

Empathy Abstracted: Georg Fuchs and the Munich Artists' Theater

by

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B.A. Art History
Columbia College, 1990

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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in the field of Architecture: History and Theory of Art
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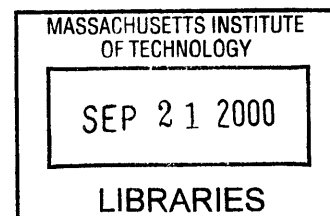
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on August 4, 2000, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Architecture: History and Theory of Art.

Abstract:

Founded by the art critic Georg Fuchs and built by the architect Max Littmann in 1908, the Munich Artists' Theater is famous for its shallow "relief stage." Reworking the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner in the service of the emerging mass audience, Fuchs advocated "the stage of the future," but created one embedded in its historical moment. Eliciting reactions from major figures in theater, architecture, and the visual arts, it provoked debate over the nature of spectatorship and crystallizes the complex relationship between empathy and abstraction, foundational concepts in modernist aesthetic discourse and artistic production.

The relief stage embodied the modernist discourse of flatness; the performances it presented may be allied to the contemporaneous birth of abstraction in Munich. Evoking the newly popular film screen, it faced an amphitheatrical auditorium suitable for the emerging mass audience. The publication that year in Munich of Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy*, which articulated the "urge to abstraction," a universal, visceral response to art, registered the spectator's changing status in aesthetic discourse. But Fuchs was inspired by the discussion of relief sculpture presented in 1893 by the sculptor and visual theorist Adolf von Hildebrand. Through Hildebrand, he absorbed the theory of empathy, developed in late nineteenth-century aesthetic philosophy, psychology, and visual theory to describe the spectator's experience as a form of active and embodied vision.

Fuchs attempted both to create and serve the mass audience, but he relied on an outmoded aesthetic model while abstraction was brewing in Munich. Ignoring Worringer's displacement of theoretical allegiances from empathy to abstraction, he never linked the relief stage to the aesthetic theory being embraced by the Munich avant-garde. His political leanings were equally conservative; he valued theater's ability to mold a group of individual spectators into the unified audience that he considered necessary for the creation of a strong German state. The promotion and reception of the Artists' Theater in 1908 present a turning point between the solitary bourgeois viewer of the nineteenth century implied by empathy and the mass audience of the 1920s, often described in terms of abstraction, distraction, and estrangement.

Thesis Supervisor: Stanford Anderson
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It is in a theatre at Munich. The audience of students is very unruly and is continually interrupting the performance of “Hamlet” with bursts of laughter and loud criticisms. The King is suddenly seen striding towards the footlights.

He is about to speak . . . silence prevails. He does not move as, with tragic and intense eyes and firm voice his sentences roll out: “I have to act a King. It is *very* difficult. You have only to act at being gentlemen, . . . and you are unable to.”

The silence in the theatre after this speech proclaims the power of the actor. But why should he wait to exert his power until the students have derided his art?

—Edward Gordon Craig, *The Mask*, vol. 1, no. 10 (December 1908): 202

Das Sitzen. Das Sitzen ist beinahe das schwerste, Herr Ui.
Es gibt Leute, die können gehen; es gibt Leute, die können stehen;
aber wo sind die Leute, die sitzen können?

—The Actor, in Bertolt Brecht, *Der Aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* (1941)
Gesammelte Werke 4, Stücke 4 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), 1771

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Juliet Koss
Los Angeles, August 2000

Chapter One: Introduction

In her satirical novel *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, first published in 1925, Anita Loos describes the grand tour of Europe taken by two young American women. After stopping in London, Paris, and Vienna, the two travel to Munich where, in keeping with their efforts to witness the cultural high points of every important European city, they visit the Munich Artists' Theater, or *Künstlertheater*. During the performance, they are disturbed by the auditorium's dusty walls and shaky foundations and fear the small stage will not support the actors' weight; they see no signs of the genteel atmosphere that they expect from the cultural jewel of the *Kunststadt* Munich. As the narrator puts it, the auditorium

seems to be decorated with quite a lot of what tripe would look like if it was pasted on the wall and gilded. Only you could not really see the gilding because it was covered with quite a lot of dust. So Dorothy looked around and Dorothy said, if this is "kunst," the art center of the world is Union Hill New Jersey.¹

Mocking the theater's insistence on its own artistic superiority, and decidedly less impressed with the architecture than with the refreshments available in the lobby, they abandon the play halfway through. "You can say what you want about the Germans being full of 'kunst,' " quips one, "but what they are really full of is delicatessen." [fig. 1.1]

Built in 1908 by the architect Max Littmann and known for its shallow, or "relief," stage, the Artists' Theater was sufficiently famous in the early twentieth century to achieve a stature in Loos's novel equal to that of London's Ritz Hotel, the Eiffel tower,

¹ Anita Loos, *Gentleman Prefer Blondes: The Illuminating Diary of a Professional Lady* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1925), 148-49. The 1953 movie based on the novel and starring Marilyn Monroe excises the Munich chapter, an omission that testifies to, among other things, Munich's demise as an international *Kunststadt*.

and Vienna's "Dr. Froyd." Numerous dazzled remarks by critics and historians likewise attest to its reputation, with its founder, Georg Fuchs, cited along with Adolph Appia and Max Reinhardt as one of the great innovators of early twentieth-century European theater. Perhaps the most significant praise that the Artists' Theater received in the year it was built came from the renowned theater reformer Edward Gordon Craig. "I have been all over this theatre," Craig declared,

and I can assure you that it is first class, that it is not a foolish affair with several balconies one over the other, with unnecessary gilt or marble columns, with unnecessary draperies of plush or silk, or with some vast chandelier, or with the ordinary orchestra boxes and the ordinary stage. It is quite out of the ordinary in every way, and yet Princes support it, without calling it eccentric, and, what is more, the people support it.²

Craig never witnessed a performance at the Artists' Theater that summer. But, after a private tour of the building, he described with great approbation its charming exterior and its "very small, but very complete" stage.³

The international reputation of the Artists' Theater was soon established. The British critic Huntly Carter exclaimed in his book *The New Spirit in Drama and Art* in 1912, "I would like to see this small, beautiful, practical and complete theatre repeated in

² "I myself tried to obtain a seat for the evening's performance, and although it was at the end of the season, it was impossible to do so. Through the courtesy of Professor Littmann I was able to go on to the stage, during the day, and into the auditorium, and I was shown the scenic devices and those for lighting." Edward Gordon Craig, "The Theater in Germany, Holland, Russia, and England," *The Mask*, vol. 1, no. 8 (November 1908): 159.

³ *Ibid.*, 160. Craig was a powerful figure in the German theater; his book *On the Art of the Theater* was written in Berlin and published in German translation in 1905 before it appeared in English. See Janet Leeper, "Peter Behrens & the Theatre," *Architectural Review*, vol. 144 (August, 1968): 139. For more on Georg Fuchs in the context of Craig's theater work, see Uta Grund, "Edward Gordon Craig und das Theater der bewegten Bilder: Zur Wechselbeziehung der Künste um 1900" (Ph.D. diss., Humboldt University, 1999), 16-47.

every town and city of the United Kingdom.”⁴ And in 1915, an article in the *Indianapolis News* included the following declaration:

For half a dozen years the Kunstler stood as the model little theater of the world; it was only last May that the Cologne Werkbund theater, designed by Henry van de Velde, snatched away the palm. The debt of the latter to the pioneer little theater is great, especially from the standpoint of the auditorium.⁵

Without superfluous decoration, the Artists’ Theater provided a simple and effective architectural conduit for presenting the performance to the audience. Five years later, an article in the New York-based *Theatre Arts Magazine*, accompanied by photographs and architectural plans, echoed these opinions. Labeling the building “a modern European theatre which comes close to being a model for architects everywhere,” it decreed that Littmann “holds rank as the world’s leading theater designer.”⁶

Not only the architecture of the Artists’ Theater but also the writings of its founder loomed large in the theory and practice of the theater in the early twentieth century. In 1905, Fuchs published *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* [The Stage of the Future], a collection of essays on the nature and purpose of the theater that proved central to the formation of the theatrical avant-garde in Europe. The book’s title evoked Richard Wagner’s *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* [The Artwork of the Future] of 1849; its contents were indebted to the composer’s ideas. To promote the Theater, he published numerous pamphlets and articles as well as a book, *Die Revolution des Theaters* [Revolution in the

⁴ Huntly Carter, *The New Spirit in Drama and Art* (London: Frank Palmer, 1912), 131.

⁵ “As a bold attempt to simplify the ornate and fussy stages of a generation ago,” the article continued, “the Kunstler did yeoman service. It taught the value of a simple, symbolic setting varied only in detail and arrangement for the various scenes of the play.” Oliver M. Saylor, “The Munich Kunstler [sic], a Pioneer Little Theater,” *Indianapolis News* (20 February 1915). Van de Velde had visited and admired another Munich theater by Littmann, the Prinzregententheater; see Henry van de Velde, *Die Geschichte Meines Lebens*, ed. and trans. Hans Curjel (Munich: Piper, 1962).

Theater], which appeared in 1909.⁷ His reputation in Russia was particularly high; that same year, he published an essay entitled “*Myunkhenskii Khudozhestvennyi Teatr*” [The Munich Artists’ Theater] in the newly founded art journal *Apollon* and a Russian translation of *Die Revolution des Theaters* soon followed.⁸ Fuchs had already made a mark in Russia; the director Vsevolod Meyerhold had read *The Theater of the Future* soon after its publication and quoted the book both in his notebooks and in his 1906 essay “The Naturalistic Theatre and the Theatre of Mood.”⁹

Given the high reputation of both Fuchs and the Artists’ Theater, the lack of appreciation on the part of the heroines of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* might appear to prove only their own lack of refinement; their comments register, once again, the building’s importance in the history of architectural and theatrical modernism. But in fact their judgment echoes that of one of the most important art critics writing in Germany at

⁶ Irving Pichel, “Stage Construction for Small Theaters and Community Buildings,” *Theatre Arts Magazine*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1920): 57.

⁷ Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters: Ergebnisse aus der Münchener Künstler-Theater* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909). An abridged English version was published as *Revolution in the Theater: Conclusions Concerning the Munich Artists’ Theatre* (1909), trans. Constance Connor Kuhn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959).

⁸ See Georg Fuchs, “*Myunkhenskii Khudozhestvennyi Teatr*,” *Apollon* (November 1909): 47-53. A concise, positive review of *Die Revolution des Theaters* appeared several months later; see *Apollon*, no. 8 (May-June, 1910): 7. One of the causes of Fuchs’s high status in Russia was his reliance on the ideas of Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche.

⁹ Vsevolod Meyerhold, “The Naturalistic Theatre and the Theatre of Mood” (1906), in Edward Braun, ed. and trans., *Meyerhold on Theatre* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969) 31. On the importance of Fuchs’s ideas for Meyerhold, see Nikolai Volkov, *Meierkhol’d*, vol. I: 1874-1908 (Moscow: Academia, 1929), 240-44; as well as Edward Braun, *The Theater of Meyerhold: Revolution on the Modern Stage* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1979), 54-56. Konstantin Rudnitsky has written that evidence of the importance of Fuchs’s ideas is found in Meyerhold’s notebooks, “entire pages of which are filled with the names of eagerly read books, articles and tracts by Symbolists of all varieties, Symbolist poets, prose writers, and estheticians. Meyerhold was particularly impressed by Georg Fuchs’s book, *The Theater of the Future*.” Rudnitsky, *Meyerhold the Director*, ed. Sydney Schultz, trans. George Petrov (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981), 85. On Fuchs’s importance in Russian theater more generally, see J. Douglas Clayton, *Pierrot in Petrograd: The Commedia dell’Arte/Balagan in Twentieth-Century Russian Theatre and Drama* (Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 50-51; and Rosamond Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 97 and 101.

the time: Wilhelm Worringer, whose scathing review of the theater appeared in the Munich press in 1908. Worringer had become famous in the Munich art world that same year with the publication of his first book, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* [Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style]. In this book, he presented a critique of the theory of aesthetic empathy and articulated the “urge to abstraction,” a universal, visceral condition with which he is firmly associated in the history of twentieth-century art. While he argued that Egyptian art exemplified this urge, his book encouraged such Munich artists as Vassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, as well as other future members of the *Blaue Reiter* group, toward painterly abstraction.

Despite Worringer’s distaste for the Artists’ Theater, the ideas he expressed in *Abstraction and Empathy* might seem to be in accordance with those of Fuchs. Both the shallow stage at the Artists’ Theater and its art nouveau architecture embodied the modernist discourse of flatness, central to the development of abstract painting. Performances at the Theater likewise appeared to engage abstraction, following Fuchs’s 1905 declaration that “drama is possible without word, sound, scenery and wall” and could exist “purely as the rhythmic movement of the human body.”¹⁰ Spectators at the Artists’ Theater faced a flattened and simplified visual field that, as I will argue, evoked the newly popular cinema screen, while the amphitheatrical auditorium in which they sat, lacking the social stratification created by aisles and boxes, suited the emerging mass audience that cinema was helping to build. The Artists’ Theater is thus easily allied with

the contemporaneous birth of abstraction in Munich and the growing mass audience in Germany.

With the advent of theatrical modernism, the activation of the spectator's imagination was paramount; Fuchs hoped to combat the stage illusionism and the "dictatorship of literature" considered typical of the naturalist theater and to encourage a more direct aesthetic experience for the spectators. Indeed, in the discipline of theater history it has often been linked—both in 1908 and subsequently—with modernist efforts in the early twentieth century to develop a theatrical language of abstraction. When it was built, as the art historian Peg Weiss has written, "it was the most modern theater in Germany, perhaps in Europe."¹¹ In Fuchs's words, it comprised nothing less than a "revolution in the theater," one that consisted, first and foremost, of a rejection of theatrical naturalism which, according to Fuchs, indulged a reprehensible bourgeois appetite for theatrical entertainment. The Artists' Theater would thus appear to take part in the general trend toward the "disenchantment with language and the growing appeal of nonverbal expression," to use the phrase with which the theater historian Harold B. Segal has characterized European theatrical modernism.¹² At the same time, as we shall see, the revolution Fuchs envisioned had crucial political implications; it aimed for social transformation on a national scale.

¹⁰ "Das Drama is möglich ohne Wort und ohne Ton, ohne Szene und ohne Gewand, rein als rhythmische Bewegung des menschlichen Körpers." Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin: Schuster und Löffler, 1905), 41.

¹¹ Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 94.

¹² Harold B. Segal, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 32.

While discussions of the Artists' Theater frequently were couched in the discourse of abstraction, Fuchs himself showed no more interest in Worringer's ideas than Worringer demonstrated approval of Fuchs's theater. Precisely while the theory of abstraction was brewing in Munich, he relied on a different aesthetic model: the writings of the sculptor and visual theorist Adolf von Hildebrand, author in 1893 of *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* [The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts], a discussion of the nature of artistic vision that culminated in an endorsement of Greek sculptural relief. The relief stage, in other words, attempted to re-create traditional relief sculpture in architectural form. Through Hildebrand's book, Fuchs absorbed the theory of *Einfühlung*, or empathy, a theory of spectatorship that had been developed in late nineteenth-century Germany. Empathy described the viewer's aesthetic experience as a form of embodied vision, an emotional absorption that helped to create the work of art; Fuchs appropriated this discourse to discuss the spectator's experience of a performance, an experience encouraged by the architectural innovations of the Artists' Theater.

The theory of empathy, probably the most stringently developed description of spectatorship in its day, appeared not only as a subset of philosophical analysis but also within a broad range of disciplines, including perceptual psychology, visual theory, and architectural discourse. It was initially developed as a discussion of an active and physical aesthetic response in 1873 by the philosopher Robert Vischer, who wrote that the body of the viewer "unconsciously projects its own bodily form—and with this also the soul—into the form of the object. From this," he added, "I derived the notion that I call

‘empathy.’”¹³ Like such later theorists as Conrad Fiedler, August Schmarsow, and Heinrich Wölfflin, Vischer described the experience of empathy as universal. The interdisciplinary nature of the discussion reflected a relative openness among the humanistic and scientific disciplines; the viewer might experience an empathetic reaction to anything from an everyday object to a work of high art according to the interests of the discipline in which he appeared. In all of its guises, however, empathy theory presumed a bourgeois spectator, a solitary male in a tranquil environment who allowed an object to transport his cultivated soul. The viewer’s cultural and intellectual background (and, indeed, his gender) were so consistent as to be taken entirely for granted.

Such presumptions about the identity of the spectator, based on Kant’s considerations of aesthetic judgment, had been in place for roughly a century before Vischer’s initiation of the discussion of empathy. According to this model, art appreciation was an activity that could be properly enjoyed only by the comfortable and propertied members of the upper classes. As Kant had explained in 1790, “it is only when the want is appeased that we can distinguish which of many men has taste or has not taste.”¹⁴

Empathy theory implicitly described this same viewer, a creature of material comfort accustomed to art ownership. But while the social status of the implied spectator

¹³ Robert Vischer, Preface to “On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics” (1873), in Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, eds. and trans., *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center Publications, 1994), 92.

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1951), 44. The art historian Karen Lang has described how “the marking off of the aesthetic into a separate sphere directed toward a class of subjects who are not ‘hungry,’ who are capable at some moment of disavowing need, begins in the eighteenth century. . . . Making the distinction between the pleasant (that which gratifies) and the beautiful (that which pleases in itself), [Kant] states: ‘As regards the interest of inclination in the case of the pleasant, everyone says that hunger is the best sauce, and everything that is eatable is relished by people with a healthy appetite; and thus a satisfaction of this sort shows no choice

remained the same, radical changes were occurring in the composition of German audiences. Operating as a discourse bridging aesthetic theory and experimental psychology, empathy theory confronted these sociological changes with enormous difficulty. In my analysis, Worringer's vision of abstraction in 1908 operated as a bridge between empathy and estrangement, two quintessential passions of European modernism.

The expansion of middle class leisure and the explosion of mass media in the last decades of the nineteenth century effected an unprecedented expansion of the audience for German culture. Spectators of a radically new kind were witnessing the new medium of cinema, introduced in Berlin in 1895. While high art had long borrowed material from popular culture, such appropriations were intended to enrich traditional art forms for the benefit of traditional art viewers. Audiences for popular culture in the nineteenth century, meanwhile, had not provoked the interest of aesthetic theorists. With questions about the status of cinema as a form of art arrived equally complex debates over the status of cinema audiences. Cinema was not initially treated in the realm of cultural discourse as an art form, an omission reflecting (among other things) its popularity among the lower classes. As Anton Kaes has written, "for the first fifteen years the German nickelodeons and cheap movie houses were mainly sanctuaries for the illiterate, poor, and unemployed. Only after 1910 were some attempts made to introduce feature-length narrative films (instead of the customary one-reel slapstick scenes)."¹⁵ The rapid growth and rising social

directed by taste.' " Lang, "The Dialectics of Decay: Rereading the Kantian Subject," *Art Bulletin*, vol. LXXIX, no. 3 (September 1997): 425, note 64.

¹⁵ Anton Kaes, "Mass Culture and Modernity: Notes Toward a Social History of Early American and German Cinema," in Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), vol. 2, 320. For an excellent discussion of the relation of literature's individual reader to cinema's

status of cinema audiences caused their increasing prominence both in German society and, consequently, aesthetic debate.

As sociological and technological changes profoundly altered the role of art, theories of spectatorship needed suddenly to address the aesthetic experiences undergone by the kind of viewers whom the empathy theorists had been able to ignore. Fuchs's promotion of the relief stage in Munich in 1908, and his reliance on Hildebrand's theories of relief sculpture, thus adopted a model of empathetic spectatorship that was rapidly becoming outmoded. At the same time, his arguments reflected a growing concern with that other shallow performance space that had recently begun to produce a new kind of spectator: the flat screen of the cinema. While neither Fuchs nor any others who described the Artists' Theater mentioned cinema in their discussion of the relief stage, their rhetoric demonstrated an awareness of film's growing presence both as a cultural medium and as the creator of a new kind of audience. Fuchs valued theater's ability to construct a unified audience from a collection of individuals, and he described this potential explicitly in terms of the physical properties of the shallow relief stage.

The Artists' Theater was built on the occasion of *Ausstellung München* 1908, an exhibition held to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the founding of the city of Munich. Still harboring disappointment in being passed over, half a century earlier, in favor of Bayreuth as the site of Richard Wagner's festival theater, and acutely aware of the success of Max Reinhardt's productions in Berlin, many in Munich viewed the exhibition that summer as an opportunity to place the city on the map of German culture.

mass audience, see Kaes, "Literary Intellectuals and the Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)," *New German Critique*, no. 40 (Special Issue on Weimar Film Theory, Winter 1987), 7-33.

Fuchs, active in the theater debates in Munich since returning in 1904 from Darmstadt, took the opportunity to create the “reform theater” he had been demanding in print for several years; he enlisted Littmann’s assistance as architect. Littmann derived the design of the auditorium primarily from his Prinzregententheater, built in Munich in 1901, and which itself had copied Gottfried Semper’s designs for a festival theater for Wagner. Prominently located near the exhibition’s main entrance, the Artists’ Theater was to showcase the latest innovations of theatrical modernism with a repertoire drawn from the most conservative dramatic canon. Opening on May 17, 1908, with a production of Goethe’s *Faust*, in the following five months it presented eight plays, including Fuchs’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* and works by Cervantes and Aristophanes.¹⁶

Founded by an art critic, and based on the ideas of a sculptor and visual theorist, the Artists’ Theater embodies fundamental concerns in the development of modernist aesthetics; it stands at a point of intersection between debates over visual theory in the early twentieth century and a set of artistic practices that encompass theater, architecture, and the visual arts. It elicited reactions not only from figures in fields of theater and architecture, but also in that of visual theory; the responses of two figures, Hildebrand and Worringer, will be of particular interest in this context. Hildebrand embraced Fuchs’s literal enactment of his theories and, perhaps prompted by his central position in Fuchs’s writings, applauded Fuchs’s efforts in an essay published in the city’s largest daily newspaper and reprinted in the Theater’s program booklet that year. Worringer, meanwhile, scorned Fuchs’s extremism; while he thought Fuchs’s explanations perfectly logical, as a

¹⁶ See Georg Fuchs, “Zum Spielplan des Münchener Künstlertheaters,” *Münchener Künstler-Theater: Ausstellung München 1908* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1908), 16-23.

member of the audience he found the relief stage an “intolerable inconvenience” that occasionally inspired one spectator out of five hundred to a higher level of consciousness but only annoyed the rest of the audience. Like Fuchs’s own arguments, the analyses of these two theorists ostensibly addressed the spectator’s aesthetic experience of a work of art within an architectural context. At the same time, each described the potential of the work of art to construct the cultural and political identity of the viewing subject.

The Artists’ Theater made a formal appearance within the discipline of architectural history in 1930 with the publication of Sheldon Cheney’s *The New World Architecture*. Cheney had no positive words for the vast majority of modern theaters, but was deeply impressed with “Max Littmann’s charming ‘Art [sic] Theater,’ ” which he described as part of the phenomenon of Jugendstil design that had been initiated in Vienna and carried further in Munich.¹⁷ “Max Littmann of Munich,” he wrote, “working by evolutionary change rather than revolutionary, became leader of the architects who simplified and democratized the theater structure between 1900 and 1920.”¹⁸ But while the placement of the Artists’ Theater within *Ausstellung München 1908*, the design of its exterior and circulation rooms, and the arrangement of seats within its auditorium all aimed to express and encourage a particular conception of theatergoing and spectatorship, Fuchs, as we shall see, was hardly concerned with the furthering of democratic values.

¹⁷ Sheldon Cheney, *The New World Architecture* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), 193-94. “Most so-called modernist theatres are surface applications of modernistic architectural idioms to basically old-fashioned theatre structures,” Cheney lamented, “and many a progressive theatre organization is housed in a feebly traditional playhouse because it couldn’t bring its experimental production ideals near enough to afford a starting-point for a distinctive or positive theatre design.” *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 353.

Within the field of theater history, three major texts have been devoted to the Artists' Theater. The earliest, Walter Grohmann's *Das Münchener Künstlertheater in der Bewegung der Szenen- und Theaterreformen* [The Munich Artists' Theater and the Scenic and Theater Reform Movement] (1935), is an essentially propagandistic publication that relies heavily on unacknowledged quotations from, and paraphrases of, the writings of Fuchs himself.¹⁹ By contrast, the dissertation by Lenz Prütting, "Die Revolution des Theaters: Studien über Georg Fuchs" [Revolution in the Theater: Studies on Georg Fuchs] (University of Munich, 1971), is thoroughly researched; it takes as its central themes the "essence and function of the theatrical ramp" and the "question of the life function of theater."²⁰ Wiltrud H. Steinacker, in her own dissertation, "Georg Fuchs and the Concept of the Relief Stage" (University of Toronto, 1995), likewise focuses on contemporaneous German theater to argue that "the idiosyncrasy of Fuchs' reform effort lies in its diffuseness and contradictoriness."²¹

Easily the most insightful discussion of the Artists' Theater is by the theater historian Peter Jelavich, who devotes a chapter of his book *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* to the topic.²² In "Retheatricalized Modernism: The Künstlertheater and its Affinities," Jelavich discusses the interplay of German nationalism, architectural innovation, and cultural politics. He is,

¹⁹ See Walter Grohmann, *Das Münchener Künstlertheater in der Bewegung der Szenen- und Theaterreformen* (Berlin: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1935).

²⁰ "Wesen und Funktion der theatralen Rampe" and "die Frage nach der Lebensfunktion des Theaters." Lenz Prütting, "Die Revolution des Theaters: Studien über Georg Fuchs" (Ph. D. diss., University of Munich, 1971), 386.

²¹ Wiltrud H. Steinacker, "Georg Fuchs and the Concept of the Relief Stage" (Ph. D. diss., University of Toronto, 1995), abstract (no page number). A fourth book on the subject of the Artists' Theater exists in Italian: Luisa Tinti, *Georg Fuchs e la rivoluzione del teatro* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980).

however, concerned neither with the Theater's relationship to contemporaneous visual theory in general, nor with theories of empathy and abstraction in particular. Brief treatments of the Artists' Theater, also within the field of theater history, may be found in two essays: Margret Dietrich, "Georg Fuchs and the Japanese Theatre" (1973) and in Barnard Hewitt, "Art and Theatre: Georg Fuchs" (1945).²³ The Theater is also discussed within the pages of two books in the field: Mordecai Gorelick's *New Theaters for Old* (1940) and Bernd-Peter Schaul, *Das Prinzregententheater in München und die Reform des Theaterbaus um 1900: Max Littmann als Theaterarchitekt* [The Prinzregententheater in Munich and Theater Building Reform around 1900: Max Littmann as Theater Architect] (1987).²⁴

But while famous in the discipline of theater history, outside this discipline the Artists' Theater has mostly been ignored. One exception is a discussion of the Theater by Peg Weiss in her book on Kandinsky's early years; under the subheading "Toward Greater Abstraction in Theater," Weiss concentrates on the Theater's emphasis on pantomime, color and movement, and vibration.²⁵ Another exception is Manfredo Tafuri's very brief treatment of the Theater in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-*

²² See Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 187-208.

²³ See Margret Dietrich, "Georg Fuchs and the Japanese Theatre," *Essays on Drama and Theater: Essays in Honor of Benjamin Hunningher* (Amsterdam: Moussault, 1973), 30-36; and Barnard Hewitt, "Art and Theatre: Georg Fuchs," *University of Colorado Studies, Series B (Studies in the Humanities)*, vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1945), 357-62.

²⁴ See Mordecai Gorelick, *New Theaters for Old* (1940; repr. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962), 175-88 and Bernd-Peter Schaul, *Das Prinzregententheater in München und die Reform des Theaterbaus um 1900: Max Littmann als Theaterarchitekt* (Munich: Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1987), 99-108.

²⁵ See Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich*, 92-103.

Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s.²⁶ On the work of Hildebrand, meanwhile, there is a catalogue raisonné published in 1993 by Sigrid Esche-Braunfels.²⁷ The only extant book on Worringer contains four essays by art historians, none of which mentions theater, Fuchs, or empathy theory.²⁸ An excellent historical overview of the development of the concept of empathy in the nineteenth century, treating the work of Fiedler, Schmarsow, Vischer, Wölfflin, and others, may be found in the introduction by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou to their very useful anthology entitled *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*.²⁹

Facing the territory set out by these discrete texts (and many others), “Empathy Abstracted” both describes the Artists’ Theater as an architectural object—concentrating on its art nouveau forms, amphitheatrical auditorium, and shallow stage—and sets it within a wider theoretical context, engaging in particular the field of visual theory. Rather than presenting both Fuchs and his Theater as models of avant-garde achievement, in other words, I explore some of the historical and discursive contexts both for Fuchs’s thinking generally and for the theater specifically. The Artists’ Theater, I argue, unites several strands of early twentieth-century European cultural history: the rejection of naturalist theater in favor of the modernist stage, the appropriation in the theater of concepts of German aesthetics, and the development of visual abstraction in Munich.

²⁶ See Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990), 95-97.

²⁷ See Sigrid Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1993).

²⁸ See Neil H. Donahue, ed., *Invisible Cathedrals: The Expressionist Art History of Wilhelm Worringer* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1995).

²⁹ See Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, eds. and trans., *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center Publications, 1994), 1-85.

Reworking the ideas of Wagner and Nietzsche in the service of the emerging mass audience, Fuchs advocated “the stage of the future,” but he created one that was deeply embedded in its own historical moment. If the building represents an architectural embodiment of the tenets of late nineteenth-century visual theory, the reaction to it demonstrates a turning point in German aesthetics that occurred as the nineteenth-century spectator implied by the theory of empathy began to metamorphose into the mass audience of the 1920s.

By investigating these discussions of the nature of spectatorship as they coalesced around the Artists’ Theater, “Empathy Abstracted” elucidates the complex relationship between abstraction and empathy, two foundational concepts in modernist aesthetic discourse and artistic production, at a critical juncture in early twentieth-century German cultural history. At the same time, it demonstrates how theories of spectatorship contended with the rapid metamorphosis of the German cultural audience. Fuchs described the Artists’ Theater in terms that emphasized not only the spectator’s experience as an individual, but also the relation of this experience to the formation of a collective audience. Using empathy almost as a political tool, productions at the Artists’ Theater were to facilitate sociopolitical changes. Fuchs valued theater’s ability to mold a group of individual spectators into a unified audience, which he considered the prerequisite and cultural parallel for forming a strong German state. His conservative political leanings, meanwhile, as we shall see, were more clearly legible in his

anonymously published *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst* [The Kaiser, Culture and Art] of 1904.³⁰

Fuchs cited a variety of other cultural forms as inspiration for the Artists' Theater, including Japanese theater, circus performance, and vaudeville.³¹ These sources have been addressed, albeit briefly, elsewhere in the literature of theater history; Jelavich has written, for example, that "the Münchener Künstlertheater, for which many of Munich's modern painters and graphic artists designed sets, used styles of acting derived from both popular circus and religious ritual."³² This dissertation does not aim to offer an exhaustive analysis of a series of influences on the construction of the Artists' Theater and the performances presented on its stage. It is also not intended as a biography of Fuchs, a fascinating study that remains to be written, nor as an analysis of his poems, which, in the words of his brother Emil, "are grandiose fantasies that expect more of the powers of comprehension of normal men than they are willing to expend."³³ Rather, "Empathy Abstracted" analyses the metaphoric construction and architectural form of the Artists' Theater, presenting the building as a locus for housing spectators and producing an audience at a pivotal moment in the history of spectatorship. It aims not to establish a theater's reputation, in other words, but to present the Artists' Theater as the embodiment

³⁰ Georg Fuchs, *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst: Betrachtungen über die Zukunft des Deutschen Volkes aus den Papieren eines Unverantwortlichen* (published anonymously; Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1904). Fuchs's name appeared on the third edition of the book, which was entitled *Der Kaiser und die Zukunft des deutschen Volkes*.

³¹ Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 84-85, 117-18, and 179-89.

³² Peter Jelavich, "Munich as Cultural Center: Politics and the Arts," *Kandinsky in Munich: 1896-1914* (New York: Guggenheim Museum exh. cat., 1985), 25.

³³ "Auch seine Dichtungen sind grandiose Phantasien, die der Fassungskraft des normalen Menschen mehr zumuten, als sie willens sind zu leisten." Emil Fuchs, *Mein Leben*, vol. I (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1957), 52.

of the relationship of visual theory to architecture at a transitional moment in modernist spectatorship.

