Theatre Optics: Enlightenment Theatre Architecture in France and the Architectonics of Husserl's Phenomenology

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This outside-of-itself of time is its spacing: an arch-stage.
– Jacques Derrida[1]
What do you understand by a fore-stage?
– Claude-Nicolas Ledoux[2]

Overview

Historians of architecture tend to read Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's 1804 engraving *Coup d'œil du théâtre de Besançon* as depicting the reflection of a Palladian bank of seats in the center of an outsized human eye (fig. 1). According to this interpretation, the eye appears to face outward from the stage toward the curved auditorium and semicircular colonnade of Ledoux's only fully realized public theatre, which stood in Besançon from its completion in 1784 until its destruction by fire in 1958. Michel Gallet's 1980 monograph on Ledoux, for example, claims that reflection gives structure to the image: "Among the pages of the *Architecture*, there is none so well known as that of the eye that reflects within its pupil the circular auditorium of Besançon and the surrounding colonnade, like that at Vicenza."[3]

Several scholars have adopted this reading, which spatially opposes the visual organ with a neoclassical amphitheatre. Wend von Kalnein, Downing Thomas, Beat Wyss, and George Hersey casually endorse the reflective interpretation of Ledoux's engraving with little attention to the instability of the composition, or interest in the complexity purchased by this instability.[4] To read Ledoux's image of the neoclassical auditorium

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena,* trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 86.

[2] Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des mœurs et de la legislation* (repr., Paris: Hermann, 1997), 380.

[3] Michel Gallet, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux* (Paris: Picard, 1980), 130. (Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.)

[4] Wend von Kalnein, *Architecture in France in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 236; Downing A. Thomas, "Architectural Visions of Lyric Theater and Spectatorship in Late-Eighteenth-Century France," *Representations* 52 (1995): 60; Beat Wyss, "Ragnarok of Illusion: Richard Wagner's 'Mystical Abyss' at Bayreuth," *October* 54 (1990): 57; George L. Hersey, *Architecture and Geometry in the Age of the Baroque* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 58.

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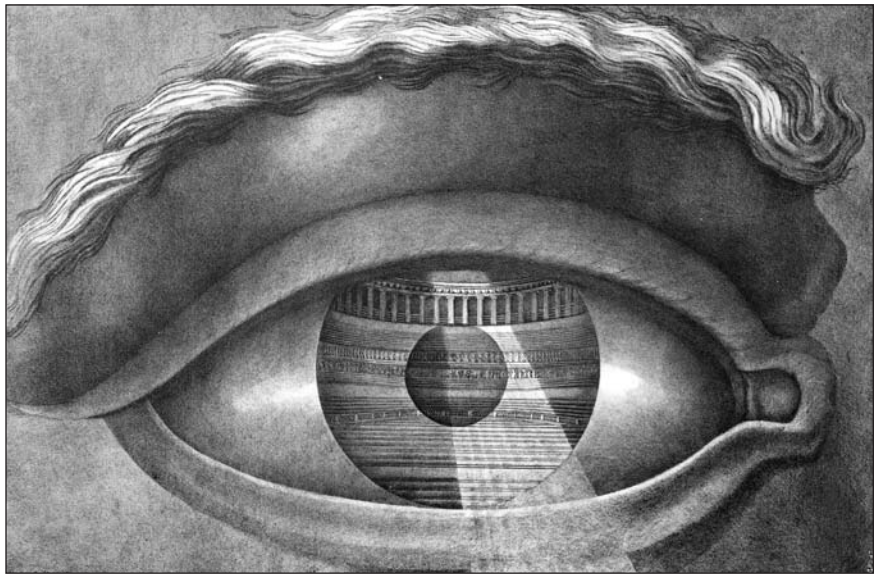


Figure 1. "Coup d'oeil du théâtre de Besançon" from Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's 1804 *L'Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation.* Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF) Est. HA-MAT 1.

as subsisting in pure reflection, however, is to raise questions about the surface that supports the reflection, and the architect seems to have deliberately banished clues that would fix the depth of a reflecting surface in the center of the eye. In fact, clearly distinguishable shading on the sclera to either side of the iris abruptly vanishes at the cusp of the circumscribed auditorium, suggesting that if, indeed, the auditorium is a reflection, the reflecting surface lies beyond a purely transparent or altogether absent cornea. Moreover, the engraving bears no signs of interaction between the descending cone of light that traverses the pupil and any reflective surface at the front of the eye. Despite these conflicting visual cues, only Anthony Vidler, in his authoritative study of Ledoux's career, acknowledges that Ledoux's image is structured by a paradoxical duality, one that "suggests a view through a transparent pupil to the empty auditorium as well as its reflection."[5]

If the transparency of Ledoux's eye—and the superimposition of ocular anatomy and theatre architecture that it implies—constitutes a blind spot for the history of architecture, for theatre studies it marks a veritable lacuna. Ledoux is not covered in Brockett's standard history of theatre, which, like George Izenour's *Theatre Design*, anoints Wagner and Bruckwald's Bayreuth Festspielhaus as the paragon of modern Western theatre architecture.[6] For Anglophone theatre-architecture historiography, Ledoux's theatre design and those of his ancien régime contemporaries are malformed hybrids, unin-

[5] Anthony Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 177. See also George Hersey, *Architecture and Geometry,* 56–58.

[6] It is worth mentioning here that Ledoux's Besançon Theatre has been identified as an influence for the Festspielhaus of Wagner and Bruckwald; moreover, the Festspielhaus opened in Bayreuth in 1876, while Husserl was studying in nearby Leipzig. See H. Leclerc, *Au théâtre de Besançon (1775–1784) C.-N. Ledoux; réformateur et précursor de Richard Wagner* (Paris: Michel Brient, 1958).

formed by the science of acoustics refined in the early nineteenth century and stranded from "the main line of development"[7] by the neoclassical formalities and utopian social visions that molded them. For status quo histories of theatre architecture, the late eighteenth century locates a period of exuberant though misguided experimentation in an evolutionary narrative for which the development of engineering techniques and their "rational" application constitute the positive core of historical change.[8] In varying contexts, theatre scholars, including Marvin Carlson, Arnold Aronson, and Susan Bennett, have addressed the ways that ideological, political, and historical circumstances affect the architectural conditions of performance, but these contingencies and their influence on the morphological development of theatre buildings remain ancillary to the dominant narrative of theatre-architecture history.

Ledoux's identification of the proscenium arch with what he calls the "first frame" of vision, however, is more than a biomorphic whimsy. It is, in fact, an overt sign of a wider pattern of appropriation on the part of eighteenth-century theatre architects of geometric assemblies, spatial relations, and concepts native to optics. In the first part of this essay, I will argue that Ledoux's contemporaries believed the science of optics to be a framework for the cultivation of a clear and distinct spectatorial encounter with the stage, and that this belief led them to treat optics as a fund of knowledge out of which the morphological particulars of theatre buildings could be wrought. Specifically, the predilection for circles and conical sections, the use of concentric circles as governing geometry in transverse sections, and the tripartite division of stage space constitute an ocular theme that describes many theatre buildings designed in the decades that preceded the French Revolution. In this context, Ledoux's conjugation of theatre architecture and ocular anatomy expresses the alignment of theatrical representation with prevailing theories of vision in late Enlightenment France—a phenomenon that itself points out an intimate relationship sustained between dramatic theory and sensationist epistemology in the mid-eighteenth century.

