye moving.