“**Empathy Abstracted**” examines the role of specific themes in the writings of Wagner and Nietzsche—concentrating particularly on that of empathy—in Fuchs’s understanding of the audience; Fuchs’s promotion of the relief stage on the basis of Hildebrand’s theories; and the response that the theater elicited both from Hildebrand himself and from Worringer. In conclusion, it sets Worringer’s negative response to the Artists’ Theater within the context of his contemporaneous critique of empathy theory. By discussing Fuchs’s conception of theater in general and the Munich Artists’ Theater specifically, and by exploring the conflicting responses that it elicited from two central figures in contemporaneous German visual theory, it presents the reconfiguration of empathy at the historical moment when the theory of abstraction was first formulated.

Fuchs appropriated the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner as models for his own discussion of the spectator’s experience within a unified audience, and **chapter two** explores these two nineteenth-century sources for his thinking in the decade preceding the founding of the Artists’ Theater. It examines their ideas on the nature of spectatorship and on the cultural and political function of the audience; these include Nietzsche’s presentation of the Dionysian element of art, Wagner’s theorization of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the notion of the *Volk* in the writings of both men, and the role of aesthetic empathy for both. The chapter ends with a discussion of Wagner’s efforts to have a festival theater built for productions of his music dramas, efforts that culminated in the inauguration of his festival theater in Bayreuth in 1876. **Chapter three** treats

Fuchs's own ideas on the role and function of the theater in the years leading up to the founding of the Artists' Theater, beginning with his background as an art critic and concentrating on his fascination with the Nietzschean figure of Zarathustra. I then describe Fuchs's role in the opening ceremony in 1901 of the Artists' Colony Darmstadt, where he worked with Peter Behrens, who shared his enthusiasm both for the notion of the theater as a festival and specifically for the relief stage, and who prompted his turn from art criticism to theater reform. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Fuchs's writings both in *The Kaiser, Culture, and Art* and in his most influential book, *The Stage of the Future*, both of which were published in Munich soon after his return from Darmstadt.

Chapter four describes the Artists' Theater as an architectural object. It begins with a general discussion of *Ausstellung München 1908*, the exhibition for which the Theater was built, both as an architectural site and as an event that sought to reconcile German art and industry one year after the founding, likewise in Munich, of the Deutsche Werkbund. Based on the few extant photographs, it then describes the spectator's physical approach to the Theater through the main gates of the exhibition, through the theater lobby, and into the auditorium, leading the reader to a seat in the auditorium before discussing the relief stage that gave the Theater its fame. The chapter concludes by linking the shallow relief stage at the Artists' Theater to the shallow stages of the cinema, only recently developed and rapidly becoming popular in cities across Germany. **Chapter five** is devoted to the ideas of Hildebrand. It begins with Hildebrand's discussion of relief sculpture in his book of 1893, *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts*, the literal inspiration for the creation of the relief stage; it attends particularly to Hildebrand's adoption of the principles of aesthetic empathy, which Fuchs would likewise appropriate

to justify the architectural innovations at the Artists' Theater. It then presents Hildebrand's essay about the Theater before linking discussions of sculptural relief in the writing of Hildebrand and others to the notion of flatness in German aesthetic discourse at this time more metaphorically. It concludes with a treatment of the notion of empathy as it traveled from the writings of Hildebrand to those of Fuchs himself.

Chapter six centers on Worringer. It begins with a presentation of his 1908 review of the Artists' Theater, a masterpiece of ironic fulmination, before positioning his polemic within his larger critique of empathy theory, presented that year in *Abstraction and Empathy* and the most strident attack leveled thus far at the theory of empathy. Worringer's discussion in this book of the universal "urge to abstraction," I will argue, attempted to grapple, at the level of aesthetic theory, with the emerging mass audience. Worringer linked the notion of visual abstraction to the viewer's experience of "self-estrangement," and presented this sensation as the conceptual center of the aesthetic response. This notion of abstraction represents a crucial conceptual hinge between, on the one hand, the empathy theory that was undergoing critique both within and beyond his own text and, on the other, articulations of distraction and estrangement that would describe the experience of the mass audience in the 1920s and 1930s. The chapter situates Worringer's critique within the contemporaneous discussion of empathy theory in the field of experimental psychology and concludes with a presentation of the afterlife of empathy theory. Ignoring Worringer's displacement of theoretical allegiances from empathy to abstraction, articulated that very year in Munich, Fuchs failed to link the shallow stage at the Artists' Theater to the new aesthetic theory being embraced at the time by the Munich avant-garde. He attempted both to create and serve the emerging

mass audience in Germany in 1908, I will argue, but in doing so he relied on an outmoded model of individual spectatorship.

Chapter Two: Nietzsche, Wagner, Bayreuth

Fully in keeping with European intellectual and artistic life at the end of the nineteenth century, Fuchs was deeply influenced by the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and, through Nietzsche, those of Richard Wagner. Any treatment of Fuchs's views of theater's cultural aims, political symbolism, and architectural objectives—the subject of the following chapter—therefore requires the presentation of selected concepts within the writings of these two men. To this end, the present chapter sets out Nietzsche's and Wagner's elaboration of themes that would become central to Fuchs's own intellectual development, particularly those concerning the role of the theater and that of the audience. These themes include the opposition of Apollo and Dionysus, which Fuchs took from Nietzsche; ideas about the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and about the *Volk*, both of which he took primarily from Wagner; and ideas about empathy, which he derived from both men as well as from other contemporaneous philosophers and visual theorists.

My discussion of these themes will begin with a motif that Fuchs absorbed from Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, first published in 1872: the famous delineation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, twin forces within Greek culture that provided a template for understanding contemporary creativity. "The Nietzschean concepts and ideas, chiffres and signs that can be found in the *Birth of Tragedy*," Reinhold Grimm has written, "are the most appropriate, most perfectly fitting parameters

for dramatic and theatrical modernism.”¹ Fuchs was no exception. (Nietzsche’s later work, in particular the *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* of 1885, was central to Fuchs’s efforts in the early 1890s as a Nietzschean art critic, but not to his ideas about the theater; a discussion of the model of Zarathustra therefore appears in the following chapter.) Wagner’s writing, while predating that of Nietzsche, became important to Fuchs only subsequently, both as Nietzsche’s inspiration and, more profoundly, as an articulation of the role of the communal audience in relation to the work of art and a celebration of drama as the highest form of art. An examination of Wagner’s conceptions of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the *Volk*, which concentrates on two works published in 1849, “Art and Revolution” and “The Art-Work of the Future,” will therefore follow the discussion of Nietzsche’s writing. Half a century later, Wagner’s articulation of a confluence of cultural and political aims, gathered in a work of art and embodied in the aesthetic response of a unified audience, provided Fuchs with a description of spectatorship capable of encompassing the growing German audience.

Fuchs gained inspiration for his discussions of the audience from his contemporaries as well; as I describe in chapter five, he relied in particular on the writings of Adolf von Hildebrand, and through him absorbed the theory of *Einfühlung*, or empathy, developed most stringently by late nineteenth-century German theorists in the overlapping fields of philosophy, psychology, and visual theory. To understand empathy theory as a central theoretical motivation for Fuchs’s founding of the Artists’ Theater in 1908, as I argue in chapter six, is to help explain the theater’s failure in the estimation of

¹ Reinhold Grimm, *Echo and Disguise: Studies in German Comparative Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1969), 74.

Wilhelm Worringer, who that same year in Munich opposed his own theory of abstraction to that of empathy using the rhetorical model from Nietzsche of Apollo and Dionysus. The penultimate section of the present chapter will therefore explore the role of empathy as it appeared in the guise of pity and compassion both in the writings of Wagner and Nietzsche and among such contemporaneous authors as Robert Vischer and Conrad Fiedler, whose work, like that of Fuchs, was permeated with their ideas.

In 1888, Nietzsche followed a discussion of Apollonian and Dionysian art with the following words: “Question: where does architecture belong?”² This chapter concludes with a discussion of Wagner’s attempts to build a festival theater, emphasizing the ways in which philosophical principles were taken up in the elaboration of architectural form. Initially in Munich and subsequently at Bayreuth, Wagner worked to have a theater constructed to host his own music dramas, one that would embody architecturally his ideas about spectatorship. Fuchs’s interest in Wagner’s theater (a building inaugurated in 1876 and instrumental in Nietzsche’s break from the composer) was to a great extent modeled on Nietzsche’s early enthusiasm for this theater. The Bayreuth theater would become a central reference point for Fuchs, as I will describe in chapter three. It not only provoked his interest in the creation of an audience by means of architectural construction, but also, and more specifically, sparked his interest in the Prinzregententheater, built by Max Littmann in Munich in 1901, prompting his own efforts to engage Littmann to build the Artists’ Theater in Munich in the summer of 1908.

1. The Dionysian

According to Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the “two interwoven artistic impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian,”³ were neither mutually exclusive nor even conceptually distinct; while polar opposites, they were also twin forces that produced culture at their intersection.⁴ The static grace of the Greek god Apollo governed the aesthetic perception of the individual spectator who contemplated a beautiful work of art. But Apollo’s “entire existence,” the philosopher maintained, could not stand alone; “despite all its beauty and moderation . . . [it] rested on a hidden substratum of suffering and of knowledge, revealed . . . by the Dionysian. And behold! Apollo could not live without Dionysus!”⁵ This double aesthetic model would prove central to German aesthetics in the coming years, appearing in 1908, for example, as the conceptual interplay of abstraction and empathy in Worringer’s book of that title.

In describing the Dionysian impulse, Nietzsche introduced passion into the pleasing realm of beauty and moderation that had traditionally been associated with art. “Everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness” under the spell of Dionysian emotions, he explained.⁶ Such a state of intoxication stood fully in opposition to the calm appreciation of a beautiful object that was presumed to govern the

² Friedrich Nietzsche, as quoted in Claudia Brodsky Lacour, “Architecture in the Discourse of Modern Philosophy,” in Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth, eds., *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 28.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 81.

⁴ In Nietzsche’s schema, the two sides are eventually unified in Greek tragedy. In *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), he argued that the Dionysian encompassed the Apollonian, rather than opposing it.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 46.

appreciation of art objects. In this intoxicated state, all sense of the spectator's carefully delineated identity disappeared as the individual melted into a sensation of ecstasy. Reconfigured as the god of a spectatorship that is active, passionate, and communal, Dionysus—and the notion of spectatorial ecstasy more specifically—would haunt European aesthetic thought for decades, from the empathy theory of Theodor Lipps through the psychology theory of Ludwig Klages to the film theory of Sergei Eisenstein.⁷

Nietzsche fully acknowledged the role of the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer in the development of his own ideas, explaining the notion of the Dionysian in relation to the earlier philosopher's work. "Schopenhauer has depicted for us," he wrote,

the tremendous *terror* which seizes man when he is suddenly dumbfounded by the cognitive form of phenomena. . . . If we add to this terror the blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at this collapse of the *principium individuationis*, we steal a glimpse into the nature of the *Dionysian*, which is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication.⁸

At the center of Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian lay the relationship between the collapse of the *principium individuationis*—itself a theme appropriated from Schopenhauer—and the experience of intoxication. For Nietzsche, the Dionysian experience of surpassing the boundaries of individual consciousness did not entail an annexation to a larger group. With the growth of the mass audience in the ensuing decades, however, the nature of this relationship would be recast. By the end of the century, the following question began to assert itself: might the dissolution of the borders

⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁷ On the ecstatic link from Lipps through Klages to Eisenstein, see Mikhail Iampolski, "Theory as Quotation," *October* 44: 51-68, especially 60 ff.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 36 (italics original).

of the individual spectator represent the productive theoretical basis for the foundation of a communal audience?⁹

Nietzsche's presentation of the dialectical pair of Apollo and Dionysus complicated the conception of beauty put forward in the mid-eighteenth century by the art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Winckelmann had written of an aesthetic ideal, symbolized by a Greek statue, to which Nietzsche referred as "that measured restraint, that freedom from the wilder emotions, that calm of the sculptor god."¹⁰ Contending that Winckelmann had told only half the story of aesthetic perception, Nietzsche's descriptions of the Dionysian impulse in *The Birth of Tragedy* completed the tale, as it were. Winckelmann's reverence for Greek art presumed, among other things, that beauty was immobile. "The general eminent characteristic of Greek masterpieces is ultimately a noble simplicity and a calm greatness, as much in the pose as in the expression," Winckelmann explained.¹¹ The static nature of the work of art was echoed, in turn, in the

⁹ Writing in 1895, Fuchs himself rejected the possibility of Schopenhauer's influence on Wagner's work. In particular, he argued that to consider Wagner's music in the context of the *principium individuationis* was so vague as to be true of German culture generally. "Even those who want to find Schopenhauerian philosophy in the fundamental drifts [of Wagner's work] are incorrect. Schopenhauer's theory has indeed had an effect on the textual arrangement in a purely formal manner; it has influenced the wording. But that constitutes by no means a material failure, but rather merely a formal tastelessness. The Haruspex will hardly be found who could predict Schopenhauer from the Music, from the most secret entrails of the work, except for in ideas belonging to the common ground of all thinkers, and especially the *principium individuationis*. "Selbst die haben nicht recht, welche in den wesentlichen Zügen Schopenhauersche Philosophie finden wollen. Wohl hat Schopenhauers Theorie auf die textliche Ausgestaltung rein formal eingewirkt; sie hat den Wortlaut beeinflußt. Doch handelt es sich dabei durchaus nicht um eine stoffliche Niederlage, sondern lediglich um formale Geschmacklosigkeiten. Der Haruspex wird wohl nicht zu finden sein, der aus der Musik, aus den geheimsten Eingeweiden des Werkes auf Schopenhauer weissagen könnte, es sei denn, daß es sich um Anschauungen handelt, die der Allgemeinheit aller Denkenden angehören, so vornehmlich um das *principium individuationis*." Georg Fuchs, "Richard Wagner und die moderne Malerei," *Die Kunst für Alle X* (1895): 114.

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 35.

¹¹ "Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfachheit, und eine stille Grösse, so wohl in der Stellung als im Ausdrucke." Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Dresden: Im Verlag der Waltherischen Handlung, 1756), 21.

contemplative pose of artistic appreciation; the serenity inherent in the work achieved its parallel in the demeanor of the viewer.

In addition, and more crucially for Nietzsche, the noble simplicity of a Greek masterpiece existed at a certain symbolic distance from the spectator. The geographic distance between Greece and Germany—between the land of art and that of art appreciation—paralleled the figurative distance between the aesthetic realm and the spectator's own environment. In *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, first published in 1935, E. M. Butler described “the invasion of Germany by the mythical inhabitants of a Greece that never was on sea or land” with the following mocking words:

In noble simplicity and serene greatness they came, just as Winckelmann had seen them. In a rush of mighty movement they were there . . . erecting an absolute standard of perfection, solemn, statuesque and unreal; shrouded in alien beauty, dimmed by the blight of years. Germany fell prostrate before them and kissed the rod wielded by the tyranny of these so-called Greeks, and the prayer “give us a mythology” was uttered by more than one as they looked with dazzled eyes at the mysteriously impressive beings who, under the demure disguise of humanitarian ideals, had joined the company of foreign invaders.¹²

The dazzling beauty of the Greeks was enhanced by the aura of distance, of “alien beauty,” which removed them to the lofty plain of an unachievable ideal. Nietzsche's critique of the ideal was in some ways an attempt to destroy the very notion of aesthetic distance, to position the spectator more immediately beside, or within, the work of art.

Butler's irony pointed to the fact that the tyranny of Greek culture over Germany was self-imposed, allowing German writers to make use of “these so-called Greeks” for their own rhetorical and symbolic purposes. Perhaps more than for Winckelmann, Nietzsche's descriptions of ancient Greek culture legitimized his claims about

contemporary German culture with the aura of historical analysis; his embrace of Greece, in other words, occurred at the expense of France which served as the dominant court culture of Germany at the time. Nietzsche later denounced his conflation of distant and contemporary concerns in the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” he appended to *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886. As he put it, “I spoiled the grandiose Greek problem, as it had arisen before my eyes, by introducing the most modern problems!”¹³ But the conflation proved useful as a conceptual model, allowing nearby phenomena to be more easily addressed under the cover of claims about distant topics. In the following decades, as we shall see in chapter five, such visual theorists as Adolf von Hildebrand and Alois Riegl appropriated this model with their discussions of the *Fernsicht* and *Nahsicht*, or distant and near views.

For Nietzsche, Apollo and Dionysus governed spectatorship as much as artistic creation. *The Birth of Tragedy* not only expanded the discussion of art beyond a treatment of static beauty to include the Dionysian combination of terror and ecstasy; it also expanded the discussion of art to include the response it elicited.¹⁴ Apollo stood for static art viewing as much as a static image of beauty; Dionysus represented a “loss of self” that was symbolized, for Nietzsche, by the appreciation of music. He wrote of “the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence,” a rapture that described not only the creative experience of the artist but also, and more

¹² E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry over the Great German Writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries* (1935; repr. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 46.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” *The Birth of Tragedy*, 24 (italics original).

¹⁴ Like countless later critics, Nietzsche himself attested to his indebtedness to Romantic theories, particularly as they took up Kant’s notions of the sublime and the beautiful. “I tried laboriously to express by means of Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas strange and new valuations which were basically at odds with Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s spirit and taste!” Friedrich Nietzsche, “Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” 24.

pointedly, the viewer's own removal from quotidian surroundings to the heightened realm of art.¹⁵ The dissolution of the limits of spectatorial identity entailed an emotional and psychological union between the spectator and the work of art.

By replacing the traditional notion of a static appreciation of art with a dynamic and experiential presentation of spectatorship, Nietzsche dissolved the conceptual unit of the individual spectator. Apollo represented the principle of individuality, but ultimately he could not act alone; "by the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysus the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open . . . to the innermost heart of things."¹⁶ Only with the assistance of Dionysus, then, could the very borders of the self dissolve, permitting the individual to surpass his own consciousness of his individual identity. It was only under the spell of the Dionysian appreciation of art, that is, "that we can understand the joy involved in the annihilation of the individual."¹⁷ The spectator's loss of individuality while contemplating the work of art suggested a celebratory merging into the crowd. "The Dionysian excitement is capable of communicating this artistic gift to a multitude," Nietzsche wrote, "so they can see themselves surrounded by such a host of spirits while knowing themselves to be essentially one with them."¹⁸

Nietzsche had originally entitled his first book *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* and had dedicated it to Richard Wagner. He set the static beauty of the artistic images, associated with dreams, against the more passionate and emotional sphere of music, best understood as a kind of intoxication, referring to "the Apollinian art of

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 59.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

sculpture and the nonimagistic, Dionysian art of music.”¹⁹ Disillusioned with Wagner, however—or, as Walter Kaufmann has argued, disillusioned with the founding of his festival theater at Bayreuth²⁰—Nietzsche revised his position. He removed the subtitle of his book to deaccentuate Wagner’s role as inspiration, but left Apollo and Dionysus intact within the text.²¹ The Dionysian came to represent the intangible nature of the spectator’s reaction, an uncontrollable passionate response, as opposed to the pleasing aesthetic beauty of a static image still symbolized by Apollo. Nietzsche displaced his explanation on to a more acceptable composer: “Transform Beethoven’s ‘Hymn to Joy’ into a painting; let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck—then you will approach the Dionysian.”²² By the turn of the century, the association of music and the Dionysian impulse was common, with the two interchangeably representing a loss of self, an embrace of speechlessness, and an abandonment within the crowd. How could the Dionysian spirit, as Nietzsche described it, be enacted among art viewers?

¹⁹ Ibid., 33.

²⁰ Walter Kaufmann, introduction to Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 149. For a recent psychobiographical analysis of the relationship between the two men, see Joachim Köhler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson in Subjugation*, trans. Ronald Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²¹ Nietzsche complained that Wagner manipulated the audience’s passions rather than appealing to their intellects; as “the modern artist *par excellence*,” he had come to exemplify the late nineteenth-century European disease of decadence. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, 166 (italics original). In 1888, five years after Wagner’s death, Nietzsche confessed: “I am, no less than Wagner, a child of this time; that is, a decadent: but I comprehended this; I resisted it. The philosopher in me resisted.” Ibid., 155.

²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 37.

2. The *Gesamtkunstwerk*

“I know of no writings on aesthetics so illuminating as Wagner’s,” Nietzsche wrote on the occasion of the inauguration of the festival theater at Bayreuth.²³ The metaphoric pair of Apollo and Dionysus had already appeared in the work of Wagner, who had declared in his 1849 essay “Art and Revolution” that “the Grecian spirit . . . found its fullest expression in the god Apollo.”²⁴ Dionysus, meanwhile, although mentioned only once in the essay, was a crucial cultural catalyst who fostered creativity and caused the unification of all art forms. “Inspired by Dionysus,” Wagner wrote, “the tragic poet saw this glorious god [Apollo]: when, to all the rich elements of spontaneous art, the harvest of the fairest and most human life, he joined the bond of speech, and concentrating them all into one focus, brought forth the highest conceivable art—the DRAMA.”²⁵ The cultural function of Dionysus, in other words, was to inspire the poet to envision an Apollonian image of beauty; under the influence of both gods together, the poet could create the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

According to Wagner, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in uniting the three sister arts of music, dance, and poetry, allowed each one to achieve its full potential, to become

²³ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth” (1876), in Daniel Breazeale, ed., *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 248.

²⁴ Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution” (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1933), 32. Perhaps encouraged by Nietzsche, later scholars have played down this particular connection to Wagner’s work. According to Walter Kaufmann, for example, “The idea of ‘the death of tragedy’ goes back to Nietzsche. . . . In the first half of the twentieth century, it was Nietzsche’s discussion of the *birth* of tragedy, and of what he called the Apollinian and the Dionysian, that established the fame of his first book.” Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 163. Josef Chytry likewise refers to Nietzsche’s “discovery of the ‘Dionysian.’ ” Chytry, *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 326 and 350.

stronger by negotiating its own formal parameters in the struggle to define itself against the others. “Not one richly developed faculty of the individual arts will remain unused in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the Future,” Wagner had decreed; “precisely in it will each one attain its full value for the first time.”²⁶ By joining its sisters, that is, each art form would not only become more intensely itself, but also, and more crucially, would abandon its formal identity in the very effort of collaboration. The parallel between art forms and audience members was unspoken, but powerful nevertheless. “Only when the pride of all three arts in their own self-sufficiency breaks down, passing into love for the others,” he explained, “will they be capable of creating the perfect artwork, and indeed their coming to an end in this sense is already in itself this artwork, their death immediately its life.”²⁷ They engaged in a battle to achieve their own artistic identities before, ultimately, succumbing to a sisterly love that signified, simultaneously, a formal death. The very notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* thus rested on a wish for each art form to approach its

²⁵ Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution,” 33. On the German cultural tradition of celebrating tragic drama both as the ultimate artistic achievement and as the focal point for creating an audience as a *Volk*, with particular reference to Schiller, see Josef Chytrý, *The Aesthetic State*, 95-97.

²⁶ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future” (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, 190 (translation altered). “Nicht eine reich entwickelte Fähigkeit der einzelnen Künste wird in dem Gesamtkunstwerke [sic] der Zukunft unbenützt verbleiben, gerade in ihm erst wird sie zur vollen Geltung gelangen.” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Otto Wiegand, 1850), 197. “In her separation from true Music, and especially from Poetry,” Wagner wrote as an example, “Dance not only gave up her highest attributes, but she also lost a portion of her *individuality*.” Likewise, only when poetry “marches hand in hand with her sister arts towards the perfect artwork” could it explore its own essential properties. “By working in common,” he wrote, “each of them attains the power to be and do the very thing which, of her own and inmost essence, she longs to do and be. Hereby: that each, where her own power ends, can be absorbed within the other, whose power commences where hers ends,—she maintains her own purity and freedom, her independence as *that* which she is.” Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 107, 139, and 189.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 155 (translation altered). “Erst wenn der Trotz aller drei Kunstarten auf ihre Selbstständigkeit sich bricht, um in der Liebe zu den andern aufzugehen . . . werden sie alle fähig, das vollendete Kunstwerk zu schaffen, ja ihr Aufhören in diesem Sinne ist ganz von selbst schon dieses Kunstwerk, ihr Tod unmittelbar sein Leben.” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 138-39. “*The solitary unit is unfree*, because confined and fettered in un-love; the *associate is free*, because unfettered and unconfined through love.” Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 96.

essential self; the interrelation of the arts was predicated on a notion of a formal purification, on a refusal to allow one art form to become contaminated by any other.²⁸

Just as art forms would achieve mutual love through their participation in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, individual artists would themselves derive personal pleasure from working for the stage. For example, a painter would feel happier working in the service of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*; “the complete [*vollendete*] artwork that faces him from the *stage*, set in this frame and in its full communal publicity, will content him infinitely more than did his earlier work,” Wagner wrote.²⁹ A painter’s work garnered increased exposure through its appearance on stage, where—at least theoretically—more people would gather to examine it. But the potential increase of spectators was not the only cause of Wagner’s high regard for theater work. The stage not only made the work accessible to more people but also, and more crucially, presented a work of art to a privileged group: the communal audience.

Wagner described the distinction between individual and communal spectatorship with a metaphor of framed images. On the one hand stood the smaller framed paintings

²⁸ Theater historian Jonathan Kalb has described “the polarity of wholeness and fragment,” a dialectic comprising the seamless *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the montage of fragments. While he argues that their synthesis occurs in the plays of Heiner Müller, the two forms imply each other from their historical beginnings. See Kalb, *The Theater of Heiner Müller* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 156. According to Walter Benjamin, the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* responded to a baroque desire for artistic synthesis, a synthesis which, he wrote, “is precisely what is required by the allegorical way of looking at things.” Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1977), 181.

²⁹ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 187 (translation altered). “Das vollendete Kunstwerk, das ihm von der *Bühne* entgegentritt, wird aber aus diesem Rahmen und von [sic] der vollen gemeinsamen Oeffentlichkeit ihn unendlich mehr befriedigen, als sein früheres. . . .” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 192 (italics original). “The illusion which [the painter’s] brush and finest blend of colours could only hint at, could only distantly approach, he will here bring to its consummation by artistic practice of every known device of optics, by use of all the art of lighting.” Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 186-87.

that were viewed by individuals and small gatherings; on the other, the image seen by a group audience within the large proscenium arch that framed a theater stage. In his words,

That which the landscape painter . . . had constricted in the narrow frames of panel-pictures—what he had hung on the egoist’s secluded chamber-walls, or had abandoned to the unconnected, incoherent, distorted stacks of a picture-storehouse—*with this* he will now fill the wide frame of the tragic stage, creating the whole scenic expanse as evidence of his power to re-create nature.³⁰

Beyond a matter of mere size (both of the picture frame and of the audience), spectatorship was, for Wagner, linked to a concern with the twin topics of communism and egoism, central themes in his writing at this time. Inherently, the very presence of a communal audience lent importance to the viewing experience. By contributing to the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in fact, the painter himself helped to form this communal audience from a group of individuals. “By setting his artwork in the frame of the tragic stage, he will expand the individual man to whom he would address himself to the communal Man of the full public sphere, and he will have the satisfaction of having extended his understanding out to this, of having made it sympathetic to his joy.”³¹

For Wagner, drama represented the ideal art form not only because it unified all the arts but also because, he argued, it ultimately came into being only as a result of the experience of the audience. Where a painting might be described as a work of art independent of any spectator, performed drama required the presence and the attention of

³⁰ Ibid., 186 (translation altered). “Was der Landschaftsmaler bisher . . . in den engen Rahmen des Bildstückes einzwängte,—was er an der einsamen Zimmerwand des Egoisten aufhängte oder zu beziehungsloser, unzusammenhängender und entstellender Uebereinanderschichtung in einem Bilderspeicher dahingab,—*damit* wird er nun den weiten Rahmen der tragischen Bühne erfüllen, den ganzen Raum der Szene zum Zeugnis seiner naturschöpferischen Kraft gestaltend.” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 191.

³¹ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 187 (translation altered). “Dadurch, daß er sein Kunstwerk nun in den Rahmen der tragischen Bühne stellt, wird er den Menschen, an den er sich mittheilen will, zum gemeinsamen Menschen der vollen Oeffentlichkeit erweitern und die Befriedigung haben, sein

this spectator in order to become complete. “The highest common [*gemeinsame*] artwork is the *Drama*,” he declared; “true Drama is only conceivable as emerging from the *common urge on the part of all the arts* toward the most direct communication to a common *public sphere*.”³² He measured the strength of a work of art by the intensity of its effect on the viewer, privileging live performance on the grounds that of all the art forms its effects, occurring both in unison and over time, extended the farthest beyond its formal boundaries. The combination of all forms of art thus not only encouraged the purest expression of each one but also allowed the work of art to achieve its greatest effect on the audience.

Wagner decried the days when only second- and third-rate poets would concern themselves with the performance of a play, rather than merely with its writing. As a result, he declared, “the unheard-of happened: *Dramas written for dumb reading!*”³³ Such dramas would never achieve the full potential of the art form, he argued. Three decades later, Nietzsche would write along similar lines, endorsing Wagner’s operas over spoken drama devoid of musical accompaniment. “No one who reflects on Wagner as poet and sculptor of language should forget that none of the Wagnerian dramas is intended to be read,” he wrote, whereas spoken drama “by contrast wants to influence the feelings solely through concepts and words; this objective brings it beneath the sway of rhetoric. But in

Verständniß auf diesen ausgedehnt, ihn zum Mitfühlenden seiner Freude gemacht zu haben. . . .” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 193.

³² Ibid., 184 (translation altered). “Das höchste gemeinsame Kunstwerk ist das *Drama*. . . . Das wahre Drama ist nur denkbar als aus dem *gemeinsamen Drange aller Künste* zur unmittelbarsten Mittheilung an eine gemeinsame *Oeffentlichkeit* hervorgehend. . . .” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 186-87. Drama best demonstrated the “frank and mutual permeation, generation, and completion of each several art from out itself [sic] and through its fellow.” Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 103-04.

³³ Ibid., 143. “So erschien denn das Unerhörte: *für die stümme Lectüre geschriebene Dramen!*” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 119.

life passion is rarely loquacious: in the spoken drama it has to be if it is to communicate itself at all.”³⁴ For both men (and, later, for Fuchs as well), words gained their very power both in combination with other art forms and in being performed before an audience. By the mid-nineteenth century, the theoretical value of live performance had soared, leading in the following decades to what the theater historian Harold B. Segal has described as the “disenchantment with language and the growing appeal of nonverbal expression” characteristic of European modernism.³⁵ The heightened theoretical value of performance owed much to Wagner and Nietzsche.

The concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* foregrounded the role of aesthetic reception, an activity that, in effect, helped to create the work of art. Rather than measuring a work by its inherent qualities, Wagner described it as something achieved by the presence of an audience: “What *he* [the dramatist] creates,” he wrote, “becomes an Art-work only when

³⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 238. “Language retreated from rhetorical expansiveness to the economy and force of a speech of feeling” in the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*; “the inward events which the poet of the spoken drama had hitherto kept off the stage on account of their supposedly undramatic nature now compelled the listener to a passionate empathy with them [*den Zuhörer zum leidenschaftlichen Miterleben*]. . . .” Ibid., 239. The German is found in Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke* IV, 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 61.

³⁵ For Segal, this modernist tendency is epitomized in the writings of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who in 1911 wrote: “Words evoke a keener sympathy, but it is at the same time figurative, intellectualized, and generalized. Music, on the other hand, evokes a fiercer sympathy, but it is vague, longingly extravagant. But the sympathy summoned by gestures is clearly all-embracing, contemporary, gratifying.” Notably, the purpose of each art form is the evocation of sympathy. Harold B. Segal, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 32; and Hofmannsthal, quoted in Segal, 43. Such a privileging of live performance over written dramatic texts reversed the judgment of Aristotle, for whom performance diluted the true artistic experience of poetic tragedy, which was ideally presented in book form for the benefit of one person at a time: “Spectacle is something enthralling, but it is very artless and least particular to the art of poetic composition. The potential of tragedy exists even without a performance and actors; besides, the designer’s art is more essential for the accomplishment of spectacular [effects] than is the poets’.” Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Richard Janko (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 10.

it enters into open life; and a work of dramatic art can only enter life upon the stage.”³⁶

The work of art ultimately was produced by the public who encountered it, and the unity of this public was central to its creative power. Wagner applied the formal logic of the work of art to the human personality, explaining the *Gesamtkunstwerk* with an anthropomorphic simile. “Each separate faculty of man is limited by bounds,” he wrote, “but his united, agreed, and reciprocally helping faculties . . . combine to form the self-completing, unbounded, universal faculty of men. Thus too has every *artistic* faculty of man its natural bounds, since man has not *only one Sense* but separate *Senses*. . . .”³⁷ The parallel structure that Wagner set up between human and artistic composition was more than formal; it also suggested a correspondence between the work of art presented on stage and the audience who gathered to experience it.