This development, moreover, is not to be read as an isolated case of architectural borrowing from natural philosophy, but rather as part of a historical pattern of mutual reference between theatrical representation and philosophical attempts to describe consciousness. Vision, for the French Enlightenment, was first among the senses,[9] which were themselves the very origin of knowledge and imagination. Theatre architecture's appropriation of optics during the eighteenth century is thus an instance of an ongoing reciprocal process in which theatre practice takes up, expresses, and diffuses assumptions concerning both the conditions of knowledge and the fundamental structure of consciousness. In the second part of the essay, I will argue that the converse aspect

[7] Oscar Brockett, *History of the Theatre,* 9th ed. (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 171.

[8] George C. Izenour's formidable *Theatre Design* offers the least restrained version of the evolutionary narrative. For Izenour, features like asymmetry that violate the laws of good theatre design "like all other fads and contagious diseases, [will pass] from the scene." He suggests that the history of theatre design witnesses the positive accumulation of technical knowledge through a constant sifting action carried out in practice. George C. Izenour, *Theatre Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), 28.

[9] Guillaume Lamy in 1677 called vision "the most noble of all the external senses." *Explication méchanique et physique des fonctions de l'âme sensitive* (Paris: Chez Lambart Roulland, 1677); reprinted in *Discours anatomiques—Explication méchanique et physique des functions de l'âme sensitive* (Paris: Universitas and Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 149. *L'Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert in 1765 states that "the phenomena of vision, their causes, and the manner in which they are carried out are among the most important points in natural philosophy"; see *L'Encyclopédie*, tome 17 (Stuttgart: Verlag, 1967), 343–44.

of this process is legible, notably, in Edmund Husserl's phenomenology—a philosophical project that commentators have repeatedly, if abstrusely, related to theatrical performance, and that since the 1980s has become important to the critical repertoire of performance studies. In my interpretation, Derrida's striking claim that "*the phenomenological reduction is a scene, a theater stage*"[10] may be pursued to argue that a thoroughgoing theatrical architectonics pervades Husserl's description of consciousness. This theatrical architectonics consists of three qualities integral to Husserl's theory of consciousness: horizon, directionality, and perspective.

The two components of the transaction described in this essay are separated by roughly a century, yet there is reason to consider them together. Ledoux and Husserl each produced writing in which references between the frames of theatrical representation and of consciousness are particularly overt. Thus by comparing the way each figure merges conditions of spectatorship with philosophical descriptions, one can begin to describe a theatricality of consciousness that is distinctly modern and in which the architectural brokering of presence plays a central role. Ledoux and Husserl also demonstrate a common desire to banish the frame of representation from spectatorial awareness. The congruity between their dramatic theories suggests that some measure of aesthetic and intellectual sympathy exists between the architect and the phenomenologist.

A comparative examination of Ledoux and Husserl would be therefore warranted even if one presumed that Enlightenment theatre architecture could have no impact whatsoever on twentieth-century phenomenology. Theatre studies, however, should not dismiss the possibility that theatre practice constitutes a historical factor in the formation of philosophical discourse. Theatre architecture affects consciousness, imposing conditions on spectators' relationships with objects, and the resulting spectatorial techniques are by no means restricted in application to theatre as such. Daniel Rabreau's claim that late eighteenth-century French citizens viewed events around them according to an "optique du théâtre" serves to remind us that the historical impact of performance and its architecture is not confined to a separate layer of culture, but comes to participate in the historical production of consciousness itself.[11] Phenomenology, interpreted as a contingent description of consciousness with special links to theatre architecture, may thus be classed as a type of performance remnant.[12] Theatre scholars, rather than ignoring Ledoux or dismissing him as an aberration, may find in his ocular theatre justification for drawing the histories of philosophy and consciousness into a fruitful relationship with the history of performance.

The Ocular Theme in Late Eighteenth-Century French Theatre Design

Anglophone historians of theatre architecture have tended to gloss over the metaphysical content of Ledoux's ocular theatre, allowing a blind spot to persist concerning eighteenth-century French theatre architecture's indebtedness to the science of optics. Preferring a simplified, reflective reading of Ledoux's *Coup d'œil*, scholars have over-

[10] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 86 (emphasis in original).

[11] Daniel Rabreau, "Le Théâtre et l'embellissement des villes de France au XVIIIe siècle" (PhD dissertation: Paris IV, 1978), xviii.

[12] Rebecca Schneider has argued that the traces of performance endure in material culture. See Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 100–108.

looked an explicit superimposition of the ocular aperture and the proscenium arch that unlocks epistemological implications in Ledoux's work and that of his contemporaries. Ledoux addresses a functional similarity between the eye and the theatre in the text that accompanies his engraving: "The first frame is doubtless that which you see; it receives the divine influences that encompass our senses, and reflects the worlds that surround us. It is this that composes all beings, embellishes our existence, supports it and exercises its dominion over all of existence."[13] For Ledoux, this frame is a "transparent mirror" that gives structure and composition to the world. While his language implies that the frame extends beyond the visual to encompass all sense perception, Ledoux specifically gestures in his engraving toward an alignment of theatrical and ocular structures. This superimposition aligns the proscenium arch with the iris, the auditorium with the retina, and the greater stage space with the world outside of the body.

The implied analogy between auditorium and ocular *cavea*, however, demands careful scrutiny. When naively conjured as transhistorical entities, the proscenium theatre and the human eye display a peculiar isomorphism, but neither object is constituted outside of history; for this reason, we should bracket the evolutionary narrative that afflicts histories of theatre architecture. Ledoux's comparison of theatre design to ocular anatomy is best read as the product of an age in which architectural production was subject to the vicissitudes of diverse confluences of knowledge. Deist and occult theories of the natural world—like those embraced by the Freemasons, who counted Ledoux among their ranks—prompted architects of the era to view natural and organic entities as the creations of the universe's divine architect. Ledoux's *Coup d'œil*, then, was conditioned both by mystical attempts to reconcile the prevalent materialist concept of nature with belief in a supernatural creator and by a practical impulse to make use of the science of light and vision.

There can be no doubt that late eighteenth-century architects in France were exposed to optics and that they believed the science germane to their creations. Optics remained, at mid-century, a fundamental part of the standard physics instruction imparted by most Jesuit colleges, and optical treatises accompanied fundamental works of philosophy and natural science. Lafont de Saint-Yenne, in a 1749 dialogue, states that "the science itself of optics [is] quite necessary to the architect," for it helps one see the relationship between objects from a variety of perspectives.[14] By the 1780s, theatre architects overtly applied optical principles to the cultivation of an ideal spectatorial encounter with the stage. Pierre Patte's 1782 *Essay on Theatre Architecture* bore the subtitle *On the Most Advantageous Arrangement of a Theatre Building According to the Principles of Optics and Acoustics*, and proposed that "the best and most natural way of viewing an object is incontrovertibly to look at it directly without need of raising, lowering or turning the head, which is to say such that the visual rays fall perpendicularly into the eye."[15] Yet as Ledoux's "first frame" analogy suggests, the appropriation of optics by theatre architects cannot be reduced to a rational application; Patte's use of optical principles exemplified only one aspect of a wider pattern of references to and borrowings from

[13] Ledoux, "Coup d'œil du théâtre de Besançon," in *L'architecture considérée*, 373.

[14] Lafont de Saint-Yenne, *L'Ombre du Grand Colbert, Le Louvre, et La Ville de Paris* (The Hague, 1749), 111.