Just as the senses were more powerful when united, spectators might also gain strength in numbers. In other words, where individual art forms that were encountered without the benefit of the presence of their sister arts might impress an individual spectator, only a unified set of art forms, each one struggling to delimit its own formal boundaries, could achieve a truly powerful effect on an audience. Wagner denigrated the isolation that was necessary within what he termed a Christian model; he endorsed the shared reception possible within a group audience, which he presented as an ancient Greek model of spectatorship. The performance of tragic drama, he believed, was an

³⁶ Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution,” 61. “Drama is only conceivable as the fullest expression of a joint artistic longing to impart; while this longing, again, can only parley with a common receptivity.” Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 139.

³⁷ Ibid., 97. “In order to will to be the whole thing which of and in himself he is, the individual must learn to be absolutely not the thing he is not; but . . . only in the fullest of communion with that which is apart from him, in the completest absorption in to the commonalty of those who differ from him, can he ever be completely *what* he is by nature, what he must be, and as a reasonable being, can but will to be.” Ibid., 98.

essentially communal endeavor; it represented “the entry of the Art-work of the Folk upon the public arena of political life” and functioned in his essay as the link between ancient Greek and modern German culture.³⁸ To support the performance of tragic drama in modern Germany, he argued, would be to encourage German culture—which is to say, the German audience—to achieve its full potential.

Wagner used an architectural model to distinguish between solitary and group audiences, setting the communal environment of a Greek amphitheater against the model of solitary confinement within a Christian monastery. “Where the Greeks, for their edification, gathered in the amphitheatre for the space of a few short hours full of the deepest meaning,” he explained, “the Christian shut himself away in the life-long imprisonment of a cloister.”³⁹ Tragic drama, the highest cultural ideal, had been facilitated by the space of the Greek amphitheater, where people could convene to share the experience of spectatorship. Architecture not only helped create this experience; it also expressed the spirit of its age. Wagner noted that “we need but honestly search the contents and the workings of our public art, especially that of the stage, in order to see the spirit of the times reflected therein as in a faithful mirror.”⁴⁰ His judgment of the contents and the workings of the German theater was not positive. “Our modern stage materializes

³⁸ Ibid., 135. “Tragedy flourished for just so long as it was inspired by the spirit of the Folk, and as this spirit was a veritably popular one, *i.e.* a *communal* one. When the national brotherhood of the Folk was shivered into fragments, when the common bond of its Religion and primeval Customs was pierced and severed by the sophist needles of the egoistic spirit of Athenian self-dissection,—then the Folk’s art-work also ceased. . . .” Ibid., 136. In contrast to German drama, Wagner maintained, French comedy and Italian opera were by nature individualistic. The argument for the German emphasis on community parallels the distinction between community and society, or *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, in Ferdinand Tönnies’s 1887 book of that title.

³⁹ Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution,” 39. Wagner showed no interest in linking the collective sanctuary provided by the church and the communal space of the theater.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 43.

the ruling spirit of our social life,” he declared; “just as the Grecian tragedy denoted the culminating point of the Grecian spirit; but ours is the efflorescence of corruption, of a hollow, soulless, and unnatural condition of human affairs and human relations.”⁴¹

If the right architecture helped to produce the work of art, the reverse was also true; participation in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* would benefit the discipline of architecture, which in the theater of the future would become, as it were, like a cousin to those sister arts that struggled to define themselves against one another before succumbing to the pleasures of the communal artistic endeavor. “Only together with the redemption of the egoistically severed humanistic arts into the common [*gemeinsame*] artwork of the future,” Wagner explained, “will architecture also be redeemed from the bond of serfdom . . . into the most free and most inexhaustibly fertile of art activity.”⁴² The auditorium and the stage would collaborate with music, dance, and poetry to produce the optimum conditions for the German audience to receive the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This communal reception was at the same time creative, a process of exchange that helped to produce the performance. “In a perfect theater building,” Wagner wrote, “down to the smallest details, only art’s need gives law and measure. This need is twofold: that of *giving* and of *receiving*, which suggestively pervade and condition one another.”⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 162. “Nur mit der Erlösung der egoistisch getrennten reinmenschlichen Kunstarten in das gemeinsame Kunstwerk . . . wird auch die Baukunst aus den Banden der Knechtschaft . . . zur freiesten, unerschöpflich fruchtbarsten Kunstthätigkeit erlöst werden.” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 150-51. “But *Landscape-painting*, as last and perfected conclusion of all the plastic arts, will become the very soul of Architecture; she will teach us so to rear the *stage* for the dramatic Artwork of the Future. . . .” Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 181.

⁴³ Ibid., 184 (translation altered). “In einem vollkommenen Theatergebäude giebt bis auf die kleinsten Einzelheiten nur das Bedürfnis der Kunst Maß und Gesetz. Dieß Bedürfnis ist ein doppeltes, das des *Gebens* und des *Empfangens*, welches sich beziehungsweise gegenseitig durchbringt und bedingt.” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 187-88 (italics original).

Such a process of artistic exchange, of mutual absorption and emotional transport between audience members and the performers on stage, dissolved the distinction between spectator and performer. “Thus the spectator transplants himself completely upon the stage, by seeing and hearing,” Wagner wrote, “while the performer becomes an artist only by complete absorption into the public.”⁴⁴ In this experience of communal catharsis, “the public, that representation of daily life, forgets the confines of the auditorium, and lives and breathes now only in the artwork, which appears to it to be life itself, and on the stage, which appears to be the whole world.”⁴⁵ In a well-constructed theater, the process of identification would be complete. The absorption between spectator, performer, and the work of art would soon appear in Nietzsche’s work, in the guise of the Dionysian impulse. Subsequently, it would be taken up by the empathy theorists to describe the emotional absorption of the art viewer, which likewise helped create the work of art. While these later descriptions of spectatorship would prove important for Fuchs, Wagner’s writings offered him something particularly appealing: the discussion of an absorption that occurred within the audience, dissolving the boundaries among the individual spectators to form them into a group.

⁴⁴ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 185 (translation altered). “So versetzt [der Zuschauer] durch Schauen und Hören sich gänzlich auf die Bühne; der Darsteller ist Künstler nur durch volles Aufgehen in das Publikum.” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 188-89.

⁴⁵ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 185 (translation altered). “. . . aus dem Zuschauerraume verschwindet das Publikum, dieser Repräsentant des Öffentlichen Lebens . . . es lebt und athmet nur noch in dem Kunstwerke, das ihm das Leben selbst, und auf der Szene, die ihm der Weltraum dünkt.” Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 189.

3. The *Volk*

If the spectator helped to create the work of art, then the creation of the ideal *Gesamtkunstwerk* would demand the presence of a particular audience. Unfortunately, the contemporary German audience, in Wagner's view, did not measure up; it was a "conglomerate of self-seeking caprice" that paled in comparison with the idealized Athenians of the past.⁴⁶ At issue, in part, was its socioeconomic uniformity. In German theaters "lo! only the affluent classes," he claimed, whereas "within the ample boundaries of the Grecian amphitheatre the whole populace was wont to witness the performances."⁴⁷ Thus, modern audiences were by definition unable to undergo the cathartic experience that would help create the work of art; given their uniform socioeconomic background, they possessed no disparate members that might be molded by the performance into a unified group. The performance formed a unified audience from individual spectators who would become part of the group while the work of art itself entered the public realm. In the mid-nineteenth century, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* could therefore only exist as the artwork of the future, one that aimed fundamentally at creating future audiences—although tastes of this future were to be found in Wagner's own music dramas.

Wagner referred to such future audiences with the notion of the *Volk*, which represented a notion of unified German cultural strength that carried an amorphous political significance. He defined the fellowship tautologically in 1849; it comprised those individuals who wished to be a part of such a group. "*Who is the Volk?*" he asked; who *was* the audience of the future? Such a group, he responded, "is the epitome of all

⁴⁶ Richard Wagner, "The Art-Work of the Future," 88. "Diesem Zusammenhange willkürlicher Eigenschaft" is found in Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 33.

those *who feel a communal need*. To it belong, then, all those who find their individual need to be based in a communal need. . . .”⁴⁸ The *Volk* was a gathering of individuals who wished to be unified by their communal experience. Facing a work of art, Germans would exchange their individuality for a collective identity. For Wagner, this collective identity had revolutionary potential in 1848. By the end of his life, his understanding of the *Volk*—like his thinking generally—had grown more conservative. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of the *Volk* played a more conservative role in the field of cultural criticism. “The link between art and politics was the *Volk*, that mythical repository of character and strength, of which every conservative German dreamed,” the historian Fritz Stern has written.⁴⁹ The very vagueness of this entity made it all the more easily manipulable, helping to negotiate a conceptual transition from individual spectators to the group audience of the future. “The real source of individuality was the *Volk* or the community,” Stern continues, “and only by restoring it, if necessary through compulsion, could freedom and greatness be achieved.”⁵⁰

For Nietzsche in the 1870s, in contrast to Wagner, the *Volk* held no value and the audience was no greater than the sum of its parts. In his words, “‘public,’ after all, is a

⁴⁷ Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution,” 47.

⁴⁸ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 74 and 75 (italics original; translation altered). “*Wer ist das Volk? . . . Das Volk ist der Inbegriff aller Derjenigen, welche eine gemeinschaftliche Noth empfinden. Zu ihm gehören daher alle Diejenigen, welche ihre eigene Noth als eine gemeinschaftlichen begründet finden. . . .*” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 9 and 11.

⁴⁹ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 179. Stern notes the distinction between “the genuine *Volk* that are always right and the democratic collection of individuals, of egoists, that was almost always inimical to the *Volk*.” Ibid., 120. On the parallel between European Hellenism and the interest in folk culture, see Josef Chytry, *The Aesthetic State*, 6.

⁵⁰ Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 180.

mere word. In no sense is it a homogeneous and constant quantity.”⁵¹ The creative artist, whose inspiration rendered him superior to those who received his work, was under no obligation to cater to this amorphous group. “Why should the artist be bound to accommodate himself to a power whose strength lies solely in numbers?” Nietzsche demanded. “And if, by virtue of his endowments and aspirations, he should feel himself superior to every one of these spectators, how could he feel greater respect for the collective expression of all these subordinate capacities than for the relatively highest-endowed individual spectator?”⁵² Collectivity in itself meant little to Nietzsche, who valued instead two creatures: the artist who bestowed the work of art from an exalted position and the spectator who was capable of appreciating it. The audience was, quite simply, a conglomeration of the latter group.

But Nietzsche was not oblivious to the experience of this conglomeration. In his essay “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” for example, he described its role in witnessing the Wagnerian music drama, explaining the experience as the enactment of an exalted existential crisis. The spectator, he wrote,

is from time to time compelled . . . to ask himself: what would this nature have with you? To what end do *you* really exist? — Probably he will be unable to find an answer, and will then stand still, amazed [*befremdet*] and perplexed at his own being. Let him then be satisfied to have experienced even this; let him hear in the fact that he *feels alienated* [*entfremdet*] from his own being the answer to his question. For it is precisely with this feeling that he participates in Wagner’s mightiest accomplishment, the central point of his power, the demonic *transmissibility* and self-relinquishment [*Selbstentäusserung*] of his nature. . . .⁵³

⁵¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 79.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 222 (italics original; translation altered). “Der Betrachtende . . . muss unwillkürlich von Zeit zu Zeit auf sich, auf seine Kleinheit und Gebrechlichkeit zurückgeworfen werden und wird sich fragen: was soll sie dir? Wozu bist denn *du* eigentlich da? — Wahrscheinlich fehlt ihm dann die Antwort, und er steht vor seinem eigenen Wesen befremdet und betroffen

The spectator, Nietzsche believed, experienced a loss of self that felt both liberating and disturbing. Self-relinquishment entailed a distancing from the self, a sense of alienation that was not entirely negative, but was rather a form of active participation in the composer's own creation.

The terms of Nietzsche's description are of particular interest. Decades earlier, both Hegel and Marx had used the terms *Entfremdung* and *Selbstentäusserung* to describe a concept of alienation. According to the historian of philosophy Richard Schacht, interest in the concept arose only in 1932, with the publication of Marx's "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" of 1844.⁵⁴ If Nietzsche participated in a discourse of alienation, Schacht has argued, he did so only unconsciously and not in an original manner: "Nietzsche uses variants of the term *Entfremdung* in a few scattered passages, but only in passing, and in quite ordinary ways, which warrant no special attention."⁵⁵ But rather than constructing invidious comparisons between Nietzsche's use of the term and that of Hegel and Marx, it would seem more productive to explore the concept in Nietzsche's writing as part of a theory of modern spectatorship; as an articulation of subjectivity within the field of aesthetic discourse. The same holds true for early twentieth-century appropriations of the concept. As we shall see in chapter six, the term *Selbstentäusserung* would reappear in 1908 in the writings of Wilhelm Worringer, as a description of the spectator's experience in the face of abstract art.

still. Mag es ihm dann genügen, eben diess erlebt zu haben; mag er eben darin, dass er sich seinem *Wesen entfremdet fühlt* die Antwort auf jene Fragen hören. Denn gerade mit diesem Gefühle nimmt er Theil an der gewaltigsten Lebensäusserung Wagner's, dem Mittelpuncte seiner Kraft, jener dämonischen *Uebertragbarkeit* und Selbstentäusserung seiner Natur. . . ." Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (*Unzeitgemässige Betrachtungen* IV) in Colli und Montinari, eds., 38.

⁵⁴ See Richard Schacht, *Alienation* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), 65.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 198.

For Nietzsche, *Entfremdung* and *Selbstentäußerung* conflated two seemingly different sensations: that of alienation, on the one hand, and, on the other, that of spectatorial identification. The alienated spectator, in other words, experienced both a depletion of his sense of himself as an individual and a participation in something larger: “By apparently succumbing to Wagner’s overflowing nature,” Nietzsche claimed, the spectator

who reflects upon it has in fact participated in its energy and has thus as it were *through him* acquired power *against him*; and whoever examines himself closely knows that even mere contemplation involves a secret antagonism, the antagonism involved in comparison. If his art allows us to experience all that a soul encounters when it goes on a journey—participation in other souls and their destiny, acquisition of the ability to look at the world through many eyes—we are, then, through such alienation and remoteness [*Entfremdung und Entlegenheit*], also made capable of seeing him himself after having experienced him himself.⁵⁶

The suggestion of alienation as a creative force, as a participatory experience, would surface more famously in Germany in the 1930s, reconfigured as *Verfremdung*, or estrangement, in the work of Bertolt Brecht. There, too, the experience ostensibly entailed a loss of self which also incorporated an element of psychological identification.⁵⁷ But alienation and the “participation in other souls” were linked already by Nietzsche, in the guise of a hybrid experience felt by both the creative artist and the viewer in which “the

⁵⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 223 (italics original; translation altered). “Indem der Betrachtende scheinbar der aus- und überströmenden Natur Wagner’s unterliegt, hat er an ihrer Kraft selber Antheil genommen und ist so gleichsam *durch ihn gegen ihn* mächtig geworden; und Jeder, der sich genau prüft, weiss, dass selbst zum Betrachten eine geheimnisvolle Gegnerschaft, die des Entgegenschauens, gehört. Lässt uns seine Kunst alles Das erleben, was eine Seele erfährt, die auf Wanderschaft geht, an anderen Seelen und ihrem Loose Theil nimmt, aus vielen Augen in die Welt blicken lernt, so vermögen wir nun auch, aus solcher Entfremdung und Entlegenheit, ihn selbst zu sehen, nachdem wir ihn selbst erlebt haben.” Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” in Colli und Montinari, eds., 38-39.

⁵⁷ On the role of psychological identification in Brecht’s theorization of estrangement, see my “Playing Politics with Estranged and Empathetic Audiences: Bertolt Brecht and Georg Fuchs,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 96, no. 4 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998): 809-20.

uncanny, exuberant sensation of amazement [*Befremdung*] and wonder at the world is coupled with the ardent longing to approach this same world as a lover.”⁵⁸

The hybrid experience of the work of art, as Nietzsche explained it, was simultaneously a paralyzing loss of self and an active engagement in the art object. This aesthetic experience on the part of the spectator was interchangeable, in his view, with that undergone by the creative artist. He had elsewhere described in similar terms an artist facing an image that he would soon turn into a painting, referring to “that aesthetic phenomenon of detachment from personal interest with which a painter sees in a stormy landscape with thunder and lightning, or a rolling sea, only the picture of them within him, the phenomenon of complete absorption in the things themselves. . . .”⁵⁹ Just like the spectator, the artist felt both detachment and absorption; the simultaneous presence of the two sensations defined both artistic creation and aesthetic reception. But while both spectator and artist were engaged in parallel creative endeavors, each helping in his way to create the work of art, both were emphatically singular individuals.

Nietzsche’s presentation of the hybrid aesthetic sensation of detachment and absorption evokes his explanation of the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The similarity is partly formal; both discussions describe the dual nature of the aesthetic response. But it operates as well at the level of content; Nietzsche specifically associated Apollo with the spectator’s emotional absorption in the work of art, and he considered this absorption—itsself linked to the emotion of pity—to be

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 226 (translation altered). “. . . und sich jene unheimlich-übermüthige Befremdung und Verwunderung über die Welt mit den sehnsüchtigen Drange paart, derselben Welt als liebender zu nahen.” Colli and Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke* IV, 43.

essentially individualistic. “The Apollonian tears us out of the Dionysian universality and lets us find delight in individuals; it attaches our pity [*Mitleidserregung*] to them,” he proclaimed in 1872.⁶⁰ If Apollo governed the pity felt by one person for another, Dionysus controlled the sensation of universalizing passion. Only by operating in tandem could the two foster true creativity, both within the artist and on the part of the spectator.

4. Empathy

Significantly, although Nietzsche presumed pity to be fundamentally individualistic, he also believed that the emotion was evoked explicitly by the spectator’s experience of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, an experience that of necessity occurred within the larger context of a theater audience. In Wagner’s music dramas, Nietzsche explained, the spectator was affected by the work of art simultaneously by three distinct registers of artistic production: word, gesture, and music. It was precisely the combination of all three that inspired the spectator’s experience of empathy. “All these effects take place simultaneously without in the least interfering with one another,” he wrote,

and compel him before whom such a drama is presented to a quite novel understanding and empathy [*Miterleben*], just as though his senses had all at once grown more spiritual and his spirit more sensual, and as though everything that longs to know is now in a free and blissful transport of knowing.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” (1873), *Untimely Meditations*, 91.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 128. “So entreisst uns das Apollinische der dionysischen Allgemeinheit und entzückt uns für die Individuen; an diese fesselt es unsre Mitleidserregung. . . .” Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in Colli und Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke* III, 1 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 133.

⁶¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 239. Here, perhaps, the English version reinforces my argument better than does the original. “To a quite novel understanding and empathy” translates

The very combination of art forms on the Wagnerian stage, according to Nietzsche, served to encourage this blissful experience on the part of the spectator. The plurality of art forms corresponded to the plethora of spectators who congregated within the auditorium in order to experience the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

While the words *Mitleid* and *Miterlebnis* may be most accurately translated as pity or compassion, the concept they represent in Nietzsche's writing strongly resembles the emotion that the philosopher Robert Vischer would the following year describe as *Einfühlung*, or empathy, in his treatise *Über das Optische Formgefühl* [On the optical sense of form]. The concept had existed for centuries and can be traced to Aristotle's treatment of *eleos* in the *Rhetoric*; the term *Einfühlung* had first appeared in 1800 in the work of Gottfried Herder, who was cited by the late nineteenth-century empathy theorists as a precursor.⁶² Vischer—whose more famous father, the professor of philosophical aesthetics Friedrich Theodor Vischer, was a personal acquaintance of Nietzsche's—is taken as the initiator of the modern school of aesthetic thought known as empathy theory, presenting empathy specifically as a spatial concept.⁶³

Nietzsche's phrase "zu einem ganz neuen Verstehen und Miterleben." Colli and Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke* IV, 61.

⁶² On the link between empathy, sympathy, and ruth in Aristotle's notion of *eleos*, see Walter Kaufmann, *Tragedy and Philosophy*, 44-48. Josef Chytrý attributes a more important role to Herder, whose "cultivation of historical empathy, his invention of 'Einfühlung [sic],' gave birth to historicism and furnished the European mind with the ideal of the natural poetic societies that came to serve as the esoteric Weimar *Humanität*." Chytrý, *The Aesthetic State*, 48. According to W. H. Bruford, "The very word 'Einfühlung' is his [Herder's] invention. This we may regard as a mainly *aesthetic* approach." Bruford, *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar, 1775-1806* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 222. On eighteenth-century debates over *Mitleid* and *Mitempfindung*, see Hans-Jürgen Schings, *Die mitleidigste Mensch ist der beste Mensch: Poetik des Mitleids von Lessing bis Büchner* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1980).

⁶³ An excellent historical overview of the development of the concept of empathy in the nineteenth century, treating the work of Conrad Fiedler, August Schmarsow, Vischer, Heinrich Wölfflin, and others, is found in the introduction to Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, eds. and trans., *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center Publications, 1994), 1-85.

According to Robert Vischer, writing in 1873, empathy denoted the spectator's "feeling-into" the art object. Vischer distinguished the experience from such others as *Aus-*, *Nach-*, and *Zufühlung* in part because *Einfühlung* entailed an active physical engagement with the work of art. In viewing a work of art, he explained,

I project my own life into the lifeless form, just as I quite justifiably do with another living person. Only ostensibly do I keep my own identity although the object [I view] remains distinct. I seem merely to adapt and attach myself to it as one hand clasps another, and yet I am mysteriously transplanted and magically transformed into this Other.⁶⁴

Vischer described the aesthetic experience as a process that transformed, and in a sense created, both the viewer and the work of art. The discourse of empathy, subsequently developed by such theorists as Conrad Fiedler, August Schmarsow, and Heinrich Wölfflin, treated vision and the experience of space in psychic terms.

The process of empathy, which destabilized the viewer's identity, occurred as a physical sensation along the surface of the body. As Vischer explained it, "the perception of exterior limits to a form can combine in some obscure way with the sensation of my own physical boundaries, which I feel on, or rather with, my own skin."⁶⁵ Theorists of empathy argued that vision, and particularly the perception of space, affected the viewer somatically; as Wölfflin stated in his *Prolegomena to the Psychology of Architecture*, "asymmetry is often experienced as physical pain, as if a limb were missing or injured."⁶⁶ Empathy theory, in other words, described an embodied vision, an aesthetic response to art that was simultaneously physical, emotional, and psychological. "There is a

⁶⁴ Robert Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics" (1873), in Mallgrave and Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form and Space*, 104.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁶ Heinrich Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture" (1886) in Mallgrave and Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form and Space*, 155.

psychology of art,” wrote Adolf von Hildebrand in reference to empathy theory, that articulated the “clear feeling for the effect of such stimulated movement on our sensibility as a whole. Such effects determine whether or not we breathe freely, for our general sensations are related to the spatial imagination and supported by kinesthetic notions.”⁶⁷

Vischer’s statement that “empathy leaves the self in a certain sense solitary” aimed to describe the result of the aesthetic response, in which the process of psychic projection left the viewer feeling depleted.⁶⁸ His comment also reflects a basic presumption about the kind of viewer capable of experiencing the sensation of empathy. Theorists of empathy presumed the viewing subject to be a solitary individual whose cultivated soul was transported by the exalted experience of art viewing. While never explicitly described, the empathetic viewer—for all his loss of self—was implicitly a man of property whose identity was destabilized within the confines of a relatively private realm, carefully circumscribed by the laws of decorum and propriety.⁶⁹ The discourse of empathy, with contributions from a wide range of fields (philosophy, perceptual psychology, optics, and visual and architectural theory), offered an interdisciplinary forum for an abstract discussion of an individual spectator’s vision. In doing so, it carried aesthetic discourse from the realm of philosophy—with treatises written, on occasion, by artists or architects making forays to the theoretical end of their discipline—

⁶⁷ Adolf von Hildebrand, “The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts” (1893) in Mallgrave and Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form and Space*, 247-48.

⁶⁸ Robert Vischer, “On the Optical Sense of Form,” 108.

⁶⁹ In attempting to describe the spectator’s active reception of art, one might argue, empathy theorists domesticated Kant’s notion of the sublime. The active aesthetic response, previously available only in nature, could with the new vocabulary of empathy be conceived within the context of art ownership.

to that of psychology, complete with a newfound reliance on inductive reasoning and experimentation. It lent itself in particular to the discussion of architecture as a spatial art.

References to pity, sympathy, and compassion—evoking not only Nietzsche but Schopenhauer and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as well—all appeared within the discourse of empathy theory, but they were not always, or consistently, distinguished from one another. English translations of the original German texts have further muddied their relationship. Wölfflin’s characterization of “the moral and aesthetic states of mind” demonstrates a typically earnest effort to theorize the distinctions between these sensations: “The ‘compassion’ that the former presumes is psychologically the same process as sympathy,” he explained. “Thus, as is known, great artists are always also ‘good people,’ that is, they are eminently susceptible to the emotion of compassion.”⁷⁰ Wölfflin’s claim reveals—in addition to a charming naiveté—an identification of sympathy and compassion that contradicts the complex distinctions made by Vischer between *Aus-*, *Nach-*, and *Zu-* and *Einfühlung*.

Nietzsche himself never treated the notion of empathy (or sympathy) in spatial terms, nor described the aesthetic response as it literally occurred on the spectator’s skin. Yet his description of this response as a merging of the self into the work of art that provoked both a speechlessness and a loss of discrete, individual identity, strongly resembles the aesthetic activity that would become prevalent among aesthetic theorists in the coming decades. Writing in 1849, Wagner described the spectator’s “sympathetic

⁷⁰ Heinrich Wölfflin, “Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture,” 157.

[*sympathetisch*] gaze.”⁷¹ Here, again, the difference in vocabulary belies a conceptual similarity. Wagner had also associated the notion of sympathy with the spectator’s sense of self-alienation, a hybrid emotion that he likened to “a thorough stepping out of oneself into unreserved sympathy [*Mitgefühl*] with the joy of the beloved, in itself.”⁷² The artist aimed his work at those capable of feeling this hybrid emotion, he explained: “those who, by reason of their general sympathy with him, *can understand this situation also, and through their sharing in his endeavor . . . make good to him in self-creative generosity the fulness of those furthering conditions* which are denied his artwork by the actual times.”⁷³ The communal sympathy, felt by the group of “fellow-feeling and fellow creating friends” [*mitfühlenden und mitschöpferischen Freunde*], helped to create the work of art.

5. Wagner’s Festival Theater

Wagner provided an important model for Fuchs not only with his theoretical writings but also through his protracted efforts to build a theater appropriate for his music dramas. In the foreword to his *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle in 1862, the composer had called for a “provisional theater, as simple as possible, perhaps merely of wood, and calculated only

⁷¹ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 80. The German is found in Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 19.

⁷² Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 168 (translation altered). The German reads: “Diese Freude war aber kein egoistisches Sehnen, sondern ein vollständiges Ausschiherausgehen zum unbedingtesten Mitgefühl der Freude des Geliebten an sich selbst. . . .” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 160.

⁷³ Richard Wagner, “A Communication to my Friends” (1851), in *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, 283 (italics original). The German describes those “die in ihrer Sympathie für ihn überhaupt, *auch diese seine Stellung begreifen und durch ihren Anteil an seinem Streben . . . in selbstschöpferischer Freiwilligkeit die Fülle von ermöglichenden Bedingungen ihm ersetzen*, die seinem Kunstwerke von der Wirklichkeit versagt sind.” See Georg Richard Kruse, ed., *Autobiographische Skizze: Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde von Richard Wagner* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1888), 52.

according to the artistic effectiveness of the interior activity.”⁷⁴ The environment was to be subservient to the performance; it would exist in order to facilitate the spectators’ aesthetic response. Wagner specified two architectural features of the auditorium: the seating arrangement was to be that of an amphitheater, and the orchestra pit was to be submerged so as to be invisible to the audience.⁷⁵ These two features—both of which, as we shall see, contradicted prevailing taste for festival theaters—would remain central to his vision of the perfect theater, while his plans for the building would pass through several proposals and take over a decade to build.

Prompted initially by an offer of funding from King Ludwig II in 1864, Wagner enlisted the architect Gottfried Semper to design a theater for him in Munich. Semper’s efforts, which have been amply described from the point of view of architectural history by Harry Francis Mallgrave, began with two designs the following year.⁷⁶ The first was a provisional theater to be located within the Glass Palace that had been constructed by August von Voit ten years earlier in the city’s botanical gardens, in imitation of London’s Crystal Palace. [fig. 2.1] The second was a more formal structure that was to be built, eventually, as the theater’s permanent home on the east bank of the Isar River. [fig. 2.2]

⁷⁴ “. . . ein provisorisches Theater, so einfach wie möglich, vielleicht bloß aus Holz, und nur auf künstlerische Zweckmäßigkeit des Inneren berechnet. . . .” Richard Wagner, as quoted in Heinrich Habel, *Festspielhaus und Wahnfried: Geplante und Ausgeführte Bauten Richard Wagners* (Munich: Prestel, 1985), 23. Further details are in Habel, “Die Idee eines Festspielhauses,” in Detta and Michael Petzet, *Die Richard Wagner-Bühne König Ludwigs II* (Munich: Prestel, 1970), 298-316.

⁷⁵ Heinrich Habel, *Festspielhaus und Wahnfried*, 24.

⁷⁶ See Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 251-67. On the design for the interior of the Glass Palace, see Eugen Roth, *Der Glaspalast in München: Glanz und Ende, 1854-1931* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1971), 31-33. For more on the exchange between Wagner and Semper, see Sophie Gobran, “The Munich Festival Theater Letters,” *Perspecta* 26: *The Yale Architecture Journal* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990): 47-68. The exchange itself is in Manfred Semper, ed., *Das Münchener Festspielhaus: Gottfried Semper und Richard Wagner* (Hamburg: Verlag von Conrad H. A. Klobß, 1906).

Seating 1000 and 1500 people, respectively, both projects possessed Wagner's two desired features of amphitheater and sunken orchestra, as well as proscenium stages that allowed what Semper termed "the necessary separation of the real world from that of the stage."⁷⁷

Owing both to political opposition and to the difficult personalities involved in the commission, reconfigurations of each proposal ensued, adapted for several different sites in Munich. By 1867, Semper had designed a festival theater for a vast area on the raised eastern river bank, a site that would be approached by the new Isar Bridge leading from the center of the city. [figs. 2.3 and 2.4] "From this eminence the ideal festival theater will proudly tower," Wagner declared in a letter to the King.⁷⁸ The grand processional approach was matched by the monumentality and opulence of the building itself; the central triumphal arch on its façade flanked by an excess of forty smaller arches. Wagner wrote enthusiastically: "It is a wonder: my idea, my instructions and requests were fully understood by Semper's genius, and—what is best of all—carried out in such a completely new and effective way that the connoisseur at once admires the sublime simplicity of this conception."⁷⁹ The building's monumental, hierarchical exterior, while contradicting the democratic symbolism of the amphitheatrical seating arrangement within the auditorium, fully matched Wagner's own sense of self-importance.

⁷⁷ Gottfried Semper, letter to Wagner of 10 May 1865, quoted in Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, 256.

⁷⁸ Richard Wagner, letter to King Ludwig II of 13 September 1865, quoted in Sophie Gobran, "The Munich Festival Theater Letters," 58.

⁷⁹ "Es ist ein Wunder: meine Idee, meine Angaben und Anforderungen wurden von Sempers Genie vollkommen begriffen, und—was eben der Große ist—in so vollendet neuer und zweckmäßiger Weise ausgeführt, daß der Kenner zugleich über die erhabene Einfachheit dieser Conzeption [sic] in Bewunderung geräth. . . ." Richard Wagner, letter to Ludwig of 2 Jan 1867, quoted in Heinrich Habel, *Festspeilhaus und Wahnfried*, 61.

The structure was never built, however, and Munich lost the honor of presenting Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerke* to the town of Bayreuth, eighty kilometers northeast of Nürnberg.⁸⁰ Designed by the architect Otto Brückwald and the stage engineer Karl Brandt, Wagner's theater opened in 1876 with a production of the *Ring* cycle. [figs. 2.5 and 2.6] Its design relied heavily on Semper's plans, which Ludwig had passed on to Wagner, who had in turn showed them to his new collaborators.⁸¹ It had been reconceived as a temporary structure to be used only once, for the production of Wagner's Ring cycle, and then destroyed; the building's exterior was built of timber with brick and some stone detailing and its auditorium constructed entirely of wood. Despite the modesty of the materials, the debt to Semper's own design was clear. As if such acknowledgment were necessary, Wagner conceded the plagiarism in a letter to Semper: "Although clumsy and artless," he wrote, "the theater is executed according to your designs."⁸²

Wagner's festival theater was built just outside the center of Bayreuth, at the top of a small hill. [figs. 2.7 and 2.8] Like Semper's design for a Munich theater, and like the contemporaneous designs for the Paris Opéra by Charles Garnier (1861-74), the building was visible from a great distance. Both the processional approach toward it and the formally planted gardens around it lent a solemn, monumental air that bricks and wood could not provide. According to the theater historian Marvin Carlson,

the true predecessors of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus were thus not, as Wagner suggested, the theatres of Greece, but the great pilgrimage churches of the Middle

⁸⁰ Among other causes of Wagner and Semper's separation, Sophie Gobran cites their "fundamental differences. . . with regard to architecture's status in a *Gesamtkunstwerk*," for Wagner's concept was "broader in theory than it was realistic in practice." Gobran, "The Munich Festival Theater Letters," 64.

⁸¹ See Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, 266.

⁸² Quoted in Heinrich Habel, *Festspielhaus und Wahnfried*, 93.

Ages, supported not by a local population but by a public that considered the spiritual rewards gained there worth the labor and expense of a lengthy journey.⁸³

In his essays of 1849, the composer had demanded precisely this combination of democratic access for members of the public from around the nation and the lofty status of the event itself.

Within the auditorium at Bayreuth, not only the performance but also the spectator's entire experience was supposed to sustain the effect of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This experience would in turn be facilitated by the surrounding architecture, which in Wagner's view was to function entirely for this purpose. "In the arrangement of the *space for the spectators*," he wrote,

the need for optic and acoustic understanding of the artwork will give the necessary law, which can only be observed by a union of beauty and fitness in the proportions; for the demand of the collective [*gemeinsam*] artwork is the demand of the *artwork*, to whose comprehension it must be distinctly led by everything that meets the eye.⁸⁴

Following this decree, the Bayreuth auditorium was designed to maximize the effect of the performance on the spectator. As in Semper's earlier projects in Munich, the orchestra was tucked under the proscenium stage, its sound subsumed within the stage image. [figs. 2.9 and 2.10] The aim was not only to improve acoustical reception but also to remove from sight any trace of the construction of the performance. Ideally, spectators would be

⁸³ Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theater Architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 88. Beat Wyss has likewise written that, according to Wagner, "the place for the performance of the Ring should not be a noisy amusement park, but rather a holy place of pilgrimage, a shrine; the building site for national communion would be set in the midst of grass." Wyss, "Ragnarök of Illusion: Richard Wagner's 'Mystical Abyss' at Bayreuth," in *October* 54 (Fall 1990), 68.

⁸⁴ Richard Wagner, "The Art-Work of the Future," 185 (italics original). "In der Anordnung des *Raumes der Zuschauergiebt* das Bedürfnis nach Verständniß des Kunstwerkes optisch und akustisch das nothwendige Gesetz, dem, neben der Zweckmäßigkeit, zugleich nur durch die Schönheit der Anordnungen entsprochen werden kann; denn das Verlangen des gemeinsamen Zuschauers ist eben das Verlangen nach dem *Kunstwerk*, zu dessen Erfassen er durch Alles, was sein Auge berührt, bestimmt werden muß." Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 188.

absorbed by the music drama without such visual distractions as musicians and instruments to remind them of the constructed nature of the work of art.⁸⁵ While Wagner endorsed such visual and emotional absorption, he also wished to distance spectators from the performance in a more figurative way, emphasizing the “complete separation of the ideal stage world from the reality that replaces it, by means of the circle of spectators.”⁸⁶ This sense of auratic distance between the spectators and stage, however, was counteracted by a closeness among the group of spectators that was both emotional and physical. The spectator was to be made to feel a part of the audience, and the architecture of the auditorium was a crucial element in this effort.

Within traditional auditoriums, such architectural delineations of space as balconies and private boxes reflected a social and economic hierarchy established by spectators’ relative ability (and willingness) to pay for an evening’s performance. Boxes, for example, offered relative privacy for smaller groups, and with it the higher social status such privacy conveyed. Additionally, they operated as architectural frames around their patrons, rendering them more noticeable from the rest of the auditorium. In the nineteenth century, Carlson has written,

the possession of a box, especially of a box at the opera, came to be regarded as one of the more dependable signs of membership in the privileged classes, so much so that even in the democratic United States, the Metropolitan Opera was originally built not primarily to satisfy a public desire for this art, but because all

⁸⁵ On the link between the Bayreuth festival theater and the cinema, see Beat Wyss, “*Ragnarök of Illusion*,” 77-78. The theater historian Iain Mackintosh likewise presents the Bayreuth theater as essentially cinematic, citing its emphasis on the stage picture instead of social and architectural distractions and the consequent effect of keeping the audience passive. See Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor, and Audience* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 41.

⁸⁶ “Vollständige Trennung der idealen Bühnenwelt von der durch den Zuschauerkreis vertretenen Realität.” Richard Wagner, quoted in Heinrich Habel, “Die Idee eines Festspielhauses,” 311.

the “aristocratic” boxes at the old Academy of Music were filled by immovable members of the established rich. . . .⁸⁷

A drawing of the New York Metropolitan Opera house, published in the *Daily Graphic* in 1883, underscores its reliance on private boxes for many of its patrons. [fig. 2.11] The scene is shown from behind the two rows of seats at the rear of a box, as if from the doorway that separates the box itself from its anteroom, itself labeled “salon” in the floor plan that accompanies the drawing. Across the auditorium, three and a half tiers of boxes are visible below two more rows of balconies. Rather than facing the stage directly, they are oriented toward us, the viewer within the auditorium.

Closer to Wagner’s home, the auditorium of the Markgräfliches Opera house in the center of the town of Bayreuth had been completed in 1748. Ornate as any royal jewel box, this auditorium is laden with hierarchical subdivisions. [fig. 2.12] Its three tiers of balconies form a horseshoe shape; their extremities oriented equally toward the royal box and the stage. (Dividing walls have since been removed; each tier originally comprised a dozen individual boxes.) The room’s architectural focal point is not the stage itself, but, rather, the royal box in the center of the auditorium’s first tier; the entire room appears to have been constructed in consideration of the view toward, and the view from, this central point.⁸⁸ Vastly oversized in proportion to its neighbors, its extensive frame prohibiting seats in the above tier, and flanked by its own subsidiary boxes, it is approached from the orchestra stalls by means of double staircases, their bases surrounded by empty space.

⁸⁷ Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance*, 142-43.

⁸⁸ Renovations at the Markgräfliches theater have removed the forestage; performers no longer stand in front of the proscenium. See Iain Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor, and Audience*, 143. Further discussion of the architecture of this theater is found in Susanne Schrader, *Architektur der barocken Hoftheater in Deutschland* (Munich: scaneg, 1988), 162-73; and in Beat Wyss, “Ragnarök of Illusion,” 73-74.

In comparison with the Markgräfliches theater, as well as with other, more contemporary theaters—such as the Paris Opéra, inaugurated the previous year—Wagner’s new auditorium is remarkably plain. [figs. 2.13 and 2.14] The side walls, instead of holding tiers of balconies, provide entrance doors to the rows of seats, which are arranged in a solid mass, without aisles. Likewise, at the back of the theater, no balconies exist to subdivide the spectators. The only boxes available were arranged in a row across the rear wall of the theater (a second row was added above this one when the building was reconstructed after World War Two). [fig. 2.15] The seating arrangement ensured equal sight-lines for all spectators and the absence of social stratification among them. This arrangement derived from the amphitheatrical model that Wagner had long championed; opposing the ornate auditoriums used for Italian opera, it embraced instead the outdoor theaters of classical Greece on which it was based. Its invocation of Greek culture, as we have seen, had democratic associations linked to the notion of the *Volk*.⁸⁹

The appearance of the festival theater auditorium was entirely in keeping with Wagner’s demands three decades earlier for a theater architecture that would not distract the audience’s attention from the stage. “The task of the theater building of the future may in no way be considered solved by our modern theater buildings,” he had declared;

they are laid out in accordance with traditional laws and canons which have nothing in common with the requirements of pure art. Where orientation towards profit, on the one side, and a luxurious love of splendor, on the other, have a determining effect, the absolute interests of art must be deplorably affected; and thus no architect in the world will, for example, be able to elevate our stratified

⁸⁹ An excellent historical treatment of this topic is found in Jochen Meyer, *Theaterbautheorien zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 1998), especially 226-32; see also Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance*, 128-57.

and fenced-off auditoria—dictated by the separation of our public into the most diverse classes and categories of citizenry—to a law of beauty.⁹⁰

No such socioeconomic parceling would be permitted within the festival theater, which would instead be beautiful by virtue of its noble simplicity. In “Art and Revolution,” in fact, Wagner had argued that “the public must have *unbought* admission to the theatrical representations,” which were to be subsidized by the state.⁹¹ Social and economic equality among audience members, expressed architecturally, would operate in the service of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Wagner’s festival theater at Bayreuth operated for less than two weeks in 1876, closing for six years before offering another performance. The extensive theoretical apparatus that surrounded it—the writings not only by the composer himself over many decades but also, crucially, those by Nietzsche—rendered it central for decades for far more than the presentation of Wagner’s music dramas. Both Nietzsche’s fanatical support for Wagner and his subsequent belittling of him after 1876 proved equally provocative for debates over the social and political function of the theater, over the role of architecture in the theatrical experience, and over the potential role of all these factors in helping to build the German nation. Such debate was particularly active at the turn of the twentieth century, coming to a head in 1906 and 1907 with books and articles on the tasks

⁹⁰ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future,” 185, note (translation altered). “Die Aufgabe des Theatergebäudes der Zukunft darf durch unsre modernen Theatergebäude keineswegs als gelöst angesehen werden: in ihnen sind herkömmliche Annahmen und Gesetze maßgebend, die mit den Erfordernissen der reinen Kunst nichts gemein haben. Wo Erwerbspekulation auf der einen, und mit ihr luxuriöse Prunksucht auf der anderen Seite bestimmend einwirken, muß das absolute Interesse der Kunst auf das Empfindlichste beeinträchtigt werden, und so wird kein Baumeister der Welt es z. B. vermögen die, durch die Trennung unsres Publikums in die unterschiedensten Stände und Staatsbürgerkategorien gebotene Uebereinanderschichtung und Zersplitterung der Zuschauerräume zu einem Gesetze der Schönheit zu erheben.” Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 188-89, note.

of the theater and the importance of theater reform.⁹² Within the arena of such debate, Fuchs's deep immersion in all things Nietzschean made Wagner's festival theater at Bayreuth the natural reference point for his own consideration of the theater.

⁹¹ Richard Wagner, "Art and Revolution," 64 (*italics original*). However, as Chytry has written, "The free gathering of artists, transformed into a free gathering of art patrons, gave way in the end to the conventional means of a paying public." Josef Chytry, *The Aesthetic State*, 303.

⁹² See, for example, Carl Hagemann, *Aufgaben des Modernen Theaters* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1906); Paul Marsop, *Weshalb Brauchen wir die Reformbühne* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1907); Max Burckhard, *Das Theater* (Frankfurt: Rütten und Loening, 1907); and Karl Scheffler, "Das Theater," in Eduard Heyk, ed., *Moderne Kultur: Ein Handbuch der Lebensbildung und des guten Geschmacks*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anhalt, 1907), 405-23.

Chapter Three: The Stage of the Future

In 1888, Nietzsche's final year of lucidity before his collapse into madness, Georg Fuchs graduated from gymnasium in Darmstadt, where he had been a classmate and friend of the writer Stefan George. After a year of military service, Fuchs studied for two years in Leipzig: first theology, at the insistence of his father, a Lutheran minister, and then *Germanistik*. In 1891, he moved to Munich to become an art critic in Germany's self-proclaimed *Kunststadt*; for five years in that city, he edited the journal *Allgemeine Kunst-Chronik*, begun in 1892 and supportive of the newly formed Munich Secession movement.¹ In Darmstadt from 1896 until 1904, he helped create the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, in part by writing the short play performed at its opening ceremony in 1901; he returned to Munich in 1904 to campaign there for theater reform. Between 1895, when he published a series of essays on Wagner and Nietzsche, and 1905, with the appearance of *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* [The Stage of the Future], Fuchs frequently presented his ideas concerning the cultural aims, political symbolism, and architectural objectives of the theater. He published dozens of articles, mostly in *Allgemeine Kunst-Chronik*, *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, *Die Kunst für Alle*, and *Wiener Rundschau*.² This

¹ Fuchs's essay "Vorspiel" appeared in George's own art journal, *Blätter für die Kunst* 2.2 (1894), 48-55. In the *Allgemeine Kunstchronik*, his review of the Munich Secession exhibition, appearing in 1893, was followed that same year by "Divina Comedia!—vom Zwecke der Schaubühne" and by a pseudonymously published essay in which he reported on the artistic activities in Darmstadt.

² Fuchs also wrote several plays in these years. He published two in 1893: *Liebe, Tragische Oper in einem Akt* and *Das Nibelungenlied, ein Festspiel*. His comedy *Till Eugenspiegel* was published in Florence and Leipzig in 1899, in Darmstadt in 1903, and in Munich and Leipzig in 1905; his tragedy *Manfred* appeared in Darmstadt in 1903 and in Munich and Leipzig in 1905. Further biographical information about Fuchs's early years can be found in Wiltrud H. Steinacker, "Georg Fuchs and the Concept of the Relief Stage"

chapter explores the development of his ideas on the theater over the course of this decade, examining his reconfigurations of central theoretical concepts in the writings of Wagner and Nietzsche, discussed in the previous chapter, in the service of the emerging mass audience.

The year of the founding of the Deutsche Werkbund in Munich—1907—is often cited as the emblematic moment when Nietzschean ideals began to confront the realities of mass culture; when, for example, the creative individualism of Jugendstil design gave way to a machine aesthetic.³ This transition, of course, happened neither instantly nor solely within the realm of designed objects; rather, it occurred throughout German culture in the context of sweeping socioeconomic and political changes. This chapter presents the development of Fuchs’s views in the years immediately preceding this emblematic moment as a prism through which to view this transition. I will begin with a discussion of Fuchs’s early embrace of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, emphasizing the inherent elitism of this aesthetic model; I will then turn to Fuchs’s vision of the audience for the *Fest*, or festival, a symbolic performance occurring outside the limitations of historical time. This event was to be experienced communally by an audience that Fuchs presented simultaneously as a multitude of thousands and as the elite sector of German culture. I will first address the theme of the *Fest* specifically, describing Fuchs’s role in the opening

(Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1995), 48ff; as well as Lenz Prütting, “Die Revolution des Theaters: Studien über Georg Fuchs” (Ph.D. diss., University of Munich, 1971), 15-24.

³ “For it was in 1907 that Behrens joined AEG (*Allgemeine Electricitätsgesellschaft* [sic]) and [Hermann] Muthesius founded the Deutscher [sic] Werkbund,” Reyner Banham has written, for example, describing these occurrences as “two faces of the same coin—a *rapprochement* between creative designers and productive industry. . . .” Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960, repr. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1980), 69.

ceremony of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony in 1901, and then more generally, presenting Fuchs's idea of the role of the *Fest* in the future he imagined for German culture.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Fuchs shifted from art criticism to focus increasingly on the site of spectators' greatest visibility as a group: the theater. While still heavily indebted to Nietzsche in his thinking, he now tried to reconcile the philosopher's ideas with the existence of a wider audience. His theoretical interest in the notion of the *Fest*, I argue in this chapter, helped turn his attention to the topic of theater architecture. Crucial also for the development of his ideas at this time was the concurrent presence in Darmstadt of the architect Peter Behrens who, like Fuchs, was at this time deeply inspired by Nietzsche and actively exploring the topic of theater reform.⁴ Like Behrens, Fuchs began to argue for the creation of a unified German audience, facilitated in part by changes in the design of the theater auditorium itself. Unlike Behrens, however, Fuchs also published anonymous tracts about the potential for German culture to strengthen the German nation in terms that, in retrospect, can only appear protofascist.

The final section of this chapter treats Fuchs's efforts to describe the stage of the future in his book of that title, a collection of essays published in 1905. Here he addressed not only the architectural model of his proposed theater but also the cultural function this theater would perform. Fuchs argued against the traditional deep stage of the naturalist theater and in favor of the shallow "relief stage," mentioning his approval of the architect Max Littmann, whom several years later he would choose to build the Artists' Theater.

⁴ Fuchs published "Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens" in 1899 in the journal *Wiener Rundschau*; two years later "Ideen zu einer festlichen Schau-Bühne" and "Zur künstlerischen Neugestaltung der Schaubühne" appeared in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*. In 1900, Behrens published both "Die Dekoration der Bühne" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*.

He admired in particular two theaters that Littmann had built in Munich in 1901, the Schauspielhaus and the Prinzregententheater, and a discussion of the architecture of each is included here. In turning to the topic of theater construction, Fuchs relied not only on the model of Nietzsche but also on the precedent of Wagner; both his efforts to translate philosophical principles into architectural form and his interest in creating an audience from a group of spectators derived explicitly from Wagner's early writings and from Wagner's construction of his own festival theater at Bayreuth. In the years leading up to his founding of the Artists' Theater, I argue in this chapter, Fuchs's theoretical writings reflected and confronted a shift occurring within German aesthetic theory and artistic practice: from the cultivated individual spectator of the late nineteenth century to the mass audience of the twentieth.

1. Fuchs as Nietzschean Art Critic

In an 1895 issue of the Munich art journal *Die Kunst für Alle*, Fuchs published a two-part essay entitled "Richard Wagner und die moderne Malerei" [Richard Wagner and modern painting]. Following the model of Nietzsche's early work, he celebrated Wagner's achievements as a composer of music dramas, labeling *Lohengrin*, for example, "the first great German work of art since Goethe's *Faust*."⁵ He devoted the second half of his essay to his argument that Wagner's works could "serve in certain senses as a prototype for the further development of painting," citing in particular the artists Adolf von Menzel,

⁵ "Hier war das erste große deutsche Kunstwerk seit Goethes 'Faust' geboren. . . ." Georg Fuchs, "Richard Wagner und die moderne Malerei," *Die Kunst für Alle* X (1895): 113.

Arnold Böcklin, Franz von Lenbach, and Max Liebermann, among others.⁶ Wagner's ideas about spectatorship, and especially his consideration of the audience as a *Volk*, would appeal increasingly to Fuchs as he turned his attention to the theater. But, following the model of Nietzsche's later work, Fuchs soon turned away from Wagner. Devoting his early years as a critic primarily to the fine arts, for the next decade he labored primarily under the influence of Nietzsche. As his brother Emil would later write, "*Nietzsche* gave us the voice and the clarifying thought for all of this. We are the generation that listened to Nietzsche when he was still a persecuted, smilingly scorned man. We young people probably did not understand all of his ideas completely clearly."⁷

Fuchs explored his interest in Nietzsche overtly in "Friedrich Nietzsche und die bildende Kunst" [Friedrich Nietzsche and the fine arts], an appreciative article that appeared serially in 1895 in *Die Kunst für Alle*. He argued that the epigrammatic statements in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, first published in 1885, offered "the bridges by which we may reach, in Nietzsche's general teachings, the precious little island of his aesthetics."⁸ As Fuchs acknowledged, Nietzsche wrote only rarely of particular artists,

⁶ "Es ist nun sehr merkwürdig, daß für die weitere Entwicklung unserer Malerei das künstlerische Schaffen des reisen und späten Wagner in gewissen Verstande als Prototyp gelten kann. . . ." Ibid., 98.

⁷ "Die Stimme und das klärende Denken für dies alles gab uns *Nietzsche*. Wir sind das Geschlecht, das Nietzsche hörte, als er noch ein verfolgter, lächelnd verachteter Mann war. Wir jungen verstanden wohl nicht alle seine Gedanken ganz klar." Emil Fuchs, *Mein Leben*, vol. I (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1957), 49 (italics original). "The key notions and basic ideas contained in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* all can at once be retrieved convincingly, indeed cogently, from the combined activities of the most seminal and creative though, nonetheless, most diverse practitioners and theroeticians of modern Western drama and theater," Reinhold Grimm has written. "No investigator of the Nietzschean philosophy as such has, to my knowledge, taken into account its significance for the stuff of modern drama and theater and their eventual theories . . . just as, conversely, no student of dramatic and theatrical modernism has as yet realized, or deigned to investigate, the full relevance of the *Birth of Tragedy*. . ." Grimm, *Echo and Disguise: Studies in German Comparative Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1969), 64 and 66.

⁸ "Diese beiden Sprüche Zarathustras bezeichnen uns die Brücken, auf welchen wir in der allgemeinen Lehre Nietzsches zu der köstlichen kleinen Insel seiner Ästhetik gelangen." Georg Fuchs, "Friedrich Nietzsche und die bildende Kunst," *Die Kunst für Alle* XI (Munich, 1895-96): 33.

and his ideas on art—in particular his appreciation for the masters of the Italian Renaissance—were mostly determined by Jakob Burckhardt, his fellow professor at the University of Basel. But despite this seeming lack of originality, Fuchs maintained,

a thousand artistic questions have been newly and for the first time scientifically answered by Nietzsche; I rank among them here: the formation of the arts and of the artist, the psychology of genius, the genealogy and principle of style, the purpose and the freedom of creating and forming, on the essential and the inessential in art, the national in art, the Greeks. . . .⁹

The central concerns of German aesthetics, in other words, were by the mid-1890s developed furthest by Nietzsche, whose scientific approach, Fuchs wrote, at last “established that which Goethe autocratically, and with the divine right of a mind so infinitely superior to his age, laid down in tightly closed sentences.”¹⁰ As the late nineteenth-century successor of Goethe, in other words, Nietzsche further elucidated the cryptic pronouncements of this quintessential German thinker.

In his essay on Nietzsche, and entirely in keeping with prevailing aesthetic sensibilities, Fuchs bolstered his discussion of the visual arts with references to music and dance. He proposed a metaphoric use of the genre of music, for example, maintaining that artistic perspective would more aptly be called “painterly rhythm,”¹¹ and called for a synaesthetic understanding of the arts:

A motley specter is haunting the theory and criticism of painting, one that elders call “coloration,” and that youngsters believe is actually the ‘handling of light’: should this specter in great art, in the art of fulfillment, perhaps not creep at all,

⁹ “Von Nietzsche sind tausend künstlerische Fragen neu, zum erstenmale wissenschaftlich beantwortet worden; ich rechne hierzu: die Entstehung der Künste, des Künstlers, die Psychologie des Genies, Genealogie und Prinzip des Stiles, der Zwang und die Freiheit des Schaffens und Gehaltens, vom Wesentlichen und Unwesentlichen in der Kunst, das Nationale in der Kunst, die Griechen. . . .” Ibid., 34.

¹⁰ “Er begründet das, was Goethe selbstherrlich und mit dem göttlichem Rechte eines über seine Zeit so unendlich erhobenen Geistes in enggeschlossenen Sentenzen festlegte.” Ibid.

¹¹ “Was wir ‘Perspektive’ nennen . . . sollte das nicht eine malerische Rhythmik sein . . . ?” Ibid., 37.

nor go on stilts, but rather dance, after all: a waltz, gallop and round dance? One too seldom observes images with one's ears!¹²

Art criticism, Fuchs believed, could help draw the arts into a theoretical *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The fundamental link between a synaesthetic combination of all art forms into a unified whole, on the one hand, and the purity of each individual art form, on the other, would remain a central theme in his writing. In 1908, he would present the Artists' Theater simultaneously as a unification of all the arts under the protective umbrella of performance and as the "retheatricalization of the theater" that liberated theater from the dominance of other forms of art, especially literature.

Fuchs began his essay on Nietzsche with two quotations from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which had been published ten years earlier. The first, the prophet's declaration that "when power grows gracious and descends into view, I call such descending beauty," epitomized the Nietzschean cult of strength and grace. Beauty was not a fragile thing that needed carefully to be preserved, but rather the miraculous appearance of power itself within the realm of daily life. Fuchs's second quotation from Nietzsche was Zarathustra's exhortation to "set good little perfect things around you, you Higher Men! Things whose golden ripeness heals the heart. Perfect things teach hope."¹³

¹² "Dann schleicht ein buntscheckiges Gespenst durch die Kritik und Theorie der Malerei, welches Ältere 'Kolorit' nannten, Jüngere meinen, es hieße eigentlich 'Lichtbehandlung': sollte dieses Gespenst in der großen Kunst, in der Kunst der Erfüllung etwa gar nicht schleichen oder auf Stelzen gehen, sondern am Ende tanzen: Walzer, Galopp und Reigen? Man hat die Bilder zu selten mit den Ohren betrachtet!" Ibid., 37-38.

¹³ "Wenn die Macht gnädig wird und herabkommt ins Sichtbare: Schönheit heiße ich solches Herabkommen," and "Stellt kleine, gute, vollkommene Dinge um euch, ihr höheren Menschen! Deren goldene Reife heilt das Herz. Vollkommenes lehrt hoffen." Ibid., 33. The two sentences appear in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1969), 141 and 303 (translation altered). Fuchs returned to the first quotation seven years later, in an essay on Peter Behrens's design for the Hamburg entry hall at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts in Turin. See Georg Fuchs, "Die Vorhalle zum Hause der Macht und der Schönheit: zur Hamburger Vorhalle von Prof. Peter Behrens," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* XI (October 1902), 9.

Addressing art only slightly more literally than the first quotation, it is the only reference to art objects in the book. More important, it encapsulates the elitism fundamental to Nietzsche's aesthetic program: such raised standards would accommodate only a small number of aesthetes. "Good little perfect things," as Nietzsche envisioned them, would surround a limited number of people; the beautification of quotidian reality would be achieved only for a selected few.

Nietzsche would have been the first to acknowledge such elitism, and Fuchs would not have considered it a defect in the philosopher's aesthetic program. Sympathetic to Nietzsche's fierce advocacy of improved aesthetic standards, Fuchs adopted as well his rhetoric of universal aesthetic betterment, just like his fellow Secessionists and, later, practitioners of Jugendstil. Subsequent accounts of these movements—beginning in the very early twentieth century with the writings of Hermann Muthesius and continuing to the present day—have criticized their inherent elitism.¹⁴ But such elitism was a cherished value in 1895, and Nietzschean precepts could be offered in the pages of a journal entitled *Die Kunst für Alle*, or "Art for All," as if such ideas—and the expensive handcrafted objects that they celebrated—were accessible to all Germans.

To extend Nietzsche's demands from the realm of philosophy into that of artistic practice two decades later (and increasingly, in the early twentieth century), however, was to reveal an attendant irony. Shifting his ideas from the context of aesthetic philosophy to

¹⁴ On the early twentieth-century German promulgation of *Sachlichkeit*, or objectivity, as a critique of the individualism and elitism of Secessionism and Jugendstil see, for example, Niklaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1936, repr. New York: Penguin, 1987), 32-36; Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 215-60; as well as Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), especially 23-43. I return to this topic in chapter four.

that of the creation of actual objects expanded the audience—both for these ideas and for the “good little perfect things” themselves—and thus highlighted a conflict between boundless appreciation and audience restriction. In the field of the applied arts, this conflict had been implicit in Jugendstil design; it soon led advocates of artistic reform to debate the relation of art and industry at the founding of the Deutsche Werkbund in Munich in 1907.¹⁵ The uneasy relation between art objects and industrial products, between exalted high culture and the creation of a middle class audience, would likewise be evident the following year at the founding of the Artists’ Theater.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, art replaced the trivial concerns of daily life with the more worthy environment of a heightened aesthetic realm and transported the spectator to a nobler plane. This scenario was fundamental to the artistic conceptions of such contemporaries of Fuchs as Behrens and Stefan George. Fuchs described his embrace of the idea of art “ ‘as a completion of life,’ as Nietzsche . . . already understood at a time when, still in his youthful awkwardness, he wished to represent himself as Richard Wagner’s philosophical apologist.”¹⁶ His early enthusiasm for Wagner notwithstanding, Nietzsche’s emphasis on the “completion of life through the highest means of art” was,

¹⁵ On the founding of the Werkbund, see Kurt Junghanns, *Der Deutsche Werkbund: Sein erstes Jahrzehnt* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1982), 17-27; and Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 9-32; and Mark Jarzombek, “The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia, 1904-1908, and the Founding of the Werkbund,” in Françoise Forster-Hahn, ed., *Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889-1910* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 127-45.

¹⁶ “ ‘die Kunst als Komplettierung des Lebens’ . . . , wie sie Nietzsche nach den Vorbildern der griechischen Tragödie, des Aristophanes und des Phidias—sicherlich auch beeinflusst durch Burckhardt—schon zu einer Zeit verstand, da er noch in jugendlicher Befangenheit den philosophischen Apologeten Richard Wagners vorstellen wollte.” Georg Fuchs, “Friedrich Nietzsche und die bildende Kunst,” 35. The idea of art providing completion for the mundane experiences of daily life famously recurs in *The Birth of Tragedy*: “we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art—for it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (1872, repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 62.

for Fuchs, the ultimate achievement of the philosopher's aesthetic program. The very act of art viewing elevated the spectator, endowing him with an almost religious enlightenment. Artistic creativity followed the divine model: "Before God and the artist all things are the same," Fuchs would write in 1904.¹⁷

Neither Nietzsche nor those critics and artists inspired by him viewed the irresolvable tension between the improvement of conditions for the elite and the fate of the larger community as a logical failing. His entire philosophical project, rather, rested on the very notion of exclusivity, on the celebration of an elitist appreciation that surpassed the mundane levels of existence maintained by the larger group. Those select few who enjoyed Nietzsche's works in the form of the limited edition could pride themselves on their superiority over those who—presumably because of a combination of cultural and economic deficiency—did not. But the logic of their superiority was increasingly challenged at the end of the nineteenth century, owing in part to the expansion of working class leisure and the growth of middle class audiences.¹⁸ Both metaphorically and literally, mass printings increased the accessibility of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and raised the question of how Nietzschean precepts might translate to larger audiences. Within the Secessionist milieu, the question could remain rhetorical. But how would such a celebration of elitism come to terms with the mass audience?

¹⁷ ". . . vor Gott und dem Künstler sind alle Dinge gleich." Georg Fuchs, *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst: Betrachtungen über die Zukunft des Deutschen Volkes aus den Papieren eines Unverantwortlichen* (published anonymously; Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1904), 38. In this context, see also Elizabeth Krimmel, "In Schönheit Sterben: Über das Religiöse im Jugendstil," in Gerhard Bott, ed, *Von Morris zum Bauhaus: Eine Kunst Gegründet auf Einfachheit* (Hanau: Hans Peters, 1977), 69-89.

¹⁸ For a treatment of German socioeconomic transformation between 1870 and 1918, see Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (1969, repr. London: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 42-61.

In 1895, Nietzsche's conception of art as a fulfillment of life, with all its contradictions, presented Fuchs with an overriding philosophical ideal. From the beginning, Fuchs took for granted the constitution of the art audience as a gathering of educated and cultured individuals, their status dependent on a presumed superiority to an uncultured public.¹⁹ A sense of exclusivity, in other words, rested on the practice of exclusion. But changes in the very identity of the spectator provoked renewed attention to the topic of the aesthetic experience. If new spectators were not always explicitly mentioned in discussions of the beholder's relation to the work of art, their existence nevertheless threatened the traditionally narrow parameters of art spectatorship. The immense popularity of cinema, initially among the lower classes, posed a particularly strong threat, one that was felt nowhere more strongly than in the theater, where spectators already gathered as a visible community. But while the audience for German culture changed drastically in the years leading up to World War One and the contradictions implicit in Nietzsche's arguments became increasingly acute, Fuchs remained faithful to his Nietzschean ideals.