[15] Pierre Patte, *Essai sur l'architecture Théâtrale—ou—De l'Ordonnance la plus avantageuse à une Salle de Spectacles, relativement aux principes de l'Optique et de l'Acoustique* (Paris: Chez Moutard, 1782), 24.

optics. Eighteenth-century architects also appropriated geometric forms printed in optical treatises, building them into their designs, and in turn molding the conditions of theatre spectatorship according to a representation of space that helped structure the Enlightenment relationship between mind and world.

The study of the properties and tendencies of light was of central importance not just to Enlightenment natural philosophy, but also to epistemology and metaphysics.[16] The mechanical interaction of light with the eye moreover extended this importance to the study of the mind. Optics had been fundamental to cosmological models of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and treatises by Johannes Kepler in 1604 and René Descartes in 1637 drew the science into a demonstrative relationship with the conditions of human knowledge in general. The workings of the eye were, after all, uniquely transparent, and their physical embodiment of the laws of geometry—long an epistemological touchstone—made the eye the exemplar of the body's mechanical purchase on knowledge of the world. The intellectual proximity between eye and mind, by the late eighteenth century, had developed a phenomenological dimension. The eye no longer represented just the mechanics of sensory knowledge production; it was metaphorically linked with imagination,[17] the faculty by which the presentations of sense, but also of memory and fantasy, were rendered in the mind and the faculty upon which the generation of ideas depended in the prevalent materialist formula. Although optics never reached the status of a model of the conscious mind itself, the eye was invoked to illustrate both sense perception and the subjectively generated constituents of consciousness. The approximation of the theatrical frame to the anatomy of the eye, therefore, is an architectural and theatrical precursor to twentieth-century phenomenology's attempt to describe the essential structures of consciousness.

Knowledge of the structure and function of the eye during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was subject to shifting epistemological conditions, though I contend that the rudimentary geometric forms pilfered from optics by eighteenth-century theatre design were already widely propagated in Europe by the mid-seventeenth century. Kepler's *Optics* included plates that imposed a spherical form onto the eye.[18] Although Christoph Scheiner's 1619 treatise on the eye, *Oculus: Hoc Est*, correctly observed that the eye is not a sphere,[19] the convention of rationalizing the eye to a perfect sphere (and its cross-section to a perfect circle) is manifest in most eighteenth-century optical treatises, including George Berkeley's *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, first published in 1709. Berkeley critiques theories of vision that espouse innate "natural geometry," but depicts human anatomy sublimated to circular perfection, demonstrating the resilience of the spherical ideal.[20] This tendency to conceive of the eye as a divinely molded, perfectly spherical organ is common to both the optical literature of

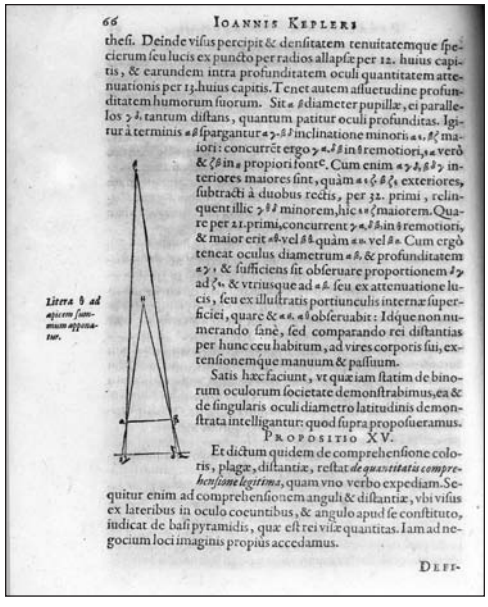
[16] See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 12–13.

[17] Diderot, in his 1778 *Elements of Physiology*, claims that imagination is "the interior eye, and the measure of things imagined is relative to the measure of sight." *Éléments de Physiologie* (repr., Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1964), 250.

[18] Johannes Kepler, *Optics: Paralipomena to Witelo and the Optical Part of Astronomy*, trans. William H. Donahue (repr. Santa Fe, NM: Green Lion Press, 2000).

[19] See Christoph Scheiner, *Oculus: Hoc Est; fundamentum opticum* (Oeniponti [Innsbruck]: Apud Danielem Agricolam, 1619), 32.

[20] G. N. Cantor, "Berkeley, Reid, and the Mathematization of Mid-Eighteenth-Century Optics," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38, no. 3 (1977): 432.


66 IOANNIS KEPLERI

theſi. Deinde viſus percipit & denſitatem tenuitatemque ſpecierum ſeu lucis ex puncto per radios allapſæ per 12. huius capitis, & earundem intra profunditatem oculi quantitatem attenuationis per 13. huius capitis. Tenet autem aſſuetudine profunditatem humorum ſuorum. Sit α β diameter pupillæ, ei parallelos γ δ, tantum diſtans, quantum patitur oculi profunditas. Igitur à terminis α β ſpargantur α γ. β δ inclinatione minoris α ε, β ζ maiori: concurrêt ergo γ α. δ β in η remotiori, ε α verò & ζ β in ϑ propiori fontẽ. Cum enim α γ. δ β γ interiores maiores ſint, quàm α ε. ζ β ε exteriores, ſubtracti à duobus rectis, per 32. primi, relinquent illic γ η δ minorem, hic ε ϑ ζ maiorem. Quare per 21. primi, concurrent γ α. δ β in η remotiori, & maior erit α η vel β η quàm α ϑ. vel β ϑ. Cum ergò teneat oculus diametrum α β, & profunditatem α γ, & ſufficiens ſit obſeruare proportionem η γ ad ζ ϑ. & vtriusque ad α β. ſeu ex attenuatione lucis, ſeu ex illuſtratis portiunculis internæ ſuperficiei, quare & α ϑ. α η obſeruabit: Idque non numerando ſanè, ſed comparando rei diſtantias per hunc ceu habitum, ad vires corporis ſui, extenſionemque manuum & paſſuum.

Litera δ ad apicem ſummum apponatur.

Satis hæc faciunt, vt quæ iam ſtatim de binorum oculorum ſocietate demonſtrabimus, ea & de ſingularis oculi diametro latitudinis demonſtrata intelligantur: quod ſupra propoſueramus.

PROPOSITIO XV.

Et dictum quidem de comprehenſione coloris, plagæ, diſtantiæ, reſtat *de quantitatis comprehenſione legitima*, quam vno verbo expediam. Sequitur enim ad comprehenſionem anguli & diſtantiæ, vbi viſus ex lateribus in oculo cocuntibus, & angulo apud ſe conſtituto, indicat de baſi pyramidis, quæ eſt rei viſæ quantitas. Iam ad negocium loci imaginis propius accedamus.

DEFI-

Figure 2. Diagram illustrating the relationship between the distance of a visible object and the breadth of the visual rays cast onto the back of the eye from *Ad Vitellionem paralipomena* (1604). Brown University Library.

the eighteenth century and to architectural representations of human physiology, like those of Ledoux's contemporary, J.-J. Lequeu.

The potent and versatile signifying capacity of the circle in architecture is, of course, well documented. The revelatory symbolic power of "centre, circle, and sphere" observed by Rudolf Wittkower in Renaissance church design is modified,[21] though by no means diminished, for Ledoux, who writes that "everything in nature is circle."[22] The circular aperture of the eye is tellingly described in Kepler's *Optics* as the "folding door" of the eye, and the structure of the face described as a kind of support for it.[23] The history of architectural theory includes a host of theorists who compare architecture to anatomy, but Kepler's use of architectural terms to depict anatomical function is specific to the eye and signals a heightened capacity for discursive and conceptual traffic between architectural and anatomical domains as early as the outset of the seventeenth century.

Taken alone, the propagation of circles through theatre architecture and optics in the eighteenth century is scant evidence for a specifically ocular theme in theatre design. The circular theatre layout nearly universalized by illustrated translations of Vitruvius's *Ten Books* during the Renaissance was readily adopted by an academic culture invigorated by groundbreaking studies of spherical heavenly bodies. However, the geometry of circles and rays that proliferated along with optical and cosmological

[21] Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism,* 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Academy Editions, 1998).

[22] Ledoux, *L'architecture considérée*, 383.

[23] Kepler, *Optics*, 78.

treatises narrowed the discursive gap between optical and architectural knowledge from the early seventeenth century forward and provided architects with a geometric vocabulary that was at once practical and resonant of profound cosmic mystery. Furthermore, the geometrical assemblies that directly link eighteenth-century theatre architecture to renderings of ocular anatomy, namely the combination of intersecting rays and conical sections, are so particular and so resonant of their optical counterparts as to diminish the likelihood that they arose spontaneously within the architectural tradition of theatre design.

In the fifth section of his *Optics*, Kepler includes a study of the relationship between the distance of an illuminated object and the breadth of the image it will project on the back surface of the eye when constrained by the constant diameter of the pupil (fig. 2).[24] Kepler contends that the greater the distance between the eye and a source of light rays, the narrower the retinal surface hit by those rays. Consequently Kepler concluded that a single eye was capable of judging relative distances—a principle endorsed by Berkeley under his analysis of the "degree of divergency with which rays, emanating from a distant point, entered the eye."[25] In sightline studies of proscenium theatres, eighteenth-century architects plainly utilize the analysis of rays emanating from a point source and the interaction of those rays with a circular or ellipsoidal surface when they are constrained by a fixed aperture. Ledoux's proposal for a grand theatre at Marseille includes a sightline study of the fourth *loge* that directly applies the same principle (fig. 3). Furthermore, plan studies of theatre designs presented in the *Théâtres* volume of Diderot and d'Alembert's *L'Encyclopédie* and in the 1774 edition of Gabriel Pierre Martin Dumont's *Parallèle de Plans des plus Belles Salles de Spectacles d'Italie et de France* suggest sightline studies that conform to an analysis of the same three elements as Kepler's optical study.[26]

A further instance of optical geometry appropriated by theatre architecture are the concentric circles manifest in the transverse sections of late eighteenth-century theatre plans. Concentric circles had long been a pervasive convention in architectural drawings of theatre plans, owing no doubt to the influence of Vitruvius, and eighteenth-century theatre architects continued to prefer circles and parts of circles for auditoria, though elliptical designs also came to prevalence.[27] Several documents of eighteenth-century theatre design, however, suggest that during this period, theatre architects began to cross-apply the motif of concentric circles to the frontal aspect of theatrical space and to use concentric circles to regulate not only the proscenium, but in some cases the longitudinal dimension of the auditorium as well. Peyre and de Wailly's "Proportions de la nouvelle salle de comédie" rendered in *L'Encyclopédie* shows an upright circle touching the leading edges of three rows of boxes as well as the parterre floor and center of the dome. Strikingly, a set of concentric circles is installed in the "transverse section of the theatre facing the stage" for the same design, in which a wider circle guides the curved segments of a supporting arch of the building (fig. 4).[28] Transverse

[24] Ibid., 82–83.

[25] Cantor, "Berkeley, Reid, and the Mathematization of Mid-Eighteenth-Century Optics," 430.

[26] "Salle de Spectacles executé au Palais Royal sur les Desseins de Mr. Moreau, planche II," in *L'Encyclopédie Diderot et d'Alembert*, vol. 45, *Théâtres*, "Recueil de Planches sur les Sciences, les Arts Libéraux et les Arts Méchaniques, avec leur explication" (Paris: Inter-Livres, 1986–89).

[27] Louis Hautecœur, *Histoire de l'Architecture classique en France*, tome 4, *Seconde Moitié du XVIIIe Siècle—Le Style Louis XVI* (Paris: Picard, 1952), 439–43.

[28] "Coup en face du Théâtre de la nouvelle salle de Comédie Françoise," in *L'Encyclopédie Diderot et d'Alembert*, vol. 45, *Théâtres*.

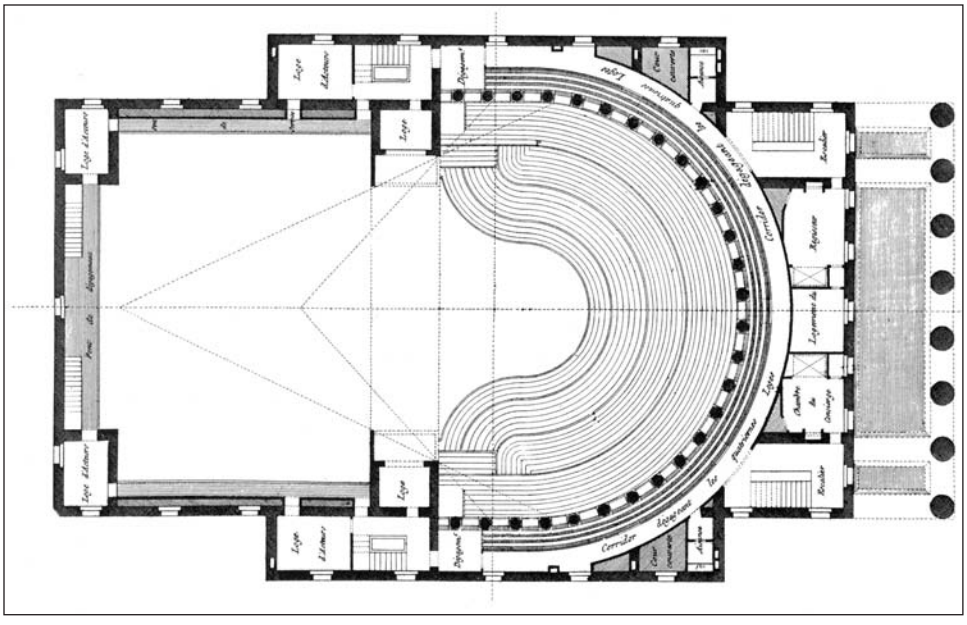


Figure 3. Plan of the fourth loges of Ledoux's design for a theatre at Marseille with sightlines. Published in Daniel Ramee's *Ledoux,* 1847. BnF.