The prevalence of a Nietzschean aesthetic in Germany at the turn of the last century is well established in scholarly literature.²⁰ An excellent illustration of this

¹⁹ Beyond its implicit status in Nietzsche's works, the question of the individual's relation to his social group was prominent in the German sociological and philosophical literature of the early twentieth century. Notable treatments of the theme include Georg Simmel, "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality" (1908), in Donald N. Levine, ed., *On Individuality and Social Forms*, trans. Richard P. Albares (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 251-93, as well as Siegfried Kracauer, "The Group as Bearer of Ideas" (1922), in Thomas Y. Levin, ed. and trans., *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 143-70.

²⁰ On the relationship of Nietzschean philosophy to art and architecture, see, for example, Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth, eds., *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), especially Fritz Neumeier, "Nietzsche and Modern Architecture," 285-309.

fascination—and of its perfect irony, given the contemporaneous emergence of machine age culture—is found in the limited edition of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, designed by Henry van de Velde and published in Leipzig in 1908.²¹ With a print run of 530 copies (one hundred bound in leather, the remainder in parchment) the edition catered to a high art audience, existing in a realm oblivious to mass culture. While the book’s large size, small print run, and liberal use of gold ornament sets it firmly within the tradition of the medieval manuscript, at the same time its design invokes machine production. **[fig. 3.1]** Across the top of the book’s penultimate page of text, showing the beginning of the section entitled “Das Zeichen,” two rows of fifteen gold, square ornaments repeat like factory-made items. On the third line, three ornaments mark the space between the edge of the text and the beginning of the margin. After the title, in capital letters, the ornaments continue in miniature form: an identical design perfectly reduced to accommodate eleven where only six and a half larger ones would have fit. Within the body of the text, meanwhile, each sentence is punctuated by two or four identical ornaments of a different design. While such ornamentation had appeared in illuminated manuscripts for centuries, here a machinelike regularity places the book at the precarious convergence of a fin-de-siècle notion of art for art’s sake and the machine aesthetic.

²¹ The typeface had been designed in 1900 by G. Lemmen (with the assistance of Harry Graf Kessler); van de Velde designed the book, title page, and ornaments, and oversaw the printing process (Leipzig: Drugulin, 1908). The leather-bound book is held in the Getty Research Institute Special Collections #471.

2. Fuchs in Darmstadt

In 1896, Ernst Ludwig, the Grand Duke of Hessen, invited Fuchs to Darmstadt, thirty kilometers south of Frankfurt, to work for the journal *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, which began publication the following year.²² There Fuchs participated in the creation of the Artists' Colony on the Mathildenhöhe, a hill rising to the east of the city center. Until 1901, the Mathildenhöhe had been a park owned by the Grand Duke and open to the public only on Thursdays. Fuchs described the location that year with the following words:

Even ten years ago, the Mathildenhöhe was the most still and dreamy little spot in Darmstadt; and Darmstadt itself was, as the travel writer's joke at the time so loved to represent it, the most still and dreamy of all still and dreamy residences in central Germany. There were many people in the city itself who had lived here for a long time and knew nothing of the park, and there were many others who only knew its name. . . .²³

Upon this still and dreamy spot, with Ernst Ludwig as its founding patron, a city would be built by artists, for art lovers—an environment that would be the apotheosis of the artistic elitism inspired by Nietzsche.²⁴ Ernst Ludwig brought to Darmstadt (in addition to

²² According to Wiltrud H. Steinacker, "in 1896 Fuchs was offered the post of chief editor for the Darmstadt art journal *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, to be published by Alexander Koch, who had founded a publishing company carrying his name in Darmstadt in 1888. . . . It was due to this position that Fuchs took part in the planning of the Colony and its exhibition. . . ." Steinacker, "Georg Fuchs and the Concept of the Relief Stage," 52. And Lenz Prütting writes that Koch invited Fuchs "nach Darmstadt zu kommen und Redakteur seiner Zeitschrift zu werden." Prütting, "Die Revolution des Theaters," 68. Fuchs's name, however, appears neither on the masthead of the journal nor in the pages of Sigrid Randa, *Alexander Koch, Publizist und Verleger in Darmstadt: Reformen der Kunst und des Lebens um 1900* (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990).

²³ "Noch vor zehn Jahren war die Mathilden-Höhe das stillste und träumerischste Fleckchen Darmstadt's; und Darmstadt war es, das der Witz der Reise-Schriftsteller damals so gerne als die stillste und träumerischste unter allen stillen und träumerschen Residenzen Mittel-Deutschland's hinzustellen liebte. Es gab in der Stadt selbst viele Leute, die lange hier wohnten und nichts von jenem Parke wussten, und viele andere, die nur den Namen kannten. . . ." Georg Fuchs, "Die 'Mathilden-Höhe' Einst und Jetzt," in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901* (repr. as *Die Ausstellung der Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie*, Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 115. This volume contains several essays by Fuchs and others reprinted from *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*.

²⁴ On the Nietzschean qualities of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, see Stanford Anderson, "Peter Behrens's Highest Kultursymbol, the Theater," *Perspecta* 26 (New Haven: Yale Architecture Journal/New York:

Fuchs) Peter Behrens and Joseph Maria Olbrich, the latter designing all of the buildings at the Artists' Colony with the exception of one by Behrens.²⁵ Fuchs and Behrens, overlapping in Darmstadt from 1899 to 1903, pursued their interests in the field of theater reform both separately and together.

In Vienna in 1900, Olbrich had inscribed above the entrance to the Secession building the motto “Der Zeit ihre Kunst; der Kunst ihre Freiheit” [To every age its art, to every art its freedom]. The following year, the phrase he used over the entrance of the main building of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, the Ernst Ludwig House, implied an altered function of art: “Seine Welt zeige der Künstler die niemals war noch jemals sein wird” [May the artist show his world, which never was nor ever will be].²⁶ [figs. 3.2 and 3.3] If the Viennese Secessionists had raised art to the level of an anonymous, albeit noble, expression of the *Zeitgeist*, in Darmstadt the artist himself now attained a new role: that of creative clairvoyant, artistic prophet of a realm at once exalted and nonexistent. In the commemorative program book published on the occasion of the official opening of the Artists' Colony in 1901, Behrens linked the two visions of artistic achievement: “under the title ‘A Document of German Art,’ ” he pronounced, the Darmstadt exhibition “should be a manifestation of the artists' best intentions to follow the goals of their age: a

Rizzoli, 1990): 103-34; as well as Tilmann Buddensieg, “Das Wohnhaus als Kultbau: Zum Darmstädter Haus von Peter Behrens,” *Peter Behrens und Nürnberg: Geschmackswandel in Deutschland: Historismus, Jugendstil, und die Anfänge der Industrieform* (Munich: Prestel, 1980), 37-47.

²⁵ On the founding of the Artists' Colony, see Hanno-Walter Kruft, “The Artists' Colony on the Mathildenhöhe,” in Lucius Burckhardt, ed., *The Werkbund: Studies in the History and Ideology of the Deutscher Werkbund, 1907-1933*, trans. Pearl Sanders (London: Design Council, 1980), 25-34. Behrens spent four years in Darmstadt, from November 1899 to March 1903. A concise and respectful narration of the history of the Artists' Colony, written by the Grand Duke's son, is found in Prinz Ludwig von Hessen, *Die Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie* (Darmstadt: Justus von Liebig, 1950).

²⁶ The motto is taken from the Viennese art critic Hermann Bahr. See Hanno-Walter Kruft, “The Artists' Colony on the Mathildenhöhe,” 28.

first grasp at great achievements, a first word of a higher conversation, a first sound of thundering music. . . .”²⁷ The aim was precisely as Behrens declared: to present an environment of artistic achievement that expressed, simultaneously, both the spirit of the age and the potential for the exalted status of art in every division of German culture.

According to Fuchs, the Artists’ Colony would “fuse life and art into a unity.”²⁸

Within its limited boundaries, existence itself would be suffused with creativity. The rallying cry to dissolve the traditional boundaries between art and life superficially resembles later efforts in the Soviet Union, evoking in particular the Constructivist slogan “art into life.”²⁹ But the differences between Darmstadt in 1901 and Moscow in 1921 remain vast. For Fuchs, art operated within a realm elevated above daily life; to fuse the two meant to raise the quotidian to the heights of aesthetic experience. Two decades later, Soviet theorists wishing to fuse art and life aimed to remove art from the very pedestal that Fuchs so treasured. In addition, the socioeconomic profile of the art audience is diametrically opposed in the two models. Fuchs characterized the spectators as a group, but as members of the cultivated bourgeoisie they were far removed from the Soviet

²⁷ “Die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt unter dem Titel ‘Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst’ soll eine Bekundung des besten Willens dieser Künstler sein den Zielen ihrer Zeit zu folgen: ein erster Griff zu großen Thaten, ein erstes Wort von hoher Rede, ein erster Ton von rauschender Musik. . . .” Peter Behrens, *Ein Dokument Deutscher Kunst: Die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt*. Zur Feier der Eröffnung 15 Mai 1901. Monacensia Library, Hildebrand Haus, Munich, folder L4182. Behrens wrote to Richard Dehmel, in reference to the Artists’ Colony: “Wir selbst werden der Kunst einen Tempel bauen, dadrinnen soll es heilig sein.” Letter of June 16, 1900, quoted in Jutta Boehe, “‘Darmstadter Spiele 1901’: Das Theater der Darmstädter Künstler-kolonie,” in Gerhard Bott, ed., *Von Morris zum Bauhaus: Eine Kunst Gegründet auf Einfachheit* (Hanau: Dr. Hans Peters Verlag, 1977), 161.

²⁸ “Leben und Kunst zur Einheit zu verschmelzen.” Georg Fuchs, “Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Entstehung der Künstler-Kolonie,” in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*, 17.

²⁹ For more on the Soviet Constructivist urge to bring “art into life,” see Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 73-108; as well as Jaroslav Andel, “The Constructivist Entanglement: Art into Politics, Politics into Art,” in Henry Art Gallery ex. cat., Seattle, *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914-1932* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 223-39.

workers later heroized by the Constructivists. In other words, Fuchs borrowed Wagner's program of cultural revolution but not his revolutionary politics. Ultimately, his ties were to Nietzsche's aestheticism, and he envisioned a socioeconomically exclusive audience for Darmstadt. "The 1901 exhibition attracted the attention of a vast public," Hanno-Walter Kruft has written, "but unfortunately, owing to their cost, the furnishings put on show remained inaccessible to the middle class for whom they had been intended."³⁰

For Fuchs, the Artists' Colony represented the nationalist potential of German culture and explicitly attempted to put cultural innovation at the service of the German empire. "The time will come," he explained, "when it will be clear *that subsidizing artistic culture is equivalent to the elevation of the nation's promotional power.*"³¹ The theoretical model relating cultural achievement to political expediency came directly from Nietzsche, who had in 1873 described "culture as a unanimity of life, thought, appearance and will."³² While German unity was primarily a cultural notion in Nietzsche's writing, it encompassed political achievements. "Let me say expressly that it is for *German unity* in the highest sense that we strive," he wrote, "and strive more ardently than we do for political reunification, *the unity of German spirit and life after the abolition of the antithesis of form and content, of inwardness and convention.*"³³ German political unity may have been presented as secondary to the cultural aspirations

³⁰ Hanno-Walter Kruft, "The Artists' Colony on the Mathildenhöhe," 29. In this context, see also Werner Hofmann, "Luxus und Widerspruch," in *Ein Dokument Deutscher Kunst, 1901-1976*, vol. 1 (Mathildenhöhe Kunsthalle, Hessisches Landesmuseum ex. cat.; Darmstadt: Eduard Roether, 1977), 21-28.

³¹ "Es wird die Zeit kommen wo man einsehen muss, *dass eine Förderung der künstlerischen Kultur gleichbedeutend ist mit einer Steigerung der werbenden Kraft der Nation.*" Georg Fuchs, "Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Entstehung der Künstler-Kolonie," 22 (*italics original*).

³² Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1873), in Daniel Breazeale, ed., *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 123.

³³ *Ibid.*, 82 (*italics original*).

underlying the construction of the Artists' Colony at Darmstadt, but the concept of German cultural unity was deeply political.³⁴

Following Nietzsche's break with Wagner after the inauguration in 1876 of the festival theater at Bayreuth, theater reform in particular encapsulated for the philosopher the larger sociopolitical potential of cultural achievement. "It is quite impossible to produce the highest and purest effect of which the art of theater is capable without at the same time effecting innovations everywhere, in morality and politics, in education and society," Nietzsche declared that year.³⁵ Rejecting prevailing notions of art for art's sake, he explained that the purpose of theater was not to provide a temporary escape route, desensitizing the audience to social ills, but instead to present a model of social engagement. "We could not be done a greater injustice," he wrote,

than if it were assumed we were concerned only with art: as though it were a kind of cure and intoxicant with the aid of which one could rid oneself of every other sickness. What we see depicted in the tragic art-work of Bayreuth is the struggle of the individual against everything that opposes him as apparently invincible necessity, with power, law, tradition, compact and the whole prevailing order of things.³⁶

³⁴ As Stanford Anderson has written, Darmstadt was to become "a prominent center of the new movement before the established 'art-cities' could take it up. . . . That Ernst Ludwig became the patron and apologist for a new cultural program was claimed by Fuchs to be a logical parallel to what Wilhelm was achieving in the realm of national material productivity and well-being." Anderson, "Peter Behrens's Highest Kultursymbol, the Theater," 110. Jarzombek has described the masking of political expediency by means of careful codes in the presentation of German design before 1908, arguing that the theoretical program of the Werkbund, for example, "constituted an attempt to obscure upper-middle-class politics and anxieties behind the irrefutability of the newly emerging aesthetic conformity." Mark Jarzombek, "The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia, 1904-1908," 130. Reform aesthetics certainly conveyed political codes, but such codes were hardly secret; the founders of neither the Darmstadt Artists' Colony nor the Werkbund claimed an apolitical stance.

³⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (1876), in Daniel Breazeale, ed., *Untimely Meditations*, 210.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 212. Nietzsche wrote that Wagner was "quite incapable of regarding the welfare of art as being in any way divorced from the general welfare. . . ." *Ibid.*, 247.

Far from escape, theater was to force the spectator to confront the individual's relation to his environment. Taking Nietzsche as their guide, the Darmstadt art reformers viewed themselves as challenging the "prevailing order" in all fields. Nevertheless, they acted on behalf of the elite individual spectator.

If Nietzsche represented to the founders of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony a modern union of culture and politics, the achievements of traditional German culture were symbolized by Goethe. The very aim of the Artists' Colony, Fuchs declared, was "the aesthetic uplifting of the whole formation of life, in short . . . all that Goethe cared to understand under the concept of 'culture.'" ³⁷ Once again, Nietzsche's significance derived in part from his presentation of Goethe's ideas for turn-of-the-century Germans. The symbolic modernization, from Goethe to Nietzsche, was made explicit as well at the opening ceremony of the Artists' Colony, on May 15, 1901. For this event, Fuchs rewrote his short play *Die Ankunft des Prometheus* [The arrival of Prometheus], originally named after Goethe's unfinished play *Prometheus*. His enchantment with Nietzsche prompted him to call his revised creation *Das Zeichen* [The Sign], a title borrowed from the final section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. ³⁸ The two chorus leaders were reincarnated for the

³⁷ ". . . die ästhetische Erhebung der ganzen Lebens-Gestaltung, kurz . . . alles das, was Goethe unter dem Begriff 'Kultur' zu verstehen pflegte"). Georg Fuchs, in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*, 20.

³⁸ The original program of *Das Zeichen*, with Fuchs's corrections, is in the Monacensia Library, Hildebrand Haus, Munich, folder L4182. The text is an alteration of *Die Ankunft des Prometheus: Cantate von Georg Fuchs, Musik von Willem de Haan* (four pages of text; no date). The cover page originally read "Das Zeichen: Festliche Handlung von Peter Behrens, Willem de Haan und Georg Fuchs. Dargestellt am 15. Mai 1901. von Frau Kaschowska, Herrn Riechmann, Herrn Weber und dem Hoftheater-Singchore. Orchester: Einige Mitgleider der Hof-Kapelle. Drei kleinere Fanfaren-Orchester a.d. heiligen Militär-Kapellen." These words are crossed out; only the title, *Das Zeichen*, remains. Fuchs has added the words: "*Festliche Dichtung zur Eröffnung des Künstlerhauses durch S.K.H. der Großherzog Ernst Ludwig aufgeführt in Darmstadt am 15. Mai 1901.*" The final section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was deeply influential in turn-of-the-century Germany, and Behrens himself designed a limited edition of the book that was exhibited in 1902 at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts in Turin. Prometheus appears throughout

occasion to become, simply, “the man” and “the woman.” The sign in question was a crystal, presented at the final moment to the Grand Duke in gratitude for his sponsorship of the Artists’ Colony. In the words of Frederic Schwartz, the crystal symbolized “the transformation of dust to diamond, life to aesthetic perfection. It was quite precisely the *Zeichen* as Romantic symbol, simultaneously the internal totality of the work of art and the visual embodiment of nonsensuous transcendent truth.”³⁹

Das Zeichen was staged by Behrens on the front steps of the Ernst Ludwig House, designed by Olbrich with the colossal statues flanking the main entrance created by the sculptor Ludwig Habich.⁴⁰ A photograph in the Darmstadt program book of the final scene of Fuchs’s play documents several hundred well-dressed spectators gathered before the Ernst Ludwig House, with the edges of the crowd cropped from view. The ladies’ white sun parasols and extravagant flower-laden hats, and the top hats for the gentlemen, testify to the audience’s position within elite German society. [fig. 3.4] Behrens himself, in the role of prophet or messenger, descends the ceremonial steps of Olbrich’s building with a white-robed chorus of fifty on either side. While Behrens carries the symbolic crystal on a pillow, the chorus proclaims: “We have awaited nothing in vain; the sign

The Birth of Tragedy, including on the title page of the first edition. See Stanford Anderson, “Peter Behrens’s Highest Kultursymbol, the Theater,” 107.

³⁹ Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, 173-74. Schwartz describes the crystal’s trajectory from the Darmstadt performance in 1901 to Behrens’s design for the AEG trademark in 1908: from Romantic symbol, in other words, to corporate one. One important source for Fuchs would have been the crystal in Wagner’s *Parsifal*. In this context, see also Regine Prange, *Das Kristalline als Kunstsymbol: Bruno Taut und Paul Klee* (New York: Georg Olms, 1991). Crystals play a crucial role in Worringer’s *Abstraction and Empathy*, representing simultaneously geometric abstraction and the phenomena of the natural world.

⁴⁰ Three years earlier, Fuchs had written approvingly of the work of Ludwig Habich in “Deutsche Plastik,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* II (April – September 1898): 395. His essay devoted to the sculptor appeared in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* IX (October 1901-March 1902): 1-7 and was reprinted in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*, 189-95.

radiates, the age is here!”⁴¹ The ceremonial, quasi-sacral nature of the performance was predicated not only on its socioeconomic exclusivity but also on its geographic seclusion; spectators gathered in an environment specially created on the outskirts of the city to enhance aesthetic reception. The exalted communal experience of the beautification of life through art necessarily occurred at a remove from daily life.

The ceremonial aspect of the Darmstadt performance is represented visually in a decorative vignette used to illustrate the first page of Fuchs’s four-page play, which itself was printed in full in the program book. **[fig. 3.5]** Designed by Behrens, the vignette shows a neoclassical edifice, its traditional architecture conveying the tone of the event: a solemn pediment coupled with the grandeur of ceremonial steps. The building is framed by the magnificent sweep of Jugendstil whiplash lines that emanate from two urns perched on either side of the building’s steps. The worthy aura of a Greek temple is complemented by a Jugendstil motif possessing its own sense of visual drama. Four pages later, another Behrens vignette marks the end of Fuchs’s play. **[fig. 3.6]** At the center is a representation of tragedy: a masklike face with fearful eyes and gaping mouth. From its temples, lines stream to the left and right to form a perfectly symmetrical ornamental design.⁴² These decorative vignettes demonstrate a confluence of ancient Greek and contemporary German culture entirely common at the turn of the century.

The term whiplash line had, in fact, been coined five years earlier by Fuchs himself, in his guise as art critic. He had used the term in an essay printed in the journal *Pan* to characterize a piece of embroidery created by Hermann Obrist in Munich that

⁴¹ “Wir harreten nichts vergebens,/Das Zeichen strahlt, die Zeit ist da!” Georg Fuchs, *Das Zeichen*.

year. [fig. 3.7] The fact that Obrist's design had been carried out in golden silk thread on pale gray-blue wool did not prevent Fuchs from arguing that it conveyed an explicitly German aesthetic because it took a simple motif from nature, and thus from the daily life of the German people. Once again, the aesthetic he proposed had at its core a seemingly contradictory alliance of popular culture and elite design. "He who wishes for a 'national' art," he proclaimed, "and for an industry that shows popular creativity and that awakens and builds up the aesthetic drive within the people [*Volk*]
—may he endeavor with us to elevate Obrist's thought to general hegemony!"⁴³ As we have seen, the *Volk* itself denoted a complicated concept that spanned this contradictory alliance of popular and elite cultures.

The opening ceremony at the Artists' Colony was only one interior venue for gathering spectators on the Mathildenhöhe. Among the buildings there was a theater, one of the half dozen temporary structures created solely for the duration of the exhibition. [figs. 3.8 and 3.9] According to Karl Heinz Schreyll, this Spielhaus, or playhouse, conformed to the theater reform ideas promulgated by both Behrens and Fuchs. "In the place of the peep-box stage," Schreyll writes, "a platform advancing into the auditorium

⁴² The previous year, these same two vignettes had embellished Behrens's own essay "Die Dekoration der Bühne" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, as discussed below.

⁴³ "Wer 'nationale' Kunst und ein Gewerbe wunscht, das von volkstümlichen Schopferkraft zeugt und die ästhetischen Triebe in Volke weckt und nährt: der bemühe sich mit uns, dem Gedanken Obrists zur allgemeinen Herrschaft zu verhelfen!" Georg Fuchs, "Hermann Obrist," *Pan* vol. 1, no. 5 (1896): 323. He refers to Obrist's "Peitschenhieb," or whiplash line, on page 324. Notably, August Endell objected to Fuchs's analysis. "By the way I am not at all a pupil of Obrist," he explained in a letter the following year: "This is a childish statement by this G. Fuchs whom I first took to Obrist when nobody knew him. I had to use Fuchs as an intermediary, because I had no relations with the press. Both of us instructed Fuchs thoroughly. Now he acts as the discoverer of the new direction. I shall fix his wagon a little." August Endell, undated letter to his cousin (written between September 13 and October 15, 1897), excerpted in Tilmann Buddensieg, "The Early Years of August Endell: Letters to Kurt Breysig from Munich," *Art Journal* 43 (Spring 1983): 46.

was set up that could be ‘decorated’ with screens and curtains.’⁴⁴ Such a platform helped dissolve the distinction between stage and auditorium not only architecturally but also symbolically, linking the performance on stage to the spectators’ own aesthetic experience in the way that Behrens had advocated the previous year in his book *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* [Festivals of life and art], discussed below. In addition, spectators could rearrange their chairs, which were not attached to the floor.⁴⁵ In the Darmstadt playhouse, the very design of the auditorium emphasized a sense of aesthetic indulgence; according to Schreyll, it was “entirely lined in deep violet material, without ornament, [and with] ‘only the stage opening and stage background . . . distinguished by ornamentation, naturally on a deep violet ground.’ ”⁴⁶

Outside the playhouse, other spectators gathered on the Mathildenhöhe, constituting the audience both for the latest developments in German art and for the Artists’ Colony itself. Their presence there assured their existence as art lovers. After visiting in 1901, the art historian Alfred Lichtwark wrote:

In my tour, I paid especial attention to the visitors. They were from Darmstadt and Frankfurt, belonging, on average, to the prosperous middle class. He who knows how these and the somewhat richer class in middle and southern Germany are

⁴⁴ “An Stelle des Gückkasten-Bühne war ein in den Zuschauerraum vordringendes Podest angelegt, das durch Paravents und Vorhänge ‘dekoriert’ werden könnte.” Karl Heinz Schreyll, *Joseph Maria Olbrich: Die Zeichnungen in der Kunstbibliothek Berlin, Kritischer Katalog* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1972), 112.

⁴⁵ See Jutta Boehe, “ ‘Darmstadter Spiele 1901,’ ” 161-81. The main hall of the Ernst Ludwig House also contained its own stage, hidden behind a curtain. Additionally, one of Olbrich’s first projects for the Artists’ Colony, drawn in 1899, had been a theater studio. For a description, perspective drawing, and bibliographic references for this project, see Karl Heinz Schreyll, *Joseph Maria Olbrich*, 65-66.

⁴⁶ “Die zeitgenössischen Quellen schildern es als weiß verputzten, mit einem Kiespappdach eingedeckten Holzbau, der im Inneren einen großen, von keinerlei Stützen unterbrochenen Raum zeigte und dessen so verkleidet war, daß der Eindruck eines großen Tonnengewölbes entstand. Das Innere war überall mit tiefvioletter Stoff ausgekleidet, ohne Ornament, ‘nur Bühnenöffnung und Bühnengrund sind durch Ornamentierung, natürlich auf tiefvioletter Grund ausgezeichnet.’ (Kunstchronik).” Ibid.

made up comprehends the mood of joyful astonishment that expresses itself mostly in admiration and delight.⁴⁷

As if to emphasize the aestheticism of the environment, Lichtwark noted especially the response of female visitors: “Women, namely, were enraptured.”⁴⁸ Delighted by the innovative architecture and design they saw, both male and female visitors could take pleasure in the fact that their visit to Darmstadt marked their possession of advanced aesthetic sensibilities. The program book for the Artists’ Colony contained a small photograph of the postcard shop, likewise designed by Olbrich in 1901. [fig. 3.10] Three ladies and two gentlemen stand before it, choosing the souvenirs that would record their presence in Darmstadt.

Visitors to the Mathildenhöhe both marked themselves as members of the German art-loving elite and absorbed the pervasive aura of internationalism there. For while the artists and architects who had created the exhibition were German, their affiliation with Jugendstil linked their efforts to artists and designers in Brussels, Glasgow, and Paris, among other cities. Fuchs himself preferred to emphasize the German aspect of the Artists’ Colony. He argued that it would operate as a preliminary step in creating a German *Volk* that encompassed the nation; a larger audience would eventually follow on the well-shod heels of the first elite visitors. The task would be to move such an event from its exclusive premises, for ultimately, Fuchs declared, “this art is *with* the *Volk*, or it is not at all. It would be simply laughable, in our democratic age, to think only of the

⁴⁷ “Bei der Besichtigung habe ich besonders auf die Besucher geachtet. Es waren Darmstadter und Frankfurter, im Durchschnitt der wohlhabenden Mittelklasse angehörend. Wer weiß, wie in Mittel- und Süddeutschland diese und die etwas reichere Klasse eingerichtet ist, begreift die Stimmung freudigen Staunens, die sich meist in Bewunderung und Entzücken ausdrückt.” Alfred Lichtwark, as quoted in Prinz Ludwig von Hessen, *Die Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie*, 31-32.

⁴⁸ “Namentlich die Frauen waren hingerissen.” Ibid.

requirements of one-sided aesthetes.”⁴⁹ Again, his conception of the elite spectator as the avant-garde for German cultural rebirth derived from a familiar Nietzschean model. After the founding of Bayreuth, Nietzsche shed Wagner’s ideal of an immediate, nationwide rebirth to embrace instead a narrower group of spectators. “After Nietzsche became disillusioned with Wagner,” Alexandre Kostka has written, “the dream of the ‘New Man’ was not abandoned but converted into the hopeful anticipation of a Renaissance carried out by a small elite (a ‘squad of a hundred progressives’).”⁵⁰ In 1901, Fuchs considered the Darmstadt audience to be precisely this kind of elite group.

3. Fuchs and the *Fest*

In an essay in the Darmstadt program book, Fuchs proclaimed the performance of his play “the first great festival in the spirit of modern aesthetics.”⁵¹ He distinguished it from a traditional outdoor theater production, labeling it instead “a festivity in the new style.”⁵² It sought to erase the lines between performance and spectatorship, between the physical activity on stage and the emotional activity in the audience. The spirit of modern aesthetics, as Fuchs represented it, nevertheless wished to maintain a strict separation

⁴⁹ “Diese Kunst ist *mit* dem Volke, oder sie ist überhaupt nicht. Es wäre einfach lächerlich, in unserer demokratischen Zeit nur an die Bedürfnisse einseitiger Aestheten zu denken.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin: Schuster und Löffler, 1905), 70 (italics original). Fuchs, a frequent self-plagiarist, had used the first sentence in a previous essay to argue against “serious literary plays.” See Georg Fuchs, “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens” *Wiener Rundschau* III (15 November 1898-31 December 1899): 484.

⁵⁰ Alexandre Kostka, “Architecture of the ‘New Man’: Nietzsche, Kessler, Beuys,” in Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth, eds., 201. The quotation from Nietzsche is from *Untimely Meditations*.

⁵¹ “Das erste grosse Fest im Geiste moderner Ästhetik.” Georg Fuchs, “Die Eröffnungs-Feier vom 15 Mai 1901”, in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*, 56.

between performers and spectators, as well as between the art lovers attending the ceremony and those who were not caught up in the fervor of Nietzschean aesthetics. In the pages of *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* the following month, another author elaborated on the importance of the event with the following words:

The first great festival in the spirit of modern aesthetics: so might the opening celebration of 15 May be best characterized. It was neither a purely courtly event, nor one of those romantic “Artists’ Festivals,” . . . nor a popular mass festival, and yet there was something of all three, but in a new aesthetic union, grandly conceived.⁵³

The founding of the Artists’ Colony generated many such hyperbolic claims that blurred the distinction between cultural analysis and self-promotion. The author of the above lines, like Fuchs himself, operated both as cultural critic and as prototypical public relations manager. The conflation of these two roles—and a certain confusion over the authorship of the above lines—is itself significant; one of the central achievements of the Artists’ Colony was its effort of self-promotion.

The spectators who gathered outside the Ernst Ludwig House on May 15, 1901, witnessed a unique celebration, one that was never to be repeated. The inspiration of Nietzsche in Fuchs’s conception of the event was strong. In 1873, the philosopher had described the *Fest*, or festival, as a celebration of history registered beyond the limits of historical time. Like a work of art, it existed outside the realm of daily life. But it also registered time in a way that an ordinary work of art could not. “That which is celebrated at popular festivals, at religious or military anniversaries, is really . . . an ‘effect in itself,’

⁵² “War es nun ein Spiel? Nein: es war eine festliche Handlung neuen Stiles.” Ibid., 60.

⁵³ “Das erste grosse Fest im Geiste moderner Ästhetik: so lässt sich vielleicht die Eröffnungs-Feier vom 15. Mai am besten charakterisieren. Es war weder eine rein-höfische Veranstaltung, noch eines jener romantischen ‘Künstler-Feste’ . . . noch ein Volks- und Massen-Fest, und doch von allen Dreien etwas aber

” Nietzsche wrote; “it is this which will not let the ambitious sleep, which the brave wear over their hearts like an amulet, but it is not really the historical *connexus* of cause and effect. . . .”⁵⁴ In a sense, the opening ceremony of the Artists’ Colony was such an “effect in itself,” an event that celebrated itself. Encouraged by the organizers of the event, the spectators celebrated their own presence there. Steeped in Nietzschean thought, Fuchs helped to create an event that established Darmstadt’s prominence in the German art world in part by celebrating the creation of its own audience.

Fuchs’s own creativity extended to his account of the audience who witnessed the performance of his play. He not only claimed that the spectators were inspired to a communal emotional response, but also inflated the numbers in attendance. In 1905, he mentioned that the “mass of participants in the *Fest* counted in the thousands.”⁵⁵ The actual number of spectators, however, would have to have been much smaller. While the promotional photograph of the event was carefully cropped to suggest an audience much larger than that in attendance, another photograph of the area, taken from the adjacent Habich house in 1901 and likewise reprinted in the program book, demonstrates that what had appeared to be the edges of a vast crowd was actually a path of onlookers only a few feet wide. [fig. 3.11] The number of spectators attending the ceremony—as well as their precise emotions at the time—may be debatable, but Fuchs’s high esteem for the

in einer neuen, gross gedachten, ästhetischen Zusammenfassung. ” Marg. Bruns, “Die Eröffnungs-Feier der Kunst-Ausstellung,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, vol. VIII (June 1901): 446.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” 70.