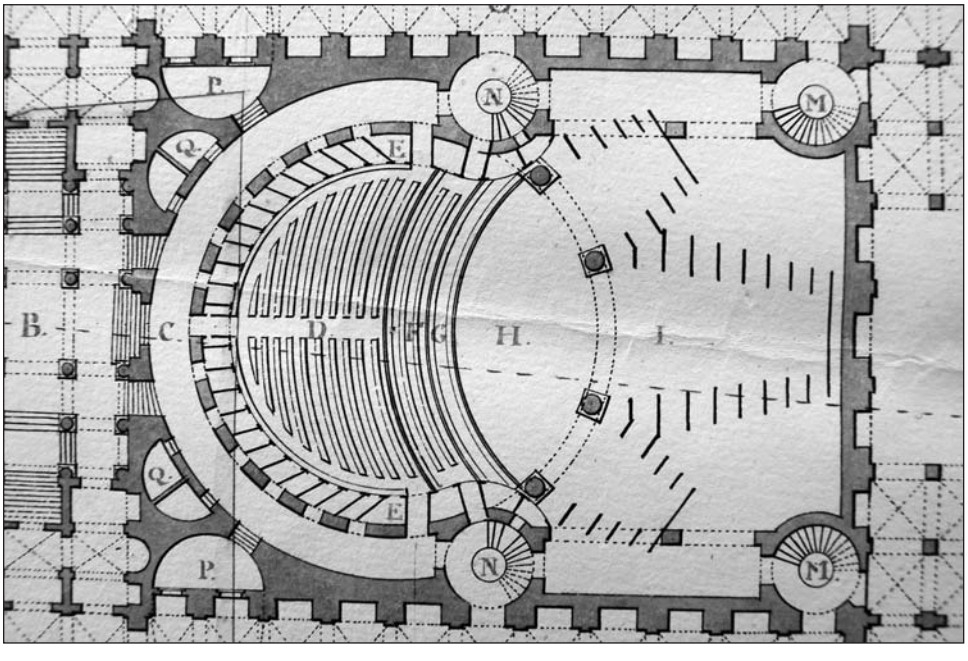


Figure 4. Plan drawing of a design by Charles de Wailly and Marie-Joseph Peyre for the Odéon (1770). Archives Nationales—Paris site: Carton O1 846.

sections from eighteenth-century theatre designs exhibit a tendency toward curved openings in stage walls visible from the auditorium. The phenomenon of frontally oriented concentric circles more closely approximates theatre design with the contours of the eye, matching the frontal view of the stage space with the frontal coup d'oeil that is the subject of Ledoux's print.

The final morphological indicator of an ocular theme in theatre architecture is the tendency to divide the stage into three centrally arranged vistas, which strongly suggests borrowing from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century optics on the part of theatre architects. This tendency of Ledoux and his contemporaries calls to mind graphical renderings of the eye that demonstrate the reversal of the external visual field on the retinal image in optical publications of the time. Descartes's famous image of the retinal inversion, which George Hersey contends is "architectural in scale,"[29] plots the rays originating at three uniformly spaced points as they traverse the lens and intersect the back surface of the eye (fig. 5).[30] The near-identical reproduction of this image in Berkeley's 1709 *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* and in Voltaire's 1738 explication of Newton's *Optics* demonstrates the circulation of this image in the eighteenth century.[31] I contend that this image and the concept of ocular function that it signifies may have contributed to the phenomenon of multiple-vista theatre design in the work of Ledoux and other eighteenth-century architects.[32] Ledoux's plan drawing of the first *loges* for his theatre at Besançon subdivides the upstage region into three segments that, according to the plan, were to be separated by scenic flats (fig. 6). A similar structure is evident in plans for his theatre at Marseille in which two diverging alleys retreat towards the upstage left and right corners of the stage.[33] Three-part divisions of stage space are also present in theatre designs by Ledoux's contemporaries Charles de Wailly, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, Neufforge and N. M. Potain.

While this segmenting of the stage is often linked to an awareness of Palladio's multiple-vista design in his *Teatro Olimpico*,[34] the tripartite spatial division adopted by these architects diverges from Palladio's design by abandoning the pierced *scenae frons* in favor of three distinct stage spaces. It is not improbable that these architects, who were unquestionably aware of this method of representing the function of the eye, borrowed its form for their stage designs. More significant for the trajectory of my argument, however, is the compatibility between an optically conceived and architecturally enforced *representation of space* and the theatrically embodied *representational space*

[29] Hersey, *Architecture and Geometry*, 57.

[30] René Descartes, "Optics," in *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings,* ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 69.

[31] George Berkeley, "Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision," in *Works on Vision,* ed. Colin Murray Turbayne (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 63; Voltaire, *The Complete Works of Voltaire*, vol. 15, *Eléments de la Philosophie de Newton* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1992), 297.

[32] While Wendell Cole points out that the "triple stage" reemerges occasionally as a strategy of heightening audience contact with the actor or else as a means of enabling simultaneous staging, its prevalence in late eighteenth-century French theatre design has not been theorized; see Cole, "The Triple Stage," *Educational Theatre Journal* 14, no. 4 (1962): 302–11.

[33] Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *Architecture de C.N. Ledoux: Collection qui Rassemble Tous les Genres de Bâtiments Employés dans L'Ordre Social,* ed. Daniel Ramée (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1983), 73, 83.

[34] Charles-Nicolas Cochin, after his voyage to Italy, wrote about this structure in accounts published in the September 1758 edition of the *Mercure de France.*

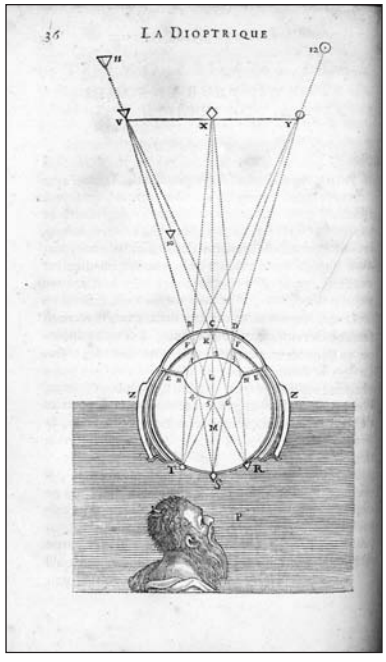


Figure 5. Diagram illustrating the crossing of visual rays within the eye from Descartes's 1637 *Optics*. Brown University Library.

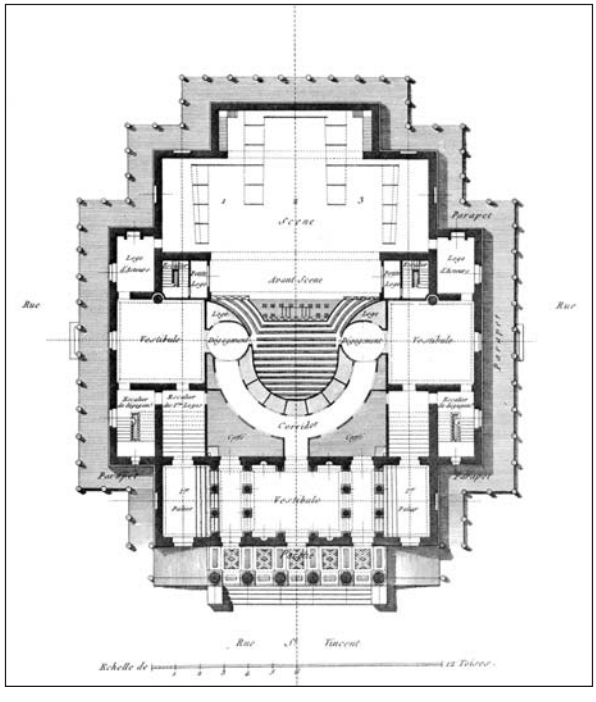


Figure 6. Plan of Ledoux's Besançon theatre showing the three-part division of the stage. BnF.

that is its product and counterpart.[35] The prominence of the triple stage in Ledoux's time demonstrates a convergence of theatrical and optical space: the frontal visual field is mapped according to the geometry of three evenly spaced and projecting rays that converge at a threshold dividing subjective and objective areas. To the extent that one concurs with Foucault and LeFebvre that knowledge is bound up with modes of space that are historically and architecturally conditioned, the congruence of optical and scenic space implies not only that the eighteenth-century spectator's encounter with the stage had indirect recourse to the mind's sensory encounter with the world, but also that in the same process, the mind's encounter with the world accommodated techniques of theatrical spectatorship.[36]

The ocular theme in the eighteenth-century playhouse, then, is both an unacknowledged factor in the development of theatre architecture and the sign of an epistemological collaboration involving scientific, metaphysical, architectural, and theatrical discourses and practices—a collaboration that came to inflect subsequent theories of human consciousness. French Enlightenment philosophers, especially the *Encylopédistes*, supported a notion of the "interrelatedness of human knowledge"[37] and believed that "the sciences and the arts are mutually supporting, and that consequently there is a chain that binds them together."[38] In a milieu where materialist notions of causality and philosophical syncretism enjoyed significant currency, the appropriation of anatomical and optical forms to architectural plans is less an example of an individual eccentricity than of a broad tendency towards philosophical thinking among architects. Epistemological presumptions characteristic of the eighteenth century validated the application of optics to theatre architecture. More contentious, however, is the notion that these buildings—and the spectatorial practices condensed within them—in turn helped shape consciousness and formal attempts to describe it in the early twentieth century.

The Theatrical Architectonics of Husserl's Phenomenology

Theatre architecture appears as an example in section 27 of Husserl's 1905 *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (*PITC*). Husserl argues that the envelope of representation effected by memory recedes as it brings a past presence into view. The image of a "lighted theater" stands out in his repertoire of usually stark, simple objects:

> I remember a lighted theater—this cannot mean that I remember having perceived the theater. Otherwise, this would imply that I remember that I have perceived, that I perceived the theater, and so on. . . . I remember the lighted theater of yesterday, i.e., I effect a

[35] This terminology is taken from Henri LeFebvre, who borrows it from Noam Chomsky. LeFebvre distinguishes between "representations of space," which is the "conceptualized space . . . of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers," and "representational spaces," which denotes "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols"; see LeFebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 1–46.

[36] See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 146–65; see also ibid., 6–11.

[37] Peter Jimack, "The French Enlightenment I: Science, Materialism, and Determinism," in *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. 5, *British Philosophy and the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Stuart Brown (New York: Routledge, 2003), 232.

[38] Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, trans. Richard N. Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5.

> "reproduction" of the perception of the theater. Accordingly, the theater hovers before me in the representation as something actually present.[39]

In this context, any spatially extended object would illustrate Husserl's point, but the workings of the theatre in this context parallel the machinations of memory itself as well as the mode of phenomenological presentation in general.[40] Far from serving as an arbitrarily selected example, this theatre points the way to a more profound tendency in phenomenology; it recalls Derrida's startling dictum: "*phenomenological reduction is a scene, a theater stage*."[41]

Andrew Haas has written that with this theatrical example, "the science of phenomenology itself shows itself to be theatre."[42] For Haas, the theatre example points out the irreducible play between phenomenology's a priori foundations and the descriptions it generates, which guarantees that a productive instability inheres to the structures of consciousness.[43] Haas seeks to undermine phenomenology's self-proclaimed status as a kind of "science," or unified, ideal continuum of meaning. Divested of its grounding in a real outside of itself, phenomenology can only be said to represent itself. Yet this interpretation falters as it ascribes to "theatre" well-worn tropes of antitheatrical bias. For Haas, the invocation of the lighted theatre suggests that phenomenology is a "feign," a "con," "just an act."[44] The notion of theatre as dissembling guides and constrains this intervention, pointing toward an approach that interrogates the interdependence of theatre and phenomenology, but hindering that approach by debasing one of its terms.

Husserl's lighted theatre is not just a symbol for representation; it is an architectural structure invoked by a philosophy that is permeated by a set of architectural qualities, or "architectonics." Taking phenomenology as a historically conditioned discourse, I will describe the architectonics of Husserl's theory of consciousness as spatially encompassing and directional, concerned with maintaining a visual confrontation with a necessarily present objective field that conforms to a perspectival unity. In brief, the architectonics of Husserlian phenomenology approximates the architecture of the modern theatre. Of course, theatre architecture is not an ideal structure; it is a material product woven into history, and Husserl's debt to theatre architecture is specifically to an architecture that absorbed Enlightenment presuppositions about the prominence of vision and the dependence of knowledge on the senses. This epistemologically conditioned theatre architecture and the description of consciousness that echoes it are static, enclosed structures designed to shelter and gird a site of movement and exchange: structures that contain and rarify flux in service of providing access to that

[39] Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (*PITC*), trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 27:82–83.

[40] The significance of this example is amplified by the fact that Husserl's lectures on internal time consciousness were given during nearly the same period (1904–1910) in which the phenomenologist wrote his fragmentary work on image consciousness that contains his writing about theatre (1904–1912). When Husserl uses the example of a lighted theatre to illustrate the effacement of the positing *as memory* of remembered objects in *PITC*, his conclusions resemble those he advances about the elided frame of theatrical presentations, further suggesting that the example in *PITC* is not arbitrarily selected.

[41] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 86 (emphasis in original).

[42] Andrew Haas, "The Theatre of Phenomenology," *Angelaki* 8, no. 3 (2003): 77.

[43] See also John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

[44] Haas, "The Theatre of Phenomenology," 73.

flux. In other words, phenomenology may be said to have taken up and abstracted the architectural structure of the eighteenth-century French playhouse, and to have transposed the theatre's spectatorial mode of addressing objects of consciousness to the essential structures of consciousness itself.

In this analysis, phenomenology and consciousness—the latter being the object of phenomenological description—both exhibit architectural traits in Husserl's thought. This reading relies on a *positively* construed phenomenology. Whereas Husserl deploys phenomenology as a method to approach the essential structure of consciousness, a method enabled by a series of reductions (of the natural attitude, of presuppositions, of knowledge, and so on), phenomenology is treated here as a discursive edifice accessible through texts. It follows that the consciousness described by Husserlian phenomenology, as the object of a historically produced discourse, exists within the same texts and takes on the same status as artifact as does the "science" that is its gatekeeper. Whereas for Husserl, the transcendental is accessible in relief through a stripping away of presuppositions, it is, for the purposes of this argument, a construct whose abstract qualities are available for description.

Horizon

Horizon is of central importance to Husserl's phenomenology. While this fact cements the claim that a spatial and visual style of knowledge prevails within Husserl's construct, the horizon of phenomenology may be applied to spheres with no properly spatial dimensions. The horizon "is constituted by those aspects of a thing that are not given in perception but rather are possibilities which can be given in further acts of perception or reflection."[45] It designates the limit of what is present to consciousness from moment to moment. While it is, therefore, bound to that which is not present, the horizon is free and mobile. In this way, the horizon of phenomenological consciousness displays a quality anticipated in the proscriptions of Enlightenment theatre architects.[46]

The horizon for Husserl is that which delimits the perceptual field for a subject at the outer edge of a spatially figured and enveloping field. The priority of this spatial sense and the importance of the horizon are evident in section 27 of *Ideas I*, wherein Husserl outlines the "natural attitude." For Husserl, the things that are present to him in perception (that which he sees before him, such as his writing table) are co-present with things that he has knowledge of though they are not immediately perceivable (things behind his back, in the other room, and so on). Even this "constant halo around the field of actual perception," however, does not fully reach the horizon line: "What is now perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (or at least somewhat determinate), are penetrated and surrounded by *an obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality*."[47]

[45] Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), 161–62.