⁵⁵ “Ganz unbestritten hat auch das festliche Spiel, mit welchem die Ausstellung der Darmstädter Künstler-Kolonie im Jahre 1901 eröffnet wurde, auf die nach Tausende zählende Masse der Festteilnehmer einer tiefer Eindruck hervorgerufen.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 70. “According to Fuchs,” Alan Windsor has written, “all the spectators (he estimated them to be 10,000) standing below were gripped by the same emotion. They were at one with the Messenger and those above, who had expressed in

communal emotional response a performance might provoke among an audience is not. This aesthetic response entailed the audience's emotional identification not only with the messenger, or prophet, but also with one another; each sensation was supported by and encouraged the other.

Ideally, the blurring of identities during the performance of *Das Zeichen* occurred simultaneously on several levels. The spectator's emotional identification with the messenger possessed its own symbolic complexity, as the messenger was not only a fictional character in Fuchs's play but was, quite literally, Behrens, the architect who had helped to create the surrounding environment. As Behrens played the role of the prophet, therefore, he enacted as well a particularly Nietzschean conception of an artist's role. With Olbrich's architecture as backdrop, the conflation of the fictional character and the real architect lent the creative act of spectatorship a heightened significance; spectators were to "feel as one" with Behrens both as prophet messenger and as artist prophet. Another identificatory process, meanwhile, was supposed to occur among the individual spectators as their emotions merged to create a unified audience. Such sensations were, of course, permissible only within the safety of a highly selective crowd. Fuchs wished, he emphasized, "*to raise the aesthetic level of the circle of cultivated people,*" not to expand the parameters of that circle.⁵⁶

While in Darmstadt, Fuchs frequently published theoretical essays on the cultural potential of the German theater. In 1899, for example, he wrote three articles on the topic

song the sacred will of all." Windsor provides no source for Fuchs's claim. Alan Windsor, *Peter Behrens: Architect and Designer* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1981), 33.

for the weekly journal *Wiener Rundschau*, including “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens” [The theater—a festival of life]; the eight essays he contributed to the Artists’ Colony program book in 1901 included “Ideen zu einer festlichen Schau-Bühne” [Ideas for a festive stage]. As Fuchs began to discuss more specifically the effect of the work of art on its audience, writing theoretically about the theater offered a mediating forum for his long-standing interest in Nietzschean precepts. The transfer of his attentions away from art criticism might also be described as one from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to Nietzsche’s first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, a shift that prompted him to turn as well to Wagner’s writings, and particularly to the notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.⁵⁷

As Fuchs envisioned it in 1899, the *Fest* would remove spectators from their daily environment and transport them to an exalted realm of shared art appreciation. “Goethe’s and Richard Wagner’s concept, to allow all the arts to combine to arouse the celebratory mood in the viewing community, is recorded,” he acknowledged.⁵⁸ But his conception of the theater was different: where Wagner sought to unite all the arts under the umbrella of his own music dramas, emphasizing musical composition at the expense of other forms of art, Fuchs would rely on traditional theater presentations couched in the grand event of a

⁵⁶ “. . . das ästhetische Niveau der gebildeten Volkskreise zu heben.” Georg Fuchs, “Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Entstehung der Künstler-Kolonie,” in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*, 22 (italics original).

⁵⁷ The title of Fuchs’s 1905 collection of essays, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, had even invoked Wagner’s 1849 essay “Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft.” Fuchs also borrowed the phrase for his essay “Zur Kunstgewerbe-Schule der Zukunft,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* XIII (January 1904), 259-66.

⁵⁸ “Der Gedanke Goethes und Richard Wagners, alle Künste zusammenwirken zu lassen zur Erregung der festlichen Stimmung in der schauenden Gemeinde, ist festzuhalten.” Georg Fuchs, “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens,” 483.

Fest.⁵⁹ In other words, Wagner had sought to unite different forms of art on stage—a unification, as we have seen, predicated on the purification of each form—in order to achieve the most powerful effect on the spectator, all while producing contemporary works of art. Fuchs was likewise interested in the spectator’s reaction to the performance, but, as a dramatist and not a composer, he wished to present dramas that were not bound to music, except insofar as incidental fanfare would contribute to the overall dramatic effect.

By 1905, Fuchs had clarified his arguments somewhat, and discarded the Wagnerian model. “The theater [*Schaubühne*] can never be the ‘*Gesamtkunstwerk*,’ ” he now declared. “It comes to completeness not through a cooperation of all the arts, valued equally, but instead is an *art for itself*. It therefore has a different purpose and a different origin, with laws and freedoms different from all other arts.”⁶⁰ Instead of aiming to unify all the arts, Fuchs sought to purify the discipline of theater itself. He wished to gather the different art forms only in theory, considering the potential function on the stage of each in order to determine that it might be discarded in creating the performance. Just as Wagner had celebrated drama as “the highest conceivable art,” Fuchs believed that the ultimate achievement of the theater was the creation of pure drama. And, it transpired, only one element was essential on stage: “Drama is possible without word, sound, scenery and wall,” he wrote; it could exist “purely as the rhythmic movement of the

⁵⁹ In 1905, he lamented that the composer had been forced to rely on the painter Arnold Böcklin to create the scenery in his music dramas, relinquishing all control on account of his own ignorance in this area. See Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 27.

⁶⁰ “. . . kennen wir aber auch, daß die Schaubühne nicht das ‘*Gesamtkunstwerk*’ sein kann. Sie entsteht nicht zur Vollkommenheit durch ein gleichwertiges Zusammenwirken aller Künste, sondern sie ist *eine*

human body.’⁶¹ If performance aimed to transport the spectator to the exalted realm of art, then the traditional stage apparatus was increasingly unnecessary.⁶²

Fuchs acknowledged that Wagner’s festival theater at Bayreuth had served its purpose, but he argued that in the early years of the twentieth century a new vision was needed. “The rising economic and cultural development of our *Volk*,” he wrote,

must also bring an understanding of a different, greater plan of realization. Goethe tells: “Schiller had the good idea to build a house proper for tragedy.” Since then the yearning for a national theater festival has always remained awake, as little forgotten by the German *Volk* as the hope for reestablishing the empire.⁶³

The different historical contexts and political leanings of Wagner and Fuchs contributed strongly to their conceptual differences. Five decades after Wagner had written “The Art-Work of the Future,” Fuchs hoped for a cultural rebirth that lacked the revolutionary politics that had pervaded Wagner’s essays in the aftermath of 1848.⁶⁴ The communal emotional transport that would occur at the *Fest* as Fuchs envisioned it would reinscribe the audience within a cultural community that harbored implications of nationalist political strength.

Kunst für sich. Sie hat anderen Zweck und anderen Ursprung, mithin auch andere Gesetze und andere Freiheiten als alle anderen Künste.” Ibid., 40-41 (italics original).

⁶¹ “Das Drama is möglich ohne Wort und ohne Ton, ohne Szene und ohne Gewand, rein als rhythmische Bewegung des menschlichen Körpers.” Ibid., 41.

⁶² On the retreat within modernist performance from speech in the drama and the concomitant embrace of silence (in the form of pantomime, dance, and silent film), see Harold B. Segal, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1-126.

⁶³ “Die steigende wirtschaftliche und culturelle Entwicklung unseres Volkes muss aber auch einen anderen, grösseren Plan der Verwirklichung näher bringen. Goethe erzählt: ‘Schiller hatte den guten Gedanken, ein eigenes Haus für die Tragödie zu bauen.’ Seitdem ist die Sehnsucht nach einem nationalen Bühnenfeste im deutschen Volke, stets wach geblieben und ebensowenig vergessen worden, wie die Hoffnung auf die Wiedererrichtung des Kaiserreiches.” Georg Fuchs, “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens,” 485.

⁶⁴ On Wagner’s political activity in this time, see Josef Chytry, *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 274-80. For more on the significance of Wagnerian politics in the early years of the twentieth century, see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 120-23.

The *Volk* that Fuchs wished to create by means of its experience of the performance was an amorphous entity, one that he linked to ancient Greek audiences by way of its potential for active spectatorship. “The *Volk*, when it is collected into a viewing community, wants not only to receive, but also to *give*,” he declared; as explanation, he reminded his readers of “how the Athenians sat in the theater, as *judges* as well,” deciding the fate of the plays they watched.⁶⁵ But while invoking the Athenian spirit, Fuchs neither advocated such competitions nor called for the audience to participate in the performance in any literal way, invoking instead the festive atmosphere of ancient performances. “As the Greeks on the day of the god,” he wrote,

and as our forefathers on the saints’ day climbed up in joyful procession to the spectators’ seats—the former filled with the roar of the tubas, the songs of the virgins, and the solemn shudder of the Dionysian cult; the latter with the ringing of bells, heavenly choruses, and joyful promises—so must we, too, elevate the play to the crowning center of a *Fest*.⁶⁶

The play itself might be one of his own, as at the opening ceremony of Darmstadt, or it might come from the classical dramatic repertory, with an emphasis on Greek and German works. Each German spectator would be made active within the performance by virtue of his own emotional response, not through any kind of physical participation.

While the *Volk* was specifically German, Fuchs occasionally hinted at its potential to gain influence throughout Europe. “[A]s the most gifted, discriminating, and superior

⁶⁵ “Das Volk, wenn es sich als schauende Gemeinde versammelt, will nicht nur empfangen, es will auch *geben*. . . . Erinnert euch, wie die Athener im Theater sassen, als *Richter* auch, mit dem ernstesten und doch freudigen Bewusstsein, dass ihre Entscheidung ein Werk aus der Reihe der Wettkämpfe emporheben sollte zu ewig wirksamer Macht im Leben.” Georg Fuchs, “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens,” 484.

⁶⁶ “Wie die Griechen am Tage des Gottes, wie unsere Vorfahren am Tage der Heiligen in festlichem Zuge zu den Bänken der Zuschauer hinaufstiegen, jene erfüllt von dem Dröhnen der Tuben, den Gesängen der Jungfrauen und dem weihervollen Schauer des dionysischen Cultus, diese von Glockenklang, himmlischen Chören und frohen Verheissungen, so müssen auch wir das Schauspiel zum krönenden Mittelpunkte eines Festes erheben.” *Ibid.*, 485.

men and women,” he wrote in 1905, the members of the *Volk* “are the European future; at the very least the *German* future. That which will be founded upon them forms the basis from which all the creative powers of the following races must henceforth shoot: that much is *certain*.”⁶⁷ Fuchs’s position might be characterized as one of German cultural nationalism with pan-European pretensions, as opposed to an avant-garde internationalism. While other nations were welcome to join, cultural rebirth would be German at its core. Again, the model for the unification of political and cultural unity in Germany originated in ancient Greece. Fuchs wrote with admiration of “the old Aristotle, whose notion of catharsis is . . . to be taken literally, as a purification, an anchoring, of the urge for life through a restless and reckless realization in a higher chorus. We want to congregate, to *feel* together, with as many others as possible in *one* large, intoxicating elevating experience.”⁶⁸

4. Toward Architecture

After the opening ceremony at Darmstadt in 1901, Fuchs’s interest in the experience of theater as festival began to wane. He remained concerned with the effect of the performance on the viewer, however, turning to the topic of the architectural reform of the theater as a means of fostering a particular effect. This topic, based on the notion of

⁶⁷ “Sie zählt bereits nach Zehntausenden; und diese, als die begabtesten, anspruchsvollsten, überlegensten Männer und Frauen, sind die europäische Zukunft, sie sind zum mindesten die *deutsche* Zukunft. Was auf sie gegründet wird, das steht auf der Basis, an die alle schöpferischen Kräfte der führenden Rassen hinfort anschließen müssen, das steht *sicher*.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 7 (italics original).

⁶⁸ “Das wußte schon der alte Aristoteles, dessen Katharsis also doch wortlich zu nehmen ist, als Reinigung, Abspannung, des Lebensdranges durch ein restloses, rücksichtsloses Ausleben im höheren Chore. . . . Wir

building as symbolic of the creation of a new culture, was no less Nietzschean in inspiration than that of the *Fest*. As Fritz Neumeier has written, “In the existential equation between art and life, the nub of all Nietzschean philosophy, the verb *to build* is a synonym for the fundamental human activity of creating form.”⁶⁹ Fuchs took literally the imperative that Neumeier refers to as Nietzsche’s “summons to build,” arguing for the creation of the new audience by means of the creation of a German theater. “They are destroyed in the German lands and are still not entirely conscious of their inner unity, as their *center* is missing,” he declared. “Creating this center, that is the problem that concerns us: *the stage of the future*.”⁷⁰

Increasingly, Fuchs described the effect of the performance in terms of alterations to the physical design of the stage and auditorium. In an essay entitled “Zur künstlerischen Neugestaltung der Schau-Bühne” [On the artistic redesigning of the stage], published in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* in 1901, he lamented the condition of the German theater. “If we now and then take home with us an elevating impression” from the theater, he complained, it “develops *despite* being cooped up with neighbors devoid of understanding, *despite* the disrespectful attitude of the crowd, *despite* the obtrusive decorations and the banality of the stage images, *despite the theater!*”⁷¹ Fuchs was

wollen uns mit möglichst vielen anderen in *einer* großen, berausenden Erhebung zusammenfinden, *zusammenfühlen*.” Ibid., 35 (italics original).

⁶⁹ Fritz Neumeier, “Nietzsche and Modern Architecture,” 286.

⁷⁰ “Sie sind zerstreut in deutschen Landen und sind sich ihrer inneren Zusammengehörigkeit noch nicht alle bewußt, weil ihnen der *Mittelpunkt* fehlt. Diesen Mittelpunkt zu schaffen, ist das Problem, das uns beschäftigt: *die Schaubühne der Zukunft*.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 7 (italics original). Cultural regeneration, as usual, was predicated on acknowledging the degenerate status of contemporary German culture.

⁷¹ “Wenn wir gleichwohl dann und wann einen erhebenden Eindruck mit nach Hause nehmen . . . so ist uns dieser Eindruck geworden *trotz* der Zusammenpferchung mit verständnislosen Nachbarn, *trotz* der unehrerbietigen Haltung der Menge, *trotz* der aufdringlichen Dekorationen und der Banalität der

disturbed not only by the current theater repertoire and the manner in which it was presented, but also by the mediocrity of contemporary audiences—all factors that harmed the spectator’s experience of the performance. He called for “a festive house in which . . . all impressions unite ceremonially through our elevated senses into a great, and *redeemed*, happiness of the spirit.”⁷² This theater would provide spectators with a collective sense of spiritual redemption based on their aesthetic experience. It would house, in other words, the sense of ceremony represented by the opening performance of the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony.

One local cause for Fuchs’s turn toward the consideration of theater architecture might well have been Behrens’s presence in Darmstadt. Like Fuchs, Behrens was interested in the notion of theater as festival; he elaborated this vision in his first published essay, “Die Dekoration der Bühne” [The Decoration of the Stage], which was included in a special issue of *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* in May 1900 devoted to the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony. “The theater has in our day become more and more a place of entertainment,” Behrens complained. Like most forms of art, he argued, it was becoming increasingly stuck in the mire of naturalism, obsessively imitating reality and, consequently, abandoning its allegiance to true creativity. But vestiges of successful art still existed in Germany: “Owing to the fact that music can never be truly naturalistic,” he explained, “opera has more than any other form of theater remained in the realm of art,

Bühnenbilder, *trotz des Theaters!*” Georg Fuchs, “Zur künstlerischen Neugestaltung der Schau-Bühne,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* VII (October 1900-March 1901), 204 (italics original).

⁷² “Wir aber wollen ein festliches Haus, da . . . alle Eindrücke feierlich einziehen durch unsere erhobenen Sinne zu einem grossen, *erlösenden* Glück der Seele.” Ibid (italics original).

and so we experience the best that our age is capable of showing in Bayreuth.”⁷³ Many European composers could have epitomized operatic achievement in 1900, but it was not opera *per se* that signified artistic success, nor even Wagner’s operas specifically. Rather, it was the Wagnerian experience offered at Bayreuth—the pilgrimage to a secluded site in a German town, the spectator’s sense of participation within an audience, and the unification of the arts in a great and glorious *Gesamtkunstwerk*—that represented, for Behrens as much as for Fuchs, an artistic ideal. The stated goal was to raise theater to this exalted level, “that we may experience on the stage the overwhelming image of the highest harmony through the combination of all the beautiful arts.”⁷⁴

In June 1900, one month after the publication of his essay, Behrens produced a twenty-five-page pamphlet entitled *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als Höchsten Kultursymbols* [Festivals of Life and Art: a Reflection on the Theater as the Highest Symbol of Culture]. [fig. 3.12] The title page, designed by Behrens, shows the book’s title flanked by two figures of indiscernible gender, each one holding a crystal the size of its own head. Their faces are reduced to masks and their hair as two sets of parallel lines; their bodies pared down to linear indications of drapery. Set

⁷³ “Das Schauspiel-Haus ist in unserer Zeit mehr und mehr eine Stätte für Unterhaltung geworden. Dadurch, dass die Musik überhaupt nicht wirklich naturalistisch werden kann, ist die Oper noch am meisten im Reiche der Kunst geblieben, und so erleben wir denn auch das Beste, was unsere Zeit zu zeigen vermag in Bayreuth.” Peter Behrens, “Die Dekoration der Bühne,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* VI (May 1900): 401. As Stanford Anderson has written, Behrens believed 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. Behrens explicitly proposed all this [and] drew a plan for the festival cult-house. . . . The stage was seen as an altar, not a mere place of entertainment.” Anderson, *Peter Behrens and the New Architecture of Germany: 1900-1917* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1968), 48.

⁷⁴ “Wie in der Natur das Licht seinen versöhnenden Glanz über das All ergießt und alles umbindet zur höheren Harmonie, so soll sich vor uns der Vorhang theilen, um auf der Bühne das überwältigende Bild der höchsten Harmonie durch das Zusammenwirken aller schönen Künste zu erleben.” Peter Behrens, “Die Dekoration der Bühne,” 405.

among the contemporaneous creatures of Jugendstil design, these figures would have appeared still more abstracted than they do today. At the same time, they appear Egyptian, a style also legible in the ornamental designs surrounding them: their faces seem like those of two sphinxes, stripped of all traces of individualism.⁷⁵ Behrens dedicated his book to the Artists' Colony at Darmstadt, showing within its pages the same crystalline symbolism that would be one of the unifying themes of its opening ceremony the following year.

Within the text of *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, the debt to Nietzsche is clear, both at the level of the description of the aesthetic experience undergone by the individual spectator and at that of the larger cultural and national significance of the work of art. "Everything opens our soul to its second, eternal life" in witnessing the work of art, Behrens wrote with words Zarathustra might have used. "We have become greater, more complete, more clear; we have forgotten the inadequacies of life; we have forgotten the shortcomings of the soul; we have forgotten that many things are ugly through our own fault."⁷⁶ His words likewise evoke Nietzsche in describing the parallels between visual style and a unified national culture: "style is the symbol of the general feeling, of an age's whole attitude to life, and appears only in the universe of all the arts. The harmony of all

⁷⁵ Richard Wagner had presented the tendency to abstraction on the part of "Asiatics and Egyptians" as a foil for the naturalism of the ancient Greeks in "The Art-Work of the Future" in 1849; Alois Riegl expanded on the theme in his 1893 book, *Problems of Style*. Wilhelm Worringer would make similar symbolic use of Egyptian art in 1908 in *Abstraction and Empathy*. For a discussion of the symbolic value of Egyptianism in the work of Riegl, Hildebrand, and others, particularly in relation to early silent film, see Antonia Lant, "Haptical Cinema," *October* 74 (Fall 1995): 45-73.

⁷⁶ "Alles eröffnet unsre Seele einem zweiten, ihrem ewigen Leben. Wir sind grösser, umfassender, klarer geworden; wir haben die Unzulänglichkeiten der Seele vergessen, wir haben die Kleinheiten der Seele vergessen, wir haben vergessen, das viele hässlich war durch unsre Schuld." Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als Höchsten Kultursymbols* (Darmstadt: C. F.

art is the beautiful symbol of a strong people.”⁷⁷ The harmony of the artistic whole paralleled, and equaled, the harmony of its parts; by means of its visual style, art expressed the spirit of its age and represented the nation’s strength—both cultural and, by implication, political.

In the contemporary theater, Behrens complained, a collection of individuals watched the false perspective of naturalist illusionism. In the theater, he believed, as in all forms of art, naturalism signaled degeneration, a decline in the creative powers exercised by both artist and viewer.⁷⁸ He advocated in its place a theater that, with the occasional assistance of illusionistic hints, encouraged the audience to help create the work. Behrens conceived of spectatorship as a form of participation in the performance, a communal act, rather than something witnessed from the outside by a set of individuals who remained emotionally discrete despite their physical proximity. To counteract this sense of isolation within the audience, he called for increasing the space between seats in order to encourage social circulation among spectators. In the new kind of theater he proposed, the traditional distinction between active performer and passive spectator would dissolve. “Through our enthusiasm we, too, have become artists,” he explained; “we are no longer waiting spectators; we are on the threshold of being participants in a revelation of life.”⁷⁹

Winter’shen, 1900), 12-13. Further analysis of this book can be found in Julius Posener, “Werkbund and Jugendstil,” in Lucius Burckhardt, ed., *The Werkbund*, 16.

⁷⁷ “Der Stil aber ist der Symbol des Gesamtempfindens, der ganzen Lebensauffassung einer Zeit, und zeigt sich nur im Universum aller Künste. Die Harmonie der ganzen Kunst ist das schöne Sinnbild eines starken Volkes.” Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, 10.

⁷⁸ “Denn wie überall in der Kunst, so verdrängt auch in der Schauspielkunst die Natur den entarteten Stil. . .” Ibid., 21.

⁷⁹ “Durch unsere Begeisterung sind wir Mitkünstler geworden, wir sind nicht abwartende Zuschauer mehr, wir sind von der Schwelle an Teilnehmer an einer Offenbarung des Lebens.” Ibid., 17.

Architecturally as well, Behrens believed, the theater should help forge a link between the audience and the performance on stage. “We do not want to separate ourselves from our art,” he maintained. “The proscenium, the most important part of our stage, is in structural thinking completely united with the hall. The stage follows behind it, in greater breadth than depth.”⁸⁰ This shallow stage would be further unified with the auditorium by means of what Behrens termed a “rising terrace” [*ansteigende Terrasse*], mechanically adjustable.⁸¹ Such a configuration, he explained, would help dissolve the distinction between the performance and the audience. Just as crucially, it would alter the audience’s perception of the stage, flattening the visual image of the performance to create a visual impression of sculptural relief. The concept of relief, central to the thinking of both Behrens and Fuchs at this time, would carry over into the design of the Munich Artists’ Theater; for Fuchs as well, as we shall see, it would likewise appear architecturally in the form of a shallow stage.⁸²

Behrens’s ideas about theater “as the highest symbol of culture,” as his book’s subtitle put it—as a Nietzschean unification of the arts presented on a relief stage—surely resonated with Fuchs’s own ideas. The very title of Fuchs’s 1899 essay, “Die Schaubühne—ein Fest des Lebens,” foreshadowed that of Behrens’s pamphlet. One indication of the

⁸⁰ “Wir wollen uns nicht trennen von unsrer Kunst. Das Proscenium, der wichtigste Teil unsrer Bühne, ist im baulichen Gedanken vollkommen vereinigt mit dem Saal. Dahinter in grösserer Breite als Tiefe, schliesst sich die Bühne an.” Ibid, 19.

⁸¹ Notably, before building the Artists’ Theater Max Littmann became known as the inventor of the variable proscenium, which he built at the Hoftheater in Weimar (1906-08) and which could be raised and lowered to different heights. He described this achievement in his essay “Theatertechnische Neuerung im Hoftheater in Weimar,” *Bühnentechnische Rundschau* no. 4 (1908). Littmann’s essay is cited at length in Friedrich Kranich, *Bühnentechnik der Gegenwart*, 2 vols. (Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1929), 197-99; Kranich himself is billed on the title page of his book as the Technical Director of the Hanover State Theater and of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus.

conjunction of their ideas at this time is the use of Behrens's illustrative vignettes to accompany both Behrens's essay "Die Dekoration der Bühne" (published in May 1900) and Fuchs's play *Das Zeichen* (published in the Darmstadt exhibition program book in 1902); the drawings would reappear in Fuchs's essay collection in 1905. According to Anderson, "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," while Fuchs, under the influence of Behrens, came to believe that performance reform would not happen without architectural reform.⁸³ But the urge to delineate mentor and apprentice can also serve to obscure larger concerns; influence between the two men in Darmstadt was probably mutual, with Nietzsche's ideas operating as the link between them. From symbolic crystals to expressive rhythm, the main ingredients of the Artists' Colony derived from Nietzsche.

⁸² Ten years later, Behrens was still promoting the "relief stage"; see Behrens, "On Art for the Stage" (1910), in *Perspecta* 26: 135-42.

⁸³ Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens*, 77. Other scholars have likewise attempted to establish a hierarchy of cultural influence in Darmstadt. Presenting the performance of *Das Zeichen* entirely as a Behrens creation, Rosemarie Haag Bletter (who cites Anderson's dissertation) ignores Fuchs's authorship of the play and suggests Paul Scheerbart as the source for the architect's interest in crystals. See Bletter, "The Interpretation of the Glass Dream: Expressionist Architecture and the History of the Crystal Metaphor," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 40 (March 1981): 31. Two comments by Anderson, that "the theme of the ceremony and the symbol were chosen by Behrens, who used precious stones as the leitmotif of his work at the colony," and that "the desire to formulate the *Zeitgeist* had led Behrens to Nietzsche and crystal-gazing around 1900," ignore Fuchs's role in shaping the Darmstadt aesthetic. Anderson, *Peter Behrens*, 47. Wiltrud H. Steinacker, meanwhile, has argued (without citing sources) that Behrens and Fuchs were unified in their approach, and together united against Olbrich's ideas about theater: "Although Behrens and Fuchs had ambitious plans for establishing a new theater at the Colony, which the former published in his *Feste des Lebens* (Celebrations of Life), these plans did not materialize. The reason for this development lay in the rivalry between Behrens and Fuchs, on the one hand, and another member of the Colony, Joseph Maria Olbrich." Steinacker, *Georg Fuchs and the Concept of the Relief Stage*, 53. According to Steinacker, "Behrens was definitely the first to introduce the concept of the

5. The Stage of the Future

Fuchs returned to Munich in 1904, leaving behind *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and with it his attempt to press the aesthetic ideals of Nietzsche and Wagner into the service of art criticism. Increasingly he wrote of theater's role as a unifying cultural force in Germany, starting a propaganda campaign to create a German theater in a city large enough to attract the audience he envisioned. His political affiliations at this time appear most clearly in *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst: Betrachtungen über die Zukunft des Deutschen Volkes aus den Papieren eines Unverantwortlichen* [The Kaiser, culture and art: considerations of the future of the German people from the papers of an irresponsible person]. In this book, published anonymously in 1904, Fuchs emphasized theater's role in the formation of the collective, right-wing political identity that he considered necessary for a strong German state. With such chapters as "Culture and the Position of World Power," "Race and Rhythm," and "On the Psychology of the Degenerate," he added his voice to German debates on culture, already politically loaded and increasingly so in the decades that followed. "Every culture is bought with blood," he announced here, "for it is nothing other than the most reckless infiltration in all things of the rhythm of its own national tradition."⁸⁴

Fuchs justified such nationalistic sentiment by underlining Germany's need to compete with other countries for a supremacy both cultural and political. This need, he explained, had been rendered urgent in part by recent increases in emigration. Millions of

relief to the stage (*Feste* 17, 19), while the title of his *Feste des Lebens* (1900) may have been derived from Fuchs' earlier essay. . . ." Ibid., 46, note 61.

Germans had departed for America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Russia, he warned, and rather than retaining their identity as Germans they tended to sever all ties to their nation. Yet people all over the world—even those who had not been born there—looked to Britain as their cultural homeland. Despite experiencing a population depletion similar to that of Germany, in other words, the British empire retained its reputation as a cultural authority. Its status, Fuchs argued, could be traced to the fact that “everything British has a British style,” including “English childcare, English sport, English thoroughbreds, English statesmanship, the English residential building, the English household. . . .”⁸⁵ The examples reveal, on the one hand, the emphasis on good breeding and sportsmanship associated with the upper class, and, on the other, the value placed on interior design and management, both at the domestic and national level. Much in the manner of Hermann Muthesius’s book *The English House*, Fuchs argued for the need to improve German standards in these areas by following the English model.⁸⁶

In the face of British achievements, Fuchs noted, “we Germans have only our music and our art of warfare to set against this, while the French have only their cuisine and their charm.”⁸⁷ National cultural succession was at stake, and Germany needed more than music and the “art of warfare” to establish its supremacy. But the British empire, a nation in decline, was not the real threat, he argued; this came from the Anglo-American

⁸⁴ “*Jede Kultur ist erkaufte mit Blut, denn sie ist nichts anderes als die rücksichtsloseste Durchsetzung der Rhythmik des eigenen Volkstumes in allen Dingen.*” Georg Fuchs, *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst*, 84 (italics original).

⁸⁵ “Alles Britische hat einen britischen Stil. . . englische Kinderpflege, englischer Sport, englische Vollblutpferde, englische Staatskunst, englisches Wohnhaus, englischer Hausrat. . . .” *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸⁶ See Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, trans. Janet Seligman (1904-05; repr. New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

and Russo-Asiatic empires, and particularly from the United States. Fuchs recorded with approval, for example, that President Roosevelt “again and again emphasizes that a process of *cultural* concentration must precede that of political expansionism.”⁸⁸ Fearing that the United States would replace Britain as the preeminent world power, Fuchs set down two linked goals for his own nation. The first was to strengthen the navy so that (together with its partners in Austria, Italy, and France) Germany might operate as an international power. The second goal, equally important, was to improve German cultural standards “so that the other continental powers, with *France* at their head, would no longer fear a cultural step backwards in forming a closer relationship to us.”⁸⁹ Both military and cultural advances were to participate in a limited European internationalism. The amorphous notion of culture was central to the notion of nation-building, with Fuchs declaring that “the price of the culture of the future is the *intercontinental war*.”⁹⁰

Fuchs acknowledged the cultural function of the theater within the pages of *The Kaiser, Culture and Art*; he declared, for example, that “the stage of the future will be of immense significance for the corporeal development and refinement of the race, of the same significance held by other sports for the Anglo-Saxon race.”⁹¹ But even as he clarified his political ideas in this anonymous publication, he began to modulate (if not

⁸⁷ “Wir Deutschen hätten nur unsere Musik und unsere Kriegskunst dagegen zu setzen, die Französer nur ihre Küche und ihre Artigkeit.” Georg Fuchs, *Der Kaiser, die Kultur und die Kunst*, 10.

⁸⁸ Roosevelt “immer und immer wieder betont, daß ein *kultureller* Konzentrationsprozeß dem politisch-expansiven vorangehen müsse.” *Ibid.*, 11 (italics original).

⁸⁹ “. . . daß die anderen kontinentalen Mächte, an ihrer Spitze *Frankreich*, in einem engeren Verhältnisse zu uns nicht mehr einen kulturellen Rückschritt befürchten.” *Ibid.*, 13 (italics original).

⁹⁰ “. . . so ist der Kaufpreis für die Kultur der Zukunft der *interkontinentale Krieg*. . . .” *Ibid.*, 13-14 (italics original).

⁹¹ “Die Schaubühne der Zukunft wird für die körperliche Entwicklung und Verfeinerung der Rasse von ungeheurer Bedeutung sein, von ähnlicher Bedeutung, wie sie andere Sports für die angelsächsische Rasse haben.” *Ibid.*, 68.

entirely conceal) them in his writings that addressed the topic of theater explicitly. Such a characterization is especially true of his collection of essays, *The Stage of the Future*, which he published the following year. This book brought him fame in Germany and helped to establish his international reputation in the theater. The same two vignettes by Behrens again illustrated Fuchs's conception of the theater, appearing as bookends at the beginning and the end of the book, but the notion of the *Fest* had faded. Instead, Fuchs concentrated on the analysis of the elements of the new theater; such chapter titles as "The House," "The Stage," "The Actors," and "Directing" exemplify an almost willfully apolitical formalism. Other chapter titles, such as "On the Purpose and Style of the Theater" and "The New Culture's Bourgeois [*bürgerlich*] Theater," indicate only slightly more about the desired sociocultural functions of the new stage.