[46] Theatre architects in late eighteenth-century France abandoned the static scenographic mainstay of the *palais à volonté* in favor of versatile, changeable stage décor. New theatre designs and sets not only helped accommodate swift and easy changes of set pieces, they employed tricks of perspective to extend or shorten the horizon of depicted visibility through a technique that M. Boullet called "*sauter des plans"*; see Boullet, "Second Lettre de M. Boullet sur le Théâtre du Palais-Royal," in *Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris,* vol. 6,873, item no. 17 (1790).

[47] Husserl, *Ideas I*, sec. 27, in *The Essential Husserl*, ed. Donn Welton, trans. Fred Kersten (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 60–61 (emphasis in original).

The phenomenological horizon is a structure proper to any number of phenomenological realms and not merely an attribute of the natural attitude in the spatial sense. Geometrical ideality, for example, "has a horizon of geometrical future" as well as a past discernable up to a point.[48] Therefore, when Husserl says that the horizon encompasses his *cogito* to circumscribe a field "endlessly spread out in space," we must recognize this enclosure as an attribute of all conscious realms bounded by horizon.[49] When Husserl notes that he "is a member" of the world he perceives around him, this does not mean that he disappears when the natural attitude and its attendant empirical presuppositions are bracketed, but simply that the world is an encompassing field, that the horizon line meets itself. In this sense, the horizon incorporates the enclosing and framing functions of modern theatre architecture.

Of course, it may be objected that architectural structures, as fixed and stable structures, do not allow the horizon to continually move; they are not "mobile" in the sense of Husserl's boundary. Yet this objection relies on an attribute of architecture that can be shown to be illusory; immobility and immutability are not necessary characteristics of architecture. While some buildings constrain perception and wall up their inhabitants from a perceivable expanse, other buildings draw and redraw the limits of perception they enforce from moment to moment—among these are theatre buildings. Husserl's example in *PITC*, as a specifically "illuminated theater,"[50] shows that he imagines himself *within* the theatre (otherwise what could its illumination mean to him?). His recollection evokes the architecturally bounded horizon of the theatre's inhabitant, rather than its remote exterior form. In that gesture, he illuminates the spatial and temporal representations of theatre—its capacity to transport, contract, expand, and leap over stretches of time—just as the intentionally structured consciousness can do. The horizon is not that which is present to consciousness, but rather the structure of its limit—that is to say, its masking.

Directionality

The freedom of the phenomenological subject to prowl his or her consciousness over ranges of available objects invokes another structural component of Husserl's phenomenology: *intentionality*. The intentional nature of phenomenology is derived from the assertion that every consciousness is a consciousness of something; thus things that spring to mind are comprised both of the objectivity in the sense of *noema*, and the *noetic* act of apprehension that constitutes them as object. This latter act of apprehension may be brought to bear on a wide variety of things that exist in the spheres of the natural world, social interaction, mathematical entities, and so on. In the spatially construed structure of Husserlian phenomenology, however, the act of apprehension takes on a *direction*, which swivels from side to side across an array of objects that are spatially configured as being simultaneously on-hand: "I can change my standpoint in space and time, turn my regard in this or that direction, forwards or backwards in time."[51] Husserl describes this directional structure as relative to a sagittal line (from front to back) that passes through the subject. Husserl's default orientation

[48] Husserl, *Origin of Geometry*, in *Essential Husserl*, 95.

[49] Husserl, *Ideas I*, sec. 27, in *Essential Husserl*, 60.

[50] Husserl, *Phenomenology of Time Consciousness*, trans. John Barnett Brough, in *Essential Husserl*, 202.

[51] Husserl, *Essential Husserl*, 61.

to the spatial field that contains him is defined by a frontal opposition evident in his many examples: "Lying in front of me in the semi-darkness is this sheet of paper. I am seeing it, touching it."[52] Also, objects reproduced in memory likewise appear in front of Husserl: "[T]he theater hovers before me in the representation as something actually present."[53]

This directionality, therefore, conforms to an azimuth whose reference is the frontal orientation of the subject's eye. The sphere that encompasses the subject and is bound by a hazy and indistinct horizon is not undifferentiated, but rather marked with a frontal aspect that determines the subject's encounter with objects: "Each has his place from which he sees the physical things present; and, accordingly, each has different physical-thing appearances."[54] But the frontal look remains the dominant mode of phenomenological perception, just as Arnold Aronson has observed that it dominates theatre architecture in the modern West.[55] Husserl directs his regard to the front, and that which is not spatially in front may nonetheless be presented as such. Yet the forward regard is not sufficient to bring about a properly phenomenological outlook. A reduction must be enforced on the secondary associations, the empirical milieu within which the natural attitude holds sway.

Thus Husserl's phenomenology must open a door in consciousness that will give access to "the things themselves," according to his motto. The secondary associations—comprised of empirically grounded presuppositions—must be cordoned off in order that the phenomenologist might know that the natural attitude has been left behind. This cordoning, this threshold that will delineate what is bracketed out, is figured by Husserl as a kind of doorway in *Ideas I*. Preparations for properly defining the phenomenological reduction in section 30 are described as "striving toward the entrance-gate of phenomenology."[56] This entrance-gate is of particular interest as far as the theatrical architectonics of phenomenology is concerned—Husserl was not one to employ metaphor glibly.[57] The gateway to phenomenology reveals an aspect of his thinking that suggests architectural conditions of representation commonly identified with modern theatre. The explicitly bicameral space demarcated by the proscenium arch is dialectically cleft in just the way that a gateway divides inside from outside, room from room, or real space from pictorial space.

Moreover, the range of directional possibilities that Husserl assumes finds a theatrical antecedent in the "triple stage" of eighteenth-century theatre designers. Architects of tripartite stages like Cochin, Potain, and Ledoux wanted to widen the range of objects available to theatre spectators, extending dramaturgical boundaries tied to the unity of place and also broadening the range of views afforded the audience. The multiplicity of perspective scenes, besides invoking Palladio's academic theatre in Vicenza, amounts to an architectural forecasting of the freedom to select objects of attention that would become crucial to Husserl's description of the conscious mind.

[52] Ibid., 68.

[53] Husserl, *PITC,* 83.

[54] Husserl, *Essential Husserl,* 62.

[55] Arnold Aronson, *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1977), 1.

[56] Husserl, *Essential Husserl,* 63.

[57] Derrida makes note of Husserl's aversion to metaphor in describing the flux that founds the constitution of time in *Speech and Phenomena*; see *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds,* ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 26.

Phenomenological directionality in this way reconstitutes not only the swivel enabled by Enlightenment optics, but also the freedom of the gaze to range over stage—and the house—that marks descriptions of spectatorial vision in eighteenth-century theatre-architecture treatises.

Perspective

The perspective scene itself haunts the spatial attributes of Husserl's early work. Erwin Panofsky described this scenic practice—which dominated Continental theatre scenery from the Renaissance through the advent of the box set—as negating the plane of the picture surface in favor of a projected spatial continuum. Panofsky explains the concept of space advanced by perspective: "In a sense, perspective transforms psychophysiological space into mathematical space. It neglects the differences between front and back, between right and left, between bodies and intervening space (empty space), so that the sum of all the parts of a space and all its contents are absorbed into a single 'quantum continuum.'"[58]

The application of painterly perspective to theatrical décor was effected by the use of serlian wings and given unity by the proscenium arch. This arch acted like the "window frame" that conventionally opened onto the unified and rendered space of perspective painting. By delimiting the area of the performance space, the arch minimized the distortions that arose in constructing the perspective scene: it signaled, and continues to signal, the unity and cohesion—spatial and conceptual—of the realm beyond the arch.