The restricted Nietzschean elite that visited the Darmstadt Artists' Colony no longer sufficed for Fuchs, who now referred to the proposed new audience as the "cultural 'superior ten thousand.'" ⁹² This larger number was more in keeping with Wagner's hopes, yet Fuchs also distinguished his aims from those of the composer. "Richard Wagner, in the era *before* the general cultural rebirth, built a festival theater for a public that he first had to create. *We*, on the contrary, plan a drama, and a festival house, for the ten thousand that already await it," Fuchs explained. ⁹³ In other words, where Wagner, according to Fuchs, had hoped to create an audience through their experience of the performance of his music dramas, contemporary sociopolitical

⁹² Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 11.

⁹³ "Richard Wagner, in die Zeit *vor* der allgemeinen kulturellen Neugeburt verschlagen, baute ein Festspielhaus für ein Publikum, das er sich erst werben mußte. Wir, dagegen, planen ein Drama und ein festliches Haus für Zehntausende, die bereits darauf warten. . . ." *Ibid.*, 8 (italics original).

conditions were different and required a new cultural tactic. The previous fifty years had created a critical mass of potential theatergoers, a dormant *Volk* who needed merely to be amassed in an appropriate setting and alerted to their cultural and political function.⁹⁴

Fuchs offered several clues within his book as to the composition of the new audience. First, he distinguished it from the contemporary “bourgeois ‘great public’ ” who, by definition, lacked aesthetic taste.⁹⁵ He argued that “today, next to this similitude of the ‘great public,’ a ‘new society’ is again crystallizing from the personalities of the young generation which has become too strong to be worn out and crushed by the wheels of the leveling machine civilization.”⁹⁶ The “new society” was distinct both from the general bourgeois mass and from that elite group, isolated from the rest of German culture, to which the Artists’ Colony at Darmstadt had catered. But it also possessed the advantages of each: the strength of numbers and the elite’s discriminating taste. In this central position, it would act as the vanguard of cultural change, setting an example to the rest of society and, ultimately, inspiring all of Germany to join its ranks. As Fuchs wrote, “It is an old story: one needs only to explain something as exclusive, as

⁹⁴ This distinction is reiterated in Walter Grohmann, “*Das Münchener Künstlertheater in der Bewegung der Szenen- und Theaterreformen* (Berlin: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1935), 6.

⁹⁵ “. . . neben den bourgeoisen ‘großen Publikum’ ein neues Publikum auf der Plattform erscheint. . . .” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 9.

⁹⁶ “Aber neben dieser Similitude des ‘großen Publikums’ kristallisiert sich heute wieder eine ‘neue Gesellschaft’ aus den Persönlichkeiten der jungen generation, welche zu stark werden, um von dem Räderwerk der nivellierenden Maschinenzivilization zerschissen und zermalmt zu werden.” *Ibid.*, 6. Again, crystallization appears as a metaphoric creation narrative, evoking simultaneously the natural sciences and a geometric mental image appropriate for modern machine civilization.

the right of an elite, in order immediately to experience a mass rush. Ultimately everyone wants to be a member of the elite.”⁹⁷

The crucial element that would inspire the “mass rush” was the construction of an accessible venue. If the new theater were positioned “in a place of international traffic: in Munich, in Berlin, on the Rhine,” for example, then more Germans would be able to attend, Fuchs explained: “Then one shouldn’t think that the numbers for such a stage would remain limited to only those ‘superior ten thousand.’”⁹⁸ Implicit in his argument was a critique of the model of theater as a pilgrimage site, a model exemplified by Wagner’s festival theater in Bayreuth and by the Artists’ Colony in Darmstadt. Fuchs now sought to build a theater in a major city, accessible to larger numbers. The siting of the festival theater was not its only shortcoming, according to Fuchs, who also decried the design of its stage. “Wagner held on to the peep-box stage with its ramp lights and stage machinery,” he wrote, “and in this way prevented the painter’s intervention in the true and artistically respectable sense of the word.”⁹⁹ Only the restructuring of the stage itself would allow all the elements upon it to come together as equals; such an architectural reconfiguration would, in turn, allow the audience to participate more fully in the performance.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “Es ist eine alte Erfahrung: man braucht eine Sache nur für exklusiv und für das Vorrecht einer Elite zu erklären, um sofort einen Massenansturm zu erleben. Schließlich will eben jeder ein Elite-mensch sein.” Ibid., 22.

⁹⁸ “Wir dürfen sehr wohl daran denken, die Gesellschaft neuer Kultur zu gewissen Zeiten an einem Punkte zu konzentrieren, namentlich, wenn dies an einer Stätte des internationalen Verkehrs geschieht: in München, in Berlin, am Rhein. Denn man darf nicht glauben, daß die Frequenz einer solchen Schaubühne nur auf jene ‘oberen Zehntausend’ beschränkt bliebe.” Ibid., 22.

⁹⁹ “Wagner hielt an der Guckkastenbühne mit Rampenlicht und Maschinerie fest, und schloß damit das Eingreifen des Malers im echten und künstlerisch anständigen Sinne des Wortes aus.” Ibid., 28.

¹⁰⁰ In support of his claim, Fuchs cited a recent book by the theater theorist Adolphe Appia, *Die Musik und die Inszenierung*, first published in Munich in 1899.

In addition to the vignettes by Behrens, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* also contained a photograph of the opening ceremony of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony. It included as well three architectural drawings of theaters by Max Littmann, whom Fuchs would choose to build the Artists' Theater. The first, labeled "a schematic section drawing of a theater following the suggestions of Georg Fuchs," shows a double structure united by a glass ceiling, allowing the use of natural light to illuminate the stage. **[fig. 3.13]** At the left, under one roof, the auditorium is divided into three levels of seating, each less raked than the last. The stage, under a separate roof structure, is likewise divided into three sections—a proscenium area, a slightly elevated middle stage, and a more elevated area at the rear—thus forming a hybrid between a relief stage and a conventional one. In between the auditorium and the stage lies an orchestra pit. Submerged below the proscenium, it is invisible to the audience, following the model of Semper's theater for Wagner that was copied also in Wagner's theater at Bayreuth. This same arrangement would be retained in the construction of the Artists' Theater, as we shall see. But where Wagner wished to hide the orchestra in order to foster theatrical illusionism, Fuchs wished to do so in order to undercut the illusionism of the traditional theater.

Two other illustrations by Littmann included in the book show the ground plans for "a new form of theater," and likewise follow Fuchs's suggestions; one shows the ground floor while another, divided down the center, shows both of the two floors above. **[figs. 3.14 and 3.15]** Much of the design echoes those of the festival theaters for Wagner in Munich and Bayreuth. On the exterior, a curved bay at the front of the building is flanked by two rectangular rooms, doubling the length of the façade; inside the

auditorium, an amphitheater laid out in a fan shape contains rows accessible from the doors at either end rather than from interior aisles. Following the Wagnerian model, the orchestra pit is submerged under the stage, invisible to the audience. But several crucial differences from these models must be noted. First, Littmann's theater building is entered from the side wing, not from the center of the curved façade. Within the auditorium the seating is arranged in three levels, each one raked at an angle, rather than in one continuous block. At the back of the lower two levels are private boxes: a large one in the center with eight smaller ones on each side. Above all, the performance area distinguishes Littmann's design from its precursors. In place of the deep stage that Wagner had demanded in order to emphasize the auratic distance between audience and performance, a shallow one appears at the focal point of the fan-shaped auditorium. Appearing in these two drawings for the first time in Fuchs's work, this shallow stage would prove to be the most significant achievement of the Artists' Theater.

The reliance on naturalism pervasive in the conventional theater and particularly prevalent in Munich at the turn of the last century, Fuchs believed, was both inexcusably deceptive and fundamentally ill-fated. No amount of effort would create a realistic optical experience for the spectator. Indeed, the more naturalistic the performance was in general, the more jarring its particular flaws would be, and spectators lulled into the comfort of a realistic performance would be especially shocked by the spatial arrangement of the traditional deep stage.¹⁰¹ The deep naturalist stage strained the capabilities of the performers and directors, creating perspectival distortions that could be corrected only by

¹⁰¹ Evident here is Fuchs's theoretical distance from Bertolt Brecht, for whom such jarring elements were valued for their potential to reconfigure the spectators' perceptual faculties.

bringing the rear wall of the stage forward. As Fuchs explained it, actors retreating from the audience decreased in size while their environment remained constant, thereby destroying the carefully constructed stage naturalism. “The conventional peep-box stage feigns spatial and scenic depth to us,” he lamented, “but without being at all capable of making the human figure appear smaller in correspondence with this depth. And despite this it makes the claim of being ‘true to nature!’ ”¹⁰²

Fuchs’s description of the shrinking actor was often invoked to symbolize the inadequacies of the naturalist stage; it was quoted, for example, by the Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold in an essay the following year.¹⁰³ For Meyerhold as for Fuchs, the disparagement of traditional stage architecture was inseparable from the distaste for the naturalist drama that had been popular—especially in Munich, but across Europe as well—and the production style that accompanied it. “The current maximum development of the stage machinery, and with it the consequent naturalism, have led the peep-box stage to absurdity,” Fuchs declared, before working himself into the following rhetorical lather: “Away with the flies! Away with the footlights! Away with the settings, the prospects, the soffits, the scenery flats and quilted leotards! Away with the peep-box stage! Away

¹⁰² “Die konventionelle Guckkastenbühne spiegelt uns räumliche und landschaftliche Tiefen vor, ohne doch irgend imstande zu sein, die menschliche Figur dieser Tiefe entsprechend kleiner erscheinen zu lassen. Und dabei erhebt sie den Anspruch der ‘Naturtreue’!” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 28-29.

¹⁰³ See Vsevolod Meyerhold, “The Naturalistic Theater and the Theater of Mood,” in Edward Braun, ed. and trans., *Meyerhold on Theatre* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), 31. According to Carlson, the essay was written in 1906 and first published in 1908. See Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theater: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 320.

with the Loge theater! This whole sham world of cardboard, wire, burlap and sequins is ripe for downfall!”¹⁰⁴

Fuchs’s argument linked the naturalist dramas of, for example, Henrik Ibsen (who had lived and worked in Munich from 1875 to 1891) with the theaters in which they were being presented at the turn of the last century. One of the city’s most famous theaters, the Schauspielhaus, had been built in 1901 explicitly to showcase naturalist drama, and exemplifies Fuchs’s association of theater architecture and the dramas presented within it. Richard Riemerschmid designed the interiors, while Littmann was responsible for the plans, nestling the structure within the interior courtyard of a residential building. [figs. 3.16 and 3.17] Possessing neither its own architectural façade nor a centralized entrance, the theater is approached through one of two nondescript passages accessible from the fashionable Maximilianstrasse. Through them, one proceeds from the public space of the city street into either end of a foyer, its center marked by a skylight and its décor in keeping with the latest Jugendstil design. [figs. 3.18 and 3.19] This process of entry into a Jugendstil environment has the effect of walking into the aestheticized interior of a body. In the words of the theater historian Peter Jelavich, “one would fully conform to the spirit of Jugendstil if one compared it to a womb—hidden, vitalizing, and, above all, the source of *Jugend*.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ “Die heutige Höchstentwicklung der Bühnenmaschinerie und mit ihr der konsequente Naturalismus haben die Guckkastenbühne ad absurdum geführt. . . . Fort mit dem Schürboden! Fort mit dem Rampenlicht! Fort mit den Versatzstücken, Prospekten, Soffitten, Kulissen und wattierten Trikots! Fort mit der Guckkastenbühne! Fort mit dem Logenhaus! Diese ganze Talmiwelt aus Pappendeckel, Draht, Sackleinwand und Flitter ist reif zum Untergang!” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 17.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 156.

Behind the foyer lies the Schauspielhaus auditorium itself, its proscenium stage facing just over 700 seats arranged on two levels: some in a horseshoe-shaped balcony, others in a gently raked orchestra section below, devoid of aisles. [fig. 3.20] The auditorium's small size, softly glittering lights, rich materials, and deep red color all create an atmosphere of intimate opulence. This atmosphere, and the fact that seats at one end of the balcony directly face those at the other, allowed the audience to turn in on itself both literally and figuratively, creating the ideal viewing conditions for the emotional interiority famously explored by Munich dramatists around 1901.¹⁰⁶ While no record exists of Fuchs's opinion of the Schauspielhaus, it cannot have been favorable. Four years after it was built, he stated unequivocally that "all men of conscious culture are united in the knowledge that within the Baroque loge theater and the flea-pit peep-box stage a general aesthetic effect will never, ever, be achieved."¹⁰⁷ A true aesthetic response would occur only in the appropriate architectural setting, which, he maintained, would comprise an amphitheatrical auditorium—with no aisles or boxes—opposite a shallow stage.

"We wish not for the peep-box, not the panorama," Fuchs wrote in *The Stage of the Future*, "but for a spatial formation favorable to moving human bodies, uniting them in a rhythmic unity and at the same time facilitating the movement of the soundwaves toward the spectator. Therefore, not the perspectival, deep painting, but the flat *relief*

¹⁰⁶ Peter Jelavich has written that the Schauspielhaus "became a home for the most advanced lyric, symbolist, and social dramas from Germany, Austria, and Scandinavia in the prewar period." *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁰⁷ "Heute sind alle Menschen von bewußter Kultur einig in der Erkenntnis, daß innerhalb des barocken Logenhauses und der schmierigen Guckkastenbühne nie und nimmer eine ästhetische Gesamtwirkung erzielt werden kann." Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 33.

must be the model.”¹⁰⁸ The relief stage was not to be entirely flat; a certain depth was necessary both to accommodate small crowds of actors on occasion and to facilitate rapid changes of scene. In *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, Fuchs described this stage in some detail, dividing its shallow structure into three parts: the foreground, the middle ground, and the background. Owing to its proximity to the spectator, he explained, the foreground was the true arena for the performance; the latter two areas served subsidiary purposes, lending depth to the stage and presenting the audience with a painted image, respectively.¹⁰⁹ The rear wall of the theater, he decreed, was “the only surface in the scenic formation on which the painter’s art can intervene.”¹¹⁰ Fuchs said little of a programmatic nature about the style of painting appropriate for this rear wall, announcing only his approval of four painters: Pierre-Cécile Puvis de Chavannes, Anselm Feuerbach, Hans von Marées, and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. He did not remark on the internationalism of this list.

Criticism of the contemporary stage was, of course, linked to that of the drama presented on it. Fuchs decried contemporary plays, arguing that dramatists’ powers had waned “since the decline of the old, primitive stage culture” and the consequent overdependence on stage machinery.¹¹¹ Such an emphasis on technical details deflected attention from such genuinely theatrical effects as the actors’ talent for pure performance.

¹⁰⁸ “Wir wollen keinen Guckkasten, kein Panorama, sondern eine Raumbildung, welche bewegten, menschlichen Körpern möglichst günstig ist, sie zu einer rhythmischen Einheit zusammenfaßt und zugleich die Bewegung der Schallwellen nach dem Zuhörer zu begünstigt. Nicht das perspektivische, tiefe Gemälde, sondern das flache *Relief* ist also maßgebend.” Ibid., 47 (italics original).

¹⁰⁹ “Die *Vorderbühne* ist der eigentliche Schauplatz.” Ibid. (italics original).

¹¹⁰ “Die Hintergrund . . . bietet die einzige Fläche, an der die Kunst des Malers eingreifen kann in die scenische Gestaltung.” Ibid., 53.

The fault lay in the structural properties of the theater stage; to remake the stage would therefore serve to unleash creativity among playwrights. Worthy dramas “will again come into being,” he predicted, “as soon as a stage is there on which they can be apprehended as constructive unities. The stage creates the literature, and not the other way around.”¹¹² In this scenario, architecture itself would inspire the necessary cultural rebirth. At his book’s conclusion, Fuchs personified his argument: “The man who builds us the new stage,” he declared, “will be regarded by us and for all to come as worthy of the highest praise.”¹¹³

Following Wagner, Fuchs frequently used metaphors derived from the fine arts, treating the stage image with a vocabulary that derived from painting. While his discussion of the tripartite division of the stage image evoked his earlier work as an art critic, Fuchs completely denied that his arguments derived from any symbolic link between stage and painting. The consideration of the stage in terms of a foreground, middle ground, and background, he wrote, arose not from the connotations of “perspectival ‘depth,’ or the naturalistic effect of the illusion of distance, but rather simply out of consideration for practical concerns.”¹¹⁴ Among these concerns lay the need

¹¹¹ “Es ist nur allzubegreiflich, daß er seit dem Untergang der alten, primitiven Bühnenkultur im Maschinen- und Kulissenunwesen, kaum noch einem Dichter gelungen ist, ein Drama von streng geschlossenerer Architektur zustande zu bringen. . . .” Ibid., 85.

¹¹² “. . . und man darf beruhigt tausend gegen eins wetten, daß solche Dramen wieder entstehen werden, sobald erst eine Schaubühne da ist, auf der sie als konstruktive Einheiten erfaßt werden können. Die Bühne schafft die Literatur, nicht umgekehrt.” Ibid.

¹¹³ “Der Mann, welcher uns die neue Schaubühne baut, welcher zur Tat werden läßt, was wir in gegwärtiger Schrift in beschränkten und bescheidenen Zügen anzudeuten versucht, wird uns und aller Zukunft des höchsten Ruhmes würdig gelten.” Ibid., 107-08.

¹¹⁴ “Daß die Bühne nach rückwärts eine Tiefengliederung erfährt durch *Mittel-* und *Hinterbühne*, geschieht nicht in der Absicht, der szenischen Erscheinungswelt eine perspektivische ‘Tiefe’ oder die naturalistische Illusionswirkung der Ferne zu sichern, sondern lediglich aus Rücksichten auf den praktischen Betrieb.” Ibid., 51.

for rapid scene changes; overburdened with realistic details, the naturalist stage was incapable of shifting from one setting to another without long interruptive pauses. No such problems would occur on the shallow stage, where the absence of spatial depth would demand the elimination of excess props and sets. The shallow stage was thus the natural result of modern efforts toward perceptual efficiency.¹¹⁵

Beyond metaphoric comparisons, Fuchs associated the new theater stage with developments in the fine arts, as if the genre of theater were in competition with that of painting. Despite theater's status as the true art form, in other words, it still looked to the fine arts for stylistic guidance. "The 'literary drama' that is still dominant," he stated,

considered culturally, exists on a par with anecdotal painting and with the problem- and genre-scenes of a historical, social, lyrical, erotic, humorous, psychological kind, which in the course of the last decade have been overcome by the onslaught of real painterly art.¹¹⁶

Now that painting had advanced beyond naturalist genre scenes, in other words, theater was to follow suit. Max Reinhardt had provided a crucial step in the ongoing progression of artistic styles in the theater by demonstrating "cubic installation" on the Berlin stage—a kind of scenic design, Fuchs explained, "which can be set parallel to the impressionist style."¹¹⁷ The relief stage was thus the logical successor to the illogical stage currently in use.

¹¹⁵ On the notion of perceptual efficiency at this time in Europe more generally, see Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 17 and 23.

¹¹⁶ "Das jetzt noch herrschende 'literarische Drama' . . . steht, kulturell betrachtet, auf einer Ebene mit der Anekdoten-Malerei, mit dem Problem- und Genrebild historischer, sozialer, lyrischer, erotischer, humoristischer, psychologischer Art, welches durch den Ansturm echter malerischer Kunst im Laufe der letzten Jahrzehnte überwunden wurde." Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 101.

¹¹⁷ "Auf den *Reinhardtschen* Bühnen in Berlin ist man im Begriff, sogar einen Stil in der Behandlung des kubischen Einbaues zu entwickeln, der dem Stil der impressionistischen Malerei parallel zu setzen ist." *Ibid.*, 91 (*italics original*).

Within the pages of *Die Schuabühne der Zukunft*, Fuchs mentioned with approval only one contemporary German theater: the Prinzregententheater, or Prince Regent's Theater, built in Munich in 1901. Its architect was Max Littmann, whom Fuchs labeled "one of the most successful master builders of theaters."¹¹⁸ As a member of the firm Heilmann and Littmann, Littmann had already built several major buildings in Munich, including the Hofbräuhaus beer hall (1896-97); a new structure for the city's largest daily newspaper, the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (1904-05); and the Anatomy Building for the University (1905-08). [figs. 3.21 and 3.22] He had become known particularly for his theater buildings, which included—in addition to the Schauspielhaus and the Prinzregententheater in Munich—the Schillertheater in Berlin (1905-06) and the Weimar Hoftheater (1906-08).¹¹⁹ [figs. 3.23 and 3.24] Fuchs commended the architect for only one building, indicating no awareness of the rest of Littmann's oeuvre. "A reliable example of the theater of the future is already available," he declared. "We have to thank for it *Littmann*, who, following *Schinkel* and Bayreuth, has created the Prinzregententheater in Munich with festive halls, amphitheater and garden."¹²⁰ As the synthesizer of Schinkel's theaters and Bayreuth itself, Littmann was the only architect capable of building the theater of the future.

¹¹⁸ "... einem der erfolgreichsten Theaterbaumeister. . . ." Ibid., 42n.

¹¹⁹ Other buildings by Littmann in Munich include the Kaufhaus Hertie department store (1904-05) and the Dresdner Bank (1906-07). For more on his work, see Georg Jacob Wolf, *Max Littmann 1862-1931* (Munich: Knorr & Hirth, 1931), an illustrated homage published on the occasion of the architect's death. On his theater projects specifically, see Bernd-Peter Schaul, *Das Prinzregententheater in München und die Reform des Theaterbaus um 1900: Max Littmann als Theaterarchitekt* (Munich: Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1987).

¹²⁰ "Bis vorher ist das Theater der Zukunft bereits in bewährter Vorbildung vorhanden. Wir verdanken es *Littmann*, der im Anschlusse an *Schinkel* und Bayreuth das Prinzregenten-Theater zu München mit

The Prinzregententheater is widely recognized as Wagner's theater incarnated, finally, in the city of Munich.¹²¹ Littmann himself, in the book published by his firm on the occasion of the theater's opening, emphasized the origins of his designs in Semper's "reformatory—indeed 'revolutionary'—thoughts."¹²² He laid out the cultural and architectural lineage of his building once again in an essay he contributed to a larger volume on Munich architecture, published in 1912. "King Ludwig II's intention to build a festival theater for the works of Richard Wagner had to be abandoned," Littmann explained,

although plans and models of the unique design had been completed by Gottfried Semper in the sixties of the previous century . . . because petty minds had laid seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the path of the great plans. But the triumphal advance of Wagner's art did not let the ingenious idea rest, and at the turn of the century the former Hoftheater Intendant Ernst von Boffart managed to take up the plans of Ludwig II again and to put them into effect in a short time, if also in a simpler form.¹²³

festlichen Sälen, Amphitheater und Garten geschaffen hat." Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 44 (italics original).

¹²¹ See, among others, Bernd-Peter Schaul, *Das Prinzregententheater in München*, 4-67, as well as Heinrich Habel, "Die Idee eines Festspielhauses," in Detta and Michael Petzet, *Die Richard Wagner-Bühne König Ludwigs II* (Munich: Prestel, 1970), 315. Habel describes how Littmann reworked this model of auditorium in his Schillertheater in Berlin (1906) as well as two years later in the Munich Artists' Theater. Manfred Semper presents four theater types in his book *Theater*: one presenting opera and ballet; one for opera, ballet, and plays; one for plays only; and, last, the Wagner-theater. The example he provides of the fourth type is the Prinzregententheater. See Manfred Semper, *Theater* (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1904), 509-11.

¹²² Littmann was also careful to acknowledge Schinkel as a forerunner of Semper's efforts at theater reform. See Max Littmann, *Das Prinzregenten-Theater in München: Denkschrift zur Feier der Eröffnung* (Munich: L. Werner, 1901), 3.

¹²³ "Die Absicht König Ludwig II., den Werken Richard Wagners ein eigenes Festspielhaus zu errichten, mußte, obwohl Pläne und Modelle des einzigartigen Entwurfes bereits von Gottfried Semper in den sechziger Jahren des vorigen Jahrhunderts angefertigt . . . fallen gelassen werden, weil kleinliche Geister scheinbar unüberwindliche Hindernisse dem großen gedanken in den We gelegt hatten. Der Siegeszug Wagnerscher Kunst ließ aber der genialer Idee nicht ruhen, und um die Jahrhundertwende gelang es dem damaligen Hoftheater-indentanten Ernst von Bossart, den gedanken Ludwigs II. wieder aufzunehmen, und in kurzer Zeit, wenn auch in einfacher Form, zu verwirklichen." Max Littmann, "Theater- und Saalbauten," in Bayerischen Architekten- und Ingenieur-Verein, ed., *München und Seine Bauten* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1912), 245-46.

With a narrative of architectural history identical to self-glorification, Littmann recounted his own vision of the Prinzregententheater: “Following the plans of Max Littmann,” he wrote, “a house should rise as the master himself had wished and planned for the presentation of his works.”¹²⁴ Without mentioning the construction of Wagner’s festival theater at Bayreuth, Littmann deftly presented his own work as the reincarnation of that of Semper.

Like the Bayreuth festival theater, the Prinzregententheater indeed relied heavily on Semper’s designs for Munich in the 1860s. [figs. 3.25 and 3.26] Altering the proportions and the detailing of Semper’s building, Littmann retained the long, flat façade on one side of the building (covering the large reception hall for use during intermissions) as well as the pitched roof perched over a curved entry section. The building’s pediment, inscribed “der deutschen Kunst” [to German art], announced its cultural purpose with a nationalist resonance that Wagner would have approved. The Prinzregententheater was likewise located on the west bank of the Isar River, away from the city center. But where Semper’s theater had appeared on a prominent bluff overlooking the river, Littmann’s was set further back several streets behind the Friedenssäule, or Peace Monument, of 1899, on an avenue extended from the Prinzregentenstrasse. [fig. 3.27] While more modest than Wagner had originally desired for his Munich theater, it was nevertheless imposing, situated on a small square at the end of a boulevard; the debt to Semper was clear.

¹²⁴ “Nach Plänen Max Littmanns sollte ein Haus erstehen, wie es der Meister für die Aufführung seiner Werke selbst gewünscht und geplant hätte.” Ibid., 246.

Inside, the theater followed Semper's designs yet more directly. [figs. 3.28 and 3.29] The raked amphitheatrical auditorium, without the traditional divisions of aisles and boxes, allowed each seat as identical a view of the stage as possible, again implying both an equal experience of the performance and equal status within the auditorium. [fig. 3.30] When the theater opened with a production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, the appropriation was so blatant as to provoke a public letter of protest from Cosima Wagner, the composer's widow. "It was the master's definitive will that his theater would stand only in Bayreuth," she declared.

But now that . . . the name of the master is taken for that which he expressly rejected, for a stock enterprise, I would place myself under an irredeemable burden of guilt were I not to declare that the new theater building presses the seal on the treatment that once was subjected to in Munich, and that it will be a serious injustice to the legacy of Richard Wagner."¹²⁵

Her words had no effect in Munich, and Cosima Wagner turned to the full-time protection of her husband's legacy in Bayreuth itself.

The egalitarian view of the stage at the Prinzregententheater, and the sense of communal spectatorship fostered by this view, fit precisely Fuchs's demands for the theater of the future. But if the auditorium that he advocated already existed in Munich, then why did he call for a new one? One answer to this question exists at the level of architectural design. While the Prinzregententheater auditorium conformed to his wishes, the communal audience constituted only half his proposed theater. Most crucially, it lacked the shallow stage that, Fuchs believed, would encourage both an abstracted

¹²⁵ "Es war des Meisters endgültiger Wille, daß sein Theater einzig in Bayreuth stehe. . . . Jetzt aber . . . wo der Name des Meisters für das, was er ausdrücklich von sich wies, für ein Aktien-Unternehmen angenommen wird . . . würde ich eine untilgbare Schuld auf mich laden, wenn ich die Erklärung . . . unterließe: Daß der Bau des neuen Theaters das Siegel auf die Behandlung aufdrückt, welche einstens dem Meister in

performance style for those who acted upon it and a flat visual field for those who faced it. Fuchs's interest in relief had not simply been lifted from Behrens; rather, as we shall see in the next chapter, it derived from a wide set of sources in German aesthetic discourse, in particular the work of Adolf von Hildebrand.

Perhaps more important than the absence of a shallow stage was the fact that Fuchs had played no role in the creation of the Prinzregententheater. For Fuchs, the very process of summoning the theater of the future, of arguing for and justifying it, was almost as important as the actual existence of the structure. *The Stage of the Future* was an impassioned call for more than simply the theater that would encourage a new German audience, drama, and culture—or for the architect who would build such a theater. It was a call for cultural rebirth; a manifesto for the construction of a strong German culture that existed only in the future. In writing this manifesto, Fuchs inscribed himself in his vision of a future Germany where cultural advances would help form a strong German nation. “The young ladies and gentlemen” involved in the new theater, Fuchs explained, both those in the audience and those on the stage, “will not learn Greek dances, but rather that the principle of movement and beauty of our modern *German* race shall be won through form.”¹²⁶

München zu Theil wurde, und daß er ein Schweres Unrecht an Richard Wagners Vermächtniß wird.”
Cosima Wagner, July 3, 1901, Wahnfried Museum Archive, Bayreuth.

¹²⁶ “Die jungen Damen und Herren . . . werden aber keine griechischen Tänze lernen, sondern das Bewegungs- und Schönheitsprinzip unserer modernen *deutschen* Rasse soll durch sie Gestalt gewinnen.”
Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 70-71 (italics original).

Chapter Four: Constructing the Artists' Theater

In the 1907 edition of his guide to southern Germany, Karl Baedeker offered his readers the following abbreviated remarks: “The *October Festival*, founded in 1810 by King Ludwig I. and celebrated on the Theresienwiese from the end of Sept. to the middle of Oct., attracts large crowds of peasants from Upper Bavaria; it includes an agricultural show, horseraces, etc.”¹ By implication, the area was an inappropriate destination for cultured travelers, the guide book’s target audience. Worse yet, according to Baedeker, the site itself “has recently been much diminished by the construction of new streets.” No mention was made of the Theresienhöhe, the hill rising to the west of the field and best known as the base for the colossal statue of the allegorical figure of Bavaria.²

The following year, this hill was the site of *Ausstellung München 1908*, an exhibition officially held to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the founding of the city of Munich. The exhibition comprised six main halls and roughly forty subsidiary structures; together with an amusement park, these buildings encircled a small meadow at the top of the Theresienhöhe. The ground plan was designed by Wilhelm Bertsch of the city planning department, with the assistance of several others, including Richard Riemerschmid; Bertsch was also responsible for some of the main exhibition halls.

Opening seven months after the founding, also in Munich, of the Deutsche Werkbund, the

¹ Baedeker, *Southern Germany (Wurtemberg and Bavaria): Handbook for Travellers* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 195 and 252.

exhibition received almost three million visitors over the course of the summer.³ In 1909, Baedeker repeated his patronizing assessment of the Oktoberfest, but he now considered the area worth a detour. He singled out for particular mention “the buildings of the 1908 exhibition, with the Artists’ Theater built by Littmann, the artistically simplified stage arrangement of which is noteworthy.”⁴

This chapter describes the architecture of the Artists’ Theater in the context of *Ausstellung München 1908*. I will begin by discussing the exhibition itself which, following the lead of the Werkbund, implicitly negotiated a position in the evolving relations of German art and industry. At this time, while Jugendstil was deferring to more *sachlich*, or rationalized, design ideals, the Nietzschean aesthetic values that had been central to the thinking of Fuchs and others were beginning to confront the realities of mass culture. Like the exhibition that surrounded it—but more formally, given its architectural function—the Artists’ Theater gathered an audience into a structure that implied a particular model of spectatorship. I will describe the approach to the Theater as it would have been experienced by a visitor, from the main gates of the exhibition to the auditorium seats. Basing my analysis on contemporaneous written sources and on the few extant photographs and architectural drawings of the building, I will present the Theater

² Modeled by the sculptor Ludwig von Schwantaler and constructed posthumously in 1850, the Bavaria statue was backed by the Ruhmeshalle, completed in 1853, a semicircular structure designed by Leo von Klenze and punctuated by busts of 80 famous Bavarians.

³ For a description of the exhibition, which ran from May 16 to October 18, 1908, see Burkhart Lauterbach, “‘München 1908’—Eine Ausstellung” and Michael Gaenßler, “Die Architektur des Münchner Ausstellungsparks,” *Vom Ausstellungspark zum Internationalen Messeplatz München, 1904 bis 1984* (Munich: Stadtmuseum, 1984), 37-48.