Husserl makes use of perspective to describe the unity of spatial and temporal objectivity available to consciousness. In a recently translated fragment written in 1931 titled "The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World That Is Outside the Flesh," Husserl maintains that the world unites itself according to a schema of perspective(s):

> The entire perceptual field of things, insofar as it is a constituted multiplicity of things appearing perspectivally, is a harmonic unity of perspectivity. One perspectival style governs and continues to govern through the variation of the perceptual field that is brought about either by the emergence of perceptual appearances of things that were not in the field a moment ago or by the departure of perceptual appearances of things that were just now in it.[59]

The appropriation of a theatrical perspective—that is, one that not only constitutes and posits a unified field of view, but one that incorporates the appearance and disappearance of objects with respect to that field (in a way that painterly perspective, for example, could not)—draws Husserl's thought into an intimate relationship with a specific theatrical architecture: that of the explicitly bounded space and codified threshold, that of the proscenium arch. What is more, this excerpt highlights a crucial aspect of Husserl's appropriation of perspective, which is that it cross-applies the spatial logic of perspective to *time*. Although time is undeniably the locus of change in Husserl—and the site of flux for which he says "all names are lacking"[60]—he will

[58] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 31.

[59] Edmund Husserl, "The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World That Is Outside the Flesh," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*, ed. and trans. Leonard Lawlor and Bettina Bergo. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 132–33.

[60] Husserl, *PITC*, 100.

nonetheless argue that time conforms to a perspectival matrix. In the excerpt above, he suggests that a perspectivity native to consciousness continually assimilates new entities, just as spatial perspective is capable of incorporating multiple objects.

Between 1910 and 1931, the analogy of spatial perspective to temporal vanishing becomes an interpretation and assertion of a spatio-temporal continuum encompassed by a perspectival style of unification. Perspective, in fact, seems to gain legitimacy as a phenomenological structure within Husserl's thought to the point that it becomes the model of an overarching synthesis drawing spatial range and temporal flux into cohesion. Perspective flourishes in Husserl's thought, perhaps because of its convergences with phenomenology in the Husserlian mode: both constructs are rigorously subjective, rely on space as their dominant conceptual fundament, and are developed through a more or less explicit faith in the validity of geometry. Although modern art and twentieth-century philosophy were soon to discover the limits of *perspectivis artificialis*,[61] for Husserl, the device of perspective came to represent an ideal transaction between the transcendental validity of geometry and the anatomical a priori of the eye.

Conclusion

In Husserl's work, theatricality signals much more than dissimulation. It consists of an architectonic brokering of presence wherein a spatial and visual mode of apprehension presides. The abstractions of horizon, intentionality, and perspective, each of which Husserl assimilates to his project, have familiar material antecedents in the history of theatre architecture; in fact, no other architecture is as concerned with the shifting limits of visually dominated sensual perception, the enforcement of a frontal encounter with a spatially constrained objectivity, and perspective as a means to rationalize disparate points of view.[62] Theatrical performance, still the dominant synthetic art form during Husserl's lifetime, lent its architectonics to the philosopher's descriptions of consciousness. Besides the "illuminated theater" in *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, Husserl's writing on fantasy, imagination, and memory is replete with references to dramatic art and includes meditations on its representational framing.[63] Given the fundamentally first-person orientation of his phenomenology, it is highly unlikely that his explications of dramatic form were carried out in the absence of personal encounters with architecturally encased performance events.

What is more, these fragmentary phenomenological writings characterize theatre's conceptual frame in a way remarkably similar to Ledoux in his *Coup d'œil du théâtre*

[61] Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

[62] It is germane here to recall the scenographic origins of painterly perspective. *Construzione legittima,* first described by Leon Battista Alberti and attributed to Filippo Brunelleschi, was not devised within a painterly tradition. As J. V. Field points out, Brunelleschi was not a painter, but an engineer who likely made clocks and designed "stage machinery for the elaborate pageants that took place in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine on the festival of the Ascension." Field also points out that perspective was more commonly applied to stage sets in the sixteenth century than it was to painting; see Field, *The Invention of Infinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.

[63] Theatre preoccupies Husserl in his work on fantasy, memory, and imagination. His explication of the spectatorial experience of theatre in a 1918 text titled "On the Theory of Intuitions and Their Modes" leaves little doubt that Husserl was familiar with theatre in a realist mode. He argues that dramatic "presentations" lack the quality of active depiction inherent to pictorial art; see Husserl, *Edmund Husserl, Collected Works*, vol. 11, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory, 1898–1925*, trans. John B. Brough (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 616–25.

de Besançon. Ledoux describes the "forestage" as "the window-well of the crossing; the intermediary and inhabited depth that separates the action from the outside; . . . I see nowhere that which is set forth; that which is called the forestage, legitimated by its usage, is nothing but the continuous line of the auditorium extended to the stage."[64] The architect seeks to magnify the arch to an unprecedented grandeur and depth, but does so in order to banish it from sight. His frame is widened such that it subsumes the perception of the spectator, vanishing behind and echoing the "first frame" of vision. In this way, Ledoux's theatre design enforces an immediate confrontation with a circumscribed objective field.

Tellingly, Husserl's 1918 text on the dramatic art and imagination preserves precisely this banishment of the representational frame. Husserl identifies a function of "depiction" detectable in portraiture but absent in the case of theatre: "[W]hen a play is presented, no consciousness of depiction whatsoever needs to be excited, and what then appears is a pure perceptual figment. We live in neutrality; we do not carry out any positing at all with respect to what is intuited."[65] For Husserl, the distinction between stage reality and reality proper consists in a "canceling" of the factual by the illusory world of the stage, but the representational frame itself recedes from view. The ideal of "immersion" commonly ascribed to Wagnerian aesthetics, then, appears in Husserl's fragment in the guise of phenomenological spectatorial consciousness. Ledoux's rejection of architectural décor in his theatre, his obscuring of the orchestra, and his sublimation of the architectural frame to the first frame of the eye forecast not only the architectural visions of Wagner, but also—and perhaps by extension—Husserl's phenomenological analysis of dramatic art.[66] As I have attempted to show, this theatre-mindedness was not restricted to Husserl's writing on theatre or the presentations of memory, but played a role in structuring his entire description of consciousness itself.

Thus Derrida's claim that the phenomenological reduction is a stage may be pursued to search out novel lines of inquiry in the study of theatre architecture. The transactions between this architecture and philosophy suggest that the history of theatre architecture can be confined neither to a sociopolitical dimension nor to the terrain staked out for it by conventional architectural history. Theatre historians must question the prevailing *telos* that guides standard histories of theatre architecture, and reject interpretations that reduce developments in theatre design to manifestations of technological advance or of broad shifts in architectural style. The historical dimension of theatre architecture responds to shifts in theatre practice and dramatic theory, but it also reflects and engenders philosophical discourse. In accounting for what Susan Bennett calls the "ideology" of a theatre building, one must extend the domains of inquiry to include the metaphysical and epistemological.[67] The architectonic theatricality of phenomenological descriptions amounts to one inroad toward understanding the philosophical assimilation of theatre architecture. It suggests that theatre architecture is not simply a material condition for or condensation of performance practices, but rather that it has participated in an articulation of the very structure of consciousness.

[64] Ledoux, *L'architecture considérée*, 380.

[65] Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory*, 617.

[66] It is likely that Husserl, a passionate German nationalist, would have been receptive to Wagner's dramatic theory; see Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 81.

[67] Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (New York: Routledge, 1997).