⁴ “. . . die Gebäude der Ausstellung von 1908, mit dem von Littmann erbauten *Künstlertheater*, dessen künstlerisch vereinfachte Bühneneinrichtung beachtenswert ist.” Baedeker, *Süd-Deutschland: Handbuch für Reisende* (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl Bædeker, 1909), 260. Perhaps as telling of the theater’s fate is the

as an architectural object, focusing first on the design of its auditorium and then on that of its stage image.

As he had seven years earlier at the Prinzregententheater, Littmann arranged the seats at the Artists' Theater into an amphitheater, eliminating aisles and boxes in an effort to dissolve social stratification within the audience. He now extended this idea, straightening the curved rows of seats to create a perfect rectangle of spectators. This visually unified audience faced the unusually shallow stage for which the Theater became famous. For its first season, the Theater offered a repertory of classic plays, rather than contemporary naturalist dramas; it presented them by means of stylized tableaux instead of relying on the detailed theatrical illusionism then prevalent in Munich. The stage at the Artists' Theater participated in the rejection of naturalism both formally and through its dramatic repertoire and may be seen in relation to other shallow stages then being constructed in cities all over Germany: the cinema screen. Likewise, as I will argue, the auditorium at the Artists' Theater may itself be viewed in relation to the mass audiences that the cinema was beginning to attract.

1. *Ausstellung München 1908*

The Darmstadt Artists' Colony, discussed in chapter three, had catered predominantly to an upper middle class audience when it opened in 1901. Visitors there retreated to the bucolic outskirts of the city, ascending the Mathildenhöhe to celebrate their own presence

brief mention it receives in the Baedeker guide three decades later: "Künstlertheater im Ausstellungspark, nur im Sommer." Baedeker, *Deutsches Reich* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1936), 460.

within the aesthetically heightened realm that aimed to provide the apotheosis of Nietzschean artistic elitism. Seven years later, *Ausstellung München 1908* appeared to rely on the same aesthetic model. As period photographs of the exhibition attest, the *bürgerlich* residents of Munich could stroll around the Theresienhöhe and explore the offerings of various exhibition halls. [figs. 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3] But if the Artists' Colony in Darmstadt had intended to “fuse life and art into a unity,” as Fuchs had put it, the Munich exhibition fostered the same goal while defining life and art less in terms of a gathered elite and more along the lines of the daily existence of the middle class.⁵ Through the united advances of art and industry and the dissemination of well-designed objects, the daily life of the German middle class would be steadily improved, materially and aesthetically.

“In contrast to the exhibition in Darmstadt,” wrote the architect Hermann Muthesius in the pages of the Berlin journal *Kunst und Künstler*, “*Ausstellung München 1908* offers an absolutely consistent sight, unified also in its achievements.”⁶ Both its contents and its form were to be admired. In Muthesius’s words,

What Munich demonstrates here represents a decisive step forward in the development of art, even a milestone in the nature of exhibitions. Mind you, in Munich we are dealing with an entirely general exhibition, an exhibition embracing art, science, and industry—and in which, by the way, industry occupies the broadest area. Here a principle of exhibition technique is resolved, one that

⁵ “Leben und Kunst zur Einheit zu verschmelzen.” Georg Fuchs, “Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Entstehung der Künstler-Kolonie,” in Alexander Koch, ed., *Grossherzog Ernst Ludwig und die Ausstellung der Künstler-Kolonie in Darmstadt von Mai bis Oktober 1901*; repr. as *Die Ausstellung der Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 17.

⁶ “Im Gegensatz zu der Ausstellung in Darmstadt . . . bietet die Ausstellung München 1908 ein durchaus geschlossenes und auch in den Leistungen einheitliches Bild.” Hermann Muthesius, “Die Architektur auf den Ausstellungen in Darmstadt, München und Wien,” *Kunst und Künstler VI* (Berlin, 1908): 493.

until now has been struggled with everywhere, with more or less—mostly with less—success. It is the principle of both effective and tasteful installation.⁷

Ausstellung München demonstrated the high quality of the objects of German industry, which Muthesius called “irreproachable as far as taste was concerned [*geschmacklich einwandfrei*],” a characterization that included everything from the largest objects on display down to the postcards and other souvenirs available for purchase. Perhaps the exhibition’s greatest success, according to Muthesius, was its effectiveness as a form of cultural propaganda. “The foreigner who saw nothing of Germany other than the *Ausstellung München 1908*,” he declared, “would arrive at the opinion that German taste stands at an enviable level.”⁸

A review essay in *The International Studio*, New York’s “Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art,” remarked on the wide scope of the *Ausstellung München 1908*, an exhibition that encompassed the fields of “art, commerce, trade, manufactures, education, public works, sport of all kinds, and so forth.”⁹ The exhibition’s central aim, according to the author, L. Deubner, was to showcase the latest achievements of the applied arts in Munich and thus to demonstrate the city’s good taste. Local designers whose work was on view included Bruno Paul and Richard Riemerschmid; Emanuel von Seidl built a hall to house individual rooms designed by Munich firms, as well as the main restaurant

⁷ “Was München hier vorführt, bedeutet in der Kunstentwicklung einen entschiedenen Schritt vorwärts, für das Ausstellungswesen bedeutet es sogar ein Markstein. Wohlgemerkt, es handelt sich in München um eine ganz allgemeine Ausstellung, eine Ausstellung, die Kunst, Wissenschaft, und Industrie umfasst, und bei der übrigens die Industrie das breiteste Feld einnimmt. Hier ist ausstellungstechnisch ein Prinzip gelöst, an dem man sich bisher allerorten mit mehr oder weniger—meist mit weniger Erfolg—abgemüht hat. Es ist das Prinzip der zugleich wirkungs- und geschmackvollen Aufstellung.” Ibid.

⁸ “Wer als Ausländer von Deutschland nichts anderes zu sehen bekäme als die Ausstellung München 1908 würde zu der Meinung gelangen, dass der deutsche Geschmack auf beneidenswerer Höhe stande.” Ibid.

⁹ L. Deubner, “Decorative Art at the Munich Exhibition,” *The International Studio*, vol. 36 (November 1908): 42.

building at the center of the semicircle arrangement of exhibition buildings.¹⁰ [fig. 4.4] In addition to the more than one hundred interiors on view in the first main hall, the exhibition also contained a picture gallery, a sculpture room, displays of works by the city's furniture makers and those owned by its antique dealers, and examples of regional peasant art. Local metalworkers and ceramicists also showed their creations. Deubner ignored the Artists' Theater entirely in his essay, although he did mention the presence of "a Catholic Church with side chapels, sacristies, and niches," complete with adjacent cemetery.¹¹

The tone of Deubner's review was mostly positive. "In the totality of the display," he wrote, "the exhibition discloses a good average of achievement, and notwithstanding a certain monotony in the forms of expression, it is both abundant and varied."¹² While he admitted that "not a few things have found their way into the exhibition which do not accord with the programme," including a hall designed by von Seidl in the style of "Old Munich," he was pleased to discover that the exhibition also demonstrated works linking art and industry along the lines that had been laid out the previous October at the founding of the Werkbund.¹³ Deubner praised, for example, "those products of the industrial organization in which the co-operation of the artistic world of to-day has been enlisted, a co-operation which has met with striking success in many ways," in particular in the design of kitchens and bathrooms. "Three large halls are reserved for displaying the

¹⁰ A small house designed by Richard Riemerschmid for the garden city of Hellerau was one of the temporary structures on view. See Burkhart Lauterbach, " 'München 1908'—Eine Ausstellung," 40 and 46.

¹¹ L. Deubner, "Decorative Art at the Munich Exhibition," 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

products of industry,” he wrote, “and one is amazed at the wealth of imaginative and constructive energy here revealed.”¹⁴

While the Munich exhibition has received little attention in the scholarly literature of the last ninety years, its importance was widely acknowledged at the time.¹⁵ As one critic wrote with admiration: “Here is a city of 500,000 inhabitants which, with its own resources, organizes a *strictly local* exhibition and which manages to fill six large halls and four hundred rooms with the products of its own activity alone.”¹⁶ Not surprisingly, the Munich press that summer attended carefully to the exhibition. In a review essay in *Dekorative Kunst*, the Munich journal of applied arts, the critic Wilhelm Michel declared that “the meaning and significance of the exhibition are of a propagandistic nature,” putting on view the German people themselves as much as showcasing the objects they had created: “The people are exhibited outside; their taste, their cultural level, their ability to judge.” Ultimately, he wrote, the city itself was “the subject of the exhibition.”¹⁷

But Michel was generally unimpressed by the cultural level of the residents of the city of Munich. Little on view in *Ausstellung München 1908*, he complained, was worthy of mention. He decried the conservatism of the Munich public, for whom “the beautiful is that which pleases, and pleasant is that which is known,” and endorsed the work of only

¹⁴ Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁵ Nancy Troy has described the exhibition’s importance for French designers and critics in *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France: Art Nouveau to Le Corbusier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 57.

¹⁶ Jules Huret, “En Allemagne: Munich; les arts décoratifs à l’exposition,” *Le Figaro* (January 19, 1905): 5, quoted in Troy, 57.

¹⁷ “Das Volk wird draußen ausgestellt, sein Geschmack, sein kulturelles Niveau, seine Urteilsfähigkeit, gemessen an Darbietungen, die ihm noch problematisch sind. . . . und München ist der Gegenstand der Ausstellung.” Wilhelm Michel, “Die Ausstellung München 1908: Wohnungskunst und Kunstgewerbe,” *Dekorative Kunst* 12 (October 1908): 9 and 12.

two designers participating in the exhibition: Richard Riemerschmid and Bruno Paul.¹⁸

[figs. 4.5 and 4.6] While these two men designed objects in a Munich style, Michel maintained, they did so by successfully integrating foreign sources; their work balanced an advanced internationalism with a specifically local achievement. “The ‘mark of Munich’ in the applied arts is mainly their creation,” Michel wrote, “and their connections go perhaps back toward England, not toward Upper Bavaria. To cause to arise from foreign stimulation an applied arts [*Kunstgewerbe*] that is native to Munich, that above all is the task solved by RIEMERSCHMID and PAUL.”¹⁹

Three months earlier in the same journal, the critic Günther von Pechmann delineated several reasons for the exhibition’s importance. First, he noted, it registered Munich as a center for the latest developments in the applied arts. “The entire exhibition has the character of a local exhibition,” he wrote with approbation; “products from elsewhere are found only if the same thing is not produced in Munich, or if the designs for them derive from Munich artists.”²⁰ Second, *Ausstellung München 1908* radically reconfigured traditional exhibition methods. While world’s fairs had long arranged some objects as they would be encountered in daily life—“the oven in the corner, the book in the bookcase, the plate on the table”²¹—such small-scale arrangements ultimately

¹⁸ “Schön ist, was gefällt, und gefällig ist das Bekannte.” Wilhelm Michel cited with approval Wagner’s understanding of this maxim. *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ “Die ‘Münchener Marke’ in der angerwandten Kunst ist in der Hauptsache ihre Schöpfung, und deren rückwärtige Verbindungen gehen allenfalls nach England, nicht nach Oberbayern. Aus fremden Anregungen ein Münchener Kunstgewerbe erstehen zu lassen, das war die Aufgabe, die in erster Linie durch RIEMERSCHMID und PAUL gelöst worden ist.” *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰ “Die gesamte Ausstellung hat den Charakter einer Lokalausstellung, auswärtige Erzeugnisse finden sich nur dann, wenn gleiches in München nicht produziert wird, oder wenn die Entwürfe dazu von Münchner Künstler herrühren.” Von Pechmann, “Die Ausstellung München 1908,” in *Dekorative Kunst XI* (July 10, 1908): 425.

²¹ “Der Ofen in der Ecke, das Buch im Schranke, der Teller auf dem Tisch.” *Ibid.*

undermined the true purpose of earlier exhibitions, which was, he wrote, “to present the objects to the visitor in effective disorder.”²² In Munich, by contrast, groups in trade and industry were each accorded subdivisions of larger exhibition halls for the presentation of their wares. The exhibition was thus oriented toward industry, with objects exhibited primarily according to their manufacturers. “In this field the Munich exhibition signifies a decisive reform of the essence of an exhibition,” von Pechmann declared.²³ Discarding their role as aesthetes-in-training, exhibition visitors now acted as model consumers: “Thus in the end the consumer decides. And in fact just as much through his buying power as through his formation of good taste.”²⁴

According to its program booklet, von Pechmann wrote, the Munich exhibition aimed to prepare a place “not for handicrafts, nor for pure art, but rather for life; freely for a life that, in its thousand expressions of striving after truth and beauty, be accompanied by matter and form.”²⁵ Given this aim, it was to be evaluated neither by the responses of journal reviews nor by the number of visitors it received, but rather by its effect on industrial production. “Are there, already today in Germany,” he queried, “economic

²² “. . . die Gegenstände in wirksamer Anordnung dem Besucher vorzuführen.” Ibid., 426.

²³ “Auf diesem Gebiet bedeutet die Münchner Ausstellung eine entschiedene Reform des Ausstellungswesens.” Ibid.

²⁴ “So entscheidet zuletzt der Konsument. Und zwar ebensowohl durch seine Kaufkraft wie durch seine Geschmacksbildung.” Ibid., 427. The consumer to whom German industry catered belonged, he added, “to the great mass, and in fact—and this is the decisive thing—until now not to the mass of our *Volk*, but rather to the masses of the United States, Brasil, India.” “Nun gehört aber der Konsument, auf den die verarbeitende Industrie Deutschlands sich hauptsächlich stützt, nicht jener Schicht des Volkes an, welche Vermögen und verfeinerte Bildung besitzt und Luxusware kauft. Er gehört vielmehr der großen Masse an und zwar—und das ist das entscheidende—bis in die Gegenwart nicht der Masse unseres Volkes, sondern der Masse der Vereinigten Staaten, Brasiliens, Indiens.” Ibid. Von Pechmann blamed the low quality of mass-produced goods on the fact that they were destined for these other countries, where the public desired a certain level of tastelessness.

²⁵ “Nicht dem Kunstgewerbe, noch der reinen Kunst sollte hier eine Stätte bereitet werden, sondern dem Leben, freilich einem Leben, das in seinen tausendfachen Aeußerungen von dem Streben nach Echtheit und Schönheit in Stoff und Form geleitet wird. So lautete das Programm dieser Ausstellung.” Ibid., 425.

interest groups that can take up the artistic tendencies represented in this exhibition and can implement them, thoroughly understood, according to their own interests?”²⁶

Incursions into industry—and particularly at the level of design for international export—would truly signify the exhibition’s success. Merely inducing the public to appreciate recent developments in the realm of aesthetics would not be enough. “What does it help,” von Pechmann demanded, “if we build festival rooms and then fill them with the whole dreariness of the official festival atmosphere; if we reform the clothing and neglect the body?”²⁷

2. On the Relation of Art and Industry

Von Pechmann’s reference to clothing reform was more than metaphoric; it evoked a central debate of early twentieth-century German design. Specifically, it comprised a critique of the *Reformkleidung*, or reform clothing, movement, and implicitly offered as well a critique of related attempts to transform German daily life by reforming the design of the objects that furnished this life. Like the rhetoric surrounding the reform movements themselves, such critique was couched in terms of daily habits, as a treatment of sensibilities and cultural attitudes, rather than focusing exclusively on the appearance of particular designed objects. Notions of standardization, rationalization, and efficiency—the cultural values of the expanding middle class—were increasingly embraced at the turn

²⁶ “Die Frage ist vielmehr die: gibt es schon heute in Deutschland wirtschaftliche Interessentengruppen, welche die auf dieser Ausstellung vertretenen künstlerischen Tendenzen aufnehmen und in wohlverstandenen eigenen Interesse zur Durchführung bringen könnte?” Ibid., 426.

of the last century. These values appeared in rhetorical opposition to the purportedly self-indulgent efforts of such Jugendstil designers as Henry van de Velde and Hermann Obrist (whose “whiplash line,” as we have seen in chapter three, Fuchs had named in 1896).

The critique of Jugendstil, well under way in the cultural press in the early years of the twentieth century, provided a useful trope for those negotiating the emerging values of the industrializing German nation. In the terms of this critique, Jugendstil design was characterized as too individualistic; as more suitable for aristocratic tastes than for the emerging middle class market. Friedrich Naumann, for example, a prominent Werkbund spokesman, referred in 1906 to the work of van de Velde as “an art for the aristocrats,” which happily, he wrote, “is regressing, while standardization and formalization of life are in control.”²⁸ The aristocratic Jugendstil aesthetic was seen as a lingering effect of Romanticism, now rendered outmoded and unsuitable for the democratizing principles occupying the German nation. “*Sturm und Drang* is over,” Naumann announced; “we most likely are witnessing the coming of a new high point in German culture of house and living [*Haus- und Wohnkultur*].”²⁹

The concept of *Sachlichkeit*—variously translated as objectivity, practicality, and rationality—associated elevated design standards with the very notion of design

²⁷ “Was hilft es, wenn wir Festräume bauen und sie dann mit der ganzen Oede offizieller Festlichkeit erfüllen, wenn wir die Kleidung reformieren und den Körper vernachlässigen?” Ibid., 427.

²⁸ Friedrich Naumann, “Kunst und Industrie,” *Kunstwart* 20, no. 2 (1906), 69; quoted in Mark Jarzombek, “The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia, 1904-1908, and the Founding of the Werkbund,” in Françoise Forster-Hahn, ed., *Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889-1910* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 133. A member of the Werkbund from the beginning, van de Velde remained committed to the artist’s individualism, opposing the Werkbund endorsement of standardization most famously in his ten “countertheses” to dispute the ten theses put forward by Hermann Muthesius at the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914. See Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 147-49.

standardization. According to Harry Francis Mallgrave, the term first appeared in architectural discourse in 1896 in the writings of Richard Streiter, who linked it to the simplicity and good taste of the *bürgerlich* mentality.³⁰ Notably, Streiter cited as the embodiment of the *sachlich* ideal the work of the Munich architect von Seidl, who the following decade would design some of the main exhibition halls of *Ausstellung München* 1908. By the time the exhibition opened, the concept of *Sachlichkeit* pervaded German cultural discourse, with Muthesius acting as one of its most prominent advocates. Indeed, Muthesius paid the following compliment to the structures built by von Seidl and others on Munich's Theresienhöhe in 1908: "The extensive exhibition buildings demonstrate, above all, simplicity and *Sachlichkeit*."³¹ Thus while the theater reformer Edward Gordon Craig declared that the Artists' Theater was "beautiful in appearance," he paid it a higher compliment by adding that "its beauty is of secondary importance, what is paramount being its practicalness and its usefulness."³²

Central among those discarding the Jugendstil past to help forge the new aesthetic was Peter Behrens. Having played a prominent role in the creation of the Artists' Colony

²⁹ Friedrich Naumann, "Kunst und Industrie," *Kunstwart* 20, no. 2 (1906): 73; quoted in Mark Jarzombek, "The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia," 135 (translation altered).

³⁰ See Harry Francis Mallgrave, "From Realism to *Sachlichkeit*: The Polemics of Architectural Modernity in the 1890s," in Mallgrave, ed., *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1993), 292-95. See also Richard Streiter, "Aus München," *Pan* 2, no. 3 (1896): 249. Notably, Streiter associated *Sachlichkeit* with realism, a term he preferred to naturalism; his ideas thus might be seen as parallel to the rejection of naturalism in the theater by Peter Behrens and Georg Fuchs. On the concept of *Sachlichkeit*, see also Stanford Anderson, "Sachlichkeit and Modernity, or Realist Architecture," in Mallgrave, ed., *Otto Wagner*, 339-41, as well as Frederic J. Schwartz, "Form Follows Fetish: Adolf Behne and the Problem of *Sachlichkeit*," *Oxford Art Journal* 21.2 (1998): 48-49.

³¹ "Die ausgedehnten Ausstellungsgebäude zeigen vor allem Einfachkeit und Sachlichkeit." Hermann Muthesius, "Die Architektur auf den Ausstellungen in Darmstadt, München und Wien," 494.

³² Edward Gordon Craig, "The Theater in Germany, Holland, Russia, and England," *The Mask* vol. 1, no. 8 (November 1908): 160.

at Darmstadt, he was soon embraced as the epitome of the new sober style, within which *Sachlichkeit* played a central part. As the art critic Joseph August Lux put it in 1908,

On the path to abstraction, Peter Behrens has emerged from his chaotic beginnings to a certain refined regularity in which glows the shimmer of an Apollonian artistic ideal. This artist, who as a result of his thinking is strong, logical and consistent, has in the relatively short time of ten years traveled an impressive path.³³

While Nietzsche still set the terms of the discussion, the symbolic status of these terms had shifted. No longer the necessary and vital antidote to an overreliance on static, classical beauty, the Dionysian impulse now seemed merely irrational and superfluous beside the sober harmony that, according to Lux, Behrens's work represented.

Sobriety and logic were carefully chosen words to describe Behrens's recent efforts. In 1907, he had been hired by the Allgemeine Electricitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG), or General Electric Company, to oversee all aspects of company design.³⁴ In his new position he was responsible for creating a wide variety of products, from the registered trademarks of 1908 to the Turbine Factory Building, constructed in Berlin in 1909. [figs. 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9] Behrens's shift to the design style appropriate for an industrial arena was not taken as evidence of inconsistency on his part, or of the whimsical nature of creative fashions more generally. Rather, it rendered him the epitome of modern German cultural achievement. Already established as a designer as a result of his Jugendstil

³³ "Auf dem Wege der Abstraktion ist Peter Behrens aus seinen wirren Anfängen zu jener geläuterten Gesetzmäßigkeit gekommen, in der der Schimmer eines apollinischen Kunstideals dämmert. Dieser Künstler, der durch sein Denken stark ist, logisch und konsequent, hat in der verhältnismäßig kurzen Zeit von zehn Jahren einen ungeheuren Weg zurückgelegt." Joseph August Lux, *Das Neue Kunstgewerbe in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1908), 172. The book itself is designed by Behrens. In his *Prolegomena* of 1886, Heinrich Wölfflin had opposed the concept of *Gesetzmäßigkeit* to *Regelmäßigkeit*, or uniformity, a distinction that would become central to Worringer's analysis of abstraction and empathy in his book of that title.

³⁴ See Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, 56-58.

efforts, he soon came to represent an ideal of sobriety. Indeed, Behrens had promoted the shift to aesthetic sobriety already in 1900, in his pamphlet *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*. “We have become serious,” he had declared at that time; “we take our life in earnest; work stands high in value for us.”³⁵

Like many other cultural critics, Fuchs also tempered his Nietzschean ideals in accordance with the prevailing turn to classical principles. His respect for sobriety is revealed in a passage from his book of 1907, *Deutsche Form: Betrachtungen über die Berliner Jahrtausstellung und die Münchener Retrospektive* [German Form: Reflections on the Berlin Centennial Exhibition and the Munich Retrospective]. Like so many others, Fuchs now emphasized moderation in design. He called for

just the most simple, everyday things, those that evoke beauty with their moderate motifs. A *Weltanschauung* that wants to shape value from the “everyday,” and for which the “everyday” appears more holy than the festival day [*Festtag*—is this not a new, moral consciousness? And an art that makes it possible to foster moral elevation, that really achieves this suggestion—is that not a great sensuous [*sinnliche*] power?³⁶

The “new, moral consciousness” represented by the sober design of everyday objects would surpass all previous efforts. Quotidian values were replacing the celebration of the *Festtag*, the festival day that Nietzsche and his followers had embraced and that had been created in Darmstadt for the opening of the Artists’ Colony in 1901.

³⁵ Wir sind ernst geworden, wir nehmen unser Leben bedeutsam, die Arbeit steht uns hoch im Wert.” Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als Höchsten Kultursymbols* (Darmstadt: C. F. Winter’shen, 1900), 7.

³⁶ “Sie wollen lebendige Tat! Darum wollen sie gerade die einfachsten, alltöglichsten Dinge und die in diesen enthaltenen Motive der Schönheit erwecken. Eine Weltanschauung, die aus dem ‘Alltage’ einen Wert gestalten möchte, welcher der ‘Alltag’ heiliger erscheint als der Festtag—ist sie nicht ein neues, sittliches Bewusstsein? Und eine Kunst, welche es vermöchte, zu dieser sittlichen Erhebung zu überreden, welche wirklich diese Suggestion vollbringt—ist sie nicht eine grosse, sinnliche Macht?” Fuchs, *Deutsche Form: Betrachtungen über die Berliner Jahrtausstellung und die Münchener Retrospektive* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1907), 415.

Where the Darmstadt Artists' Colony had sought to celebrate the highest German artistic achievements, *Ausstellung München 1908* aimed to display the industrial and artistic achievements of the modern German nation. Visitors gathered at the top of a hill on the city's edge as they had seven years earlier in Darmstadt, but now they examined bathroom fixtures as well as paintings, kitchen objects as well as contemporary furniture. The antiques they viewed represented the commercial offerings of local dealers as much as the historical achievements of German art and design. Interweaving a complex elaboration of aesthetic, political, and socioeconomic themes, the exhibition embodied the ideals of the recently established Werkbund. Both contemporaneous accounts and recent scholarly literature have described the Werkbund's aim of unifying German art and industry through the formation of a consistent style for the applied arts.³⁷ As Muthesius had written of the Third German Exhibition of Applied Arts, held in 1906 in Dresden and marking the birth of the Werkbund, "What every viewer . . . must have noticed first of all, was that everything that was exhibited, from the small art embroidery to the furnished room, spoke the same artistic language."³⁸

³⁷ For secondary literature, see, for example, Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, especially 23-43; as well as Julius Posener, "Between Art and Industry—the Deutscher Werkbund" and "Werkbund and Jugendstil," Lucius Burckhardt, ed., *The Werkbund: Studies in the History and Ideology of the Deutscher Werkbund, 1907-1933*, trans. Pearl Sanders (London: Design Council, 1980), 7-24. On the founding of the Werkbund, see Kurt Junghanns, *Der Deutsche Werkbund: Sein erstes Jahrzehnt* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1982), 17-27; Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 9-32; and Mark Jarzombek, "The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia," 127-45. Historical precedent for the theme of the relation of art and industry, as it was debated at the founding of the Werkbund and made visible in such exhibitions as *Ausstellung München 1908*, may be found in the *Kunstammer*, where between 1540 and 1740 art and technology were treated as linked realms of human creativity. See Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine: The Kunstammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art, and Technology*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1995).

³⁸ "Das, was jedem Betrachter . . . zuerst auffallen mußte, war, daß alles, was ausgestellt wurde, von der kleinen Kunststickerei bis zum ausgestatteten Zimmer, eine eigene künstlerische Sprache redete." Hermann Muthesius, "Die Bedeutung des Kunstgewerbes: Frühjahr 1907," in *Dekorative Kunst XV*, vol. 5 (1907): 177.

If the Werkbund attempted to teach the objects of art and industry to speak the same language, what audience was expected to listen? Supporters of the *Kunstgewerbe* movement—who included Fuchs in their ranks—“presumed to be addressing all of Germany,” Mark Jarzombek has written, but not all of Germany was paying attention; “their audience in fact was restricted to a narrow stratum of German society known as the *Bildungsbürgertum*.”³⁹ Sober design was oriented toward an industrial aesthetic, but not literally intended for the wider audience to which industrial objects catered. In 1908, Lux himself elaborated the distinction between art and industry as follows:

Industry provides for the masses. It arises from the masses, and is justified only through them. According to an incomprehensible falsehood [*Lebenslüge*], the masses would also like to have art. In other words, that which they have never understood and never will understand. The result is that they accept a worthless surrogate and that the industry produces this kind of art for the masses. Art industry [*Kunstindustrie*]. But in reality industry can never produce art. Art industry is a non-thing [*Unding*].⁴⁰

Much as critics might celebrate the union of art and industry, the two categories were actually polar opposites that could never be reconciled. (Two years earlier, Fuchs had made the same assertion about the categories of art and crafts.⁴¹) Designers might struggle with representing the notion of accessibility, but they were not necessarily concerned

³⁹ “The *Kunstgewerbe* claimed that the solution to the decade-long struggle to find a suitable identity for modern Germany lay . . . [within] the commitment of the educated upper middle class to capitalism on the one hand and to social responsibility through control of its own aesthetics, on the other.” Mark Jarzombek, “The Discourses of a Bourgeois Utopia, 128. In this context, see also idem, “The *Kunstgewerbe*, the *Werkbund*, and the Aesthetics of Culture in the Wilhelmine Period,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no.1 (1994): 7-19.

⁴⁰ “Für die Masse sorgt die Industrie. Sie ist aus der Masse hervorgegangen und nur durch sie gerechtfertigt. Einer unbegreiflichen Lebenslüge zufolge, möchte die Masse auch Kunst haben. Also das, was sie niemals verstanden hat und niemals verstehen wird. Die folge ist, daß sie ein wertloses Surrogat hinnimmt, und daß die Industrie diese Art von Kunst für die Masse hervorbringt. Kunstindustrie. In Wahrheit aber kann die Industrie niemals Kunst hervorbringen. Kunstindustrie ist ein Unding.” Joseph August Lux, *Das Neue Kunstgewerbe in Deutschland*, 241.

⁴¹ Georg Fuchs, “Der Schöpferische Künstler und die Kulturelle Organization,” *Die Kunst* XIV (Munich, 1906): 512-20.

with creating objects that would be accessible to the masses. As Lux wrote eagerly: “Already a new, huge exhibition undertaking stands at the door: Munich 1908, which will showcase especially Bavarian achievements in all areas of craft and industry open to artistic creation.”⁴²

3. Getting to the Theater

Despite having endorsed “the most simple, everyday things” in 1907 in his book *Deutsche Form*, Fuchs remained fully committed to a Nietzschean aesthetic where the theater was concerned: a grand, communal response predicated on narrow, elitist limitations. Richard Wagner’s festival theater at Bayreuth and the arguments of Wagner and his early supporter, Nietzsche, were clearly prominent in Fuchs’s mind when he invited Littmann to construct the Artists’ Theater. Fuchs had been particularly impressed, as we have seen in chapter three, by Littmann’s *Prinzregententheater* of 1901, itself modeled on Semper’s design for a theater for Wagner.⁴³ A visit to the Artists’ Theater would entail a pilgrimage similar to the model used in Bayreuth and Darmstadt, but in a larger city. As the American Oliver M. Saylor reported with admiration in reference to the Artists’ Theater site, “the Germans aren’t afraid to put their theaters in pleasing

⁴² “Schon steht eine neue, gewaltige Ausstellungsunternehmung vor der Tür, München 1908, die insbesondere die Leistungen Bayerns auf allen Gewerbe- und Industriegebieten, die der künstlerischen Gestaltung zugänglich sind, zeigen will.” Joseph August Lux, *Das Neue Kunstgewerbe in Deutschland*, 211.

⁴³ According to Peter Jelavich, Littmann introduced himself to Fuchs after hearing him lecture in 1904; the architect’s designs for a theater appeared in the first edition of Fuchs’s *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, published later that year. Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 193.

surroundings and then spend a little time to get to them.”⁴⁴ This extra effort, intended to imbue the experience of attending the theater with a sense of ceremony and importance, relied on a model of spectatorship that was somewhat incongruous with the exhibition’s goal to foster middle class culture by showcasing industrial products.

Heading southwest from the center of the city of Munich, spectators would ascend the Theresienhöhe and enter the exhibition area through its main portal, designed by the Rank brothers, Munich architects. [figs. 4.10 and 4.11] They would then pass through the first courtyard, a wide but shallow space bordered by trees to the left and extending to the right to a view of the “presentation ring,” a larger courtyard or arena at the center of two exhibition halls, visible on the site plan for the exhibition. [fig. 4.12] Having passed through this courtyard, visitors would find themselves at the center of a larger, square courtyard, this one entirely encircled by buildings. [figs. 4.13, 4.14, and 4.15] As E. W. Bredt wrote that July in the pages of *Dekorative Kunst*,

If we go only a few steps further in the same direction from the entrance, a new and much more magnificent group of buildings surrounds us. To the left, MAX LITTMANN’s Artists’ Theater, between the Bazaar and the Coffeehouse, and to the right the large Hall III by the city planner WILHELM BERTSCH. The Hall and the Coffeehouse are drawn together by a one-story connecting passageway.⁴⁵

The Theater Café was designed by the Munich architect Paul Pfann; its footprint on the exhibition site plan is echoed on the other side of the Artists’ Theater by that of the

⁴⁴ Oliver M. Saylor, “The Munich Künstler [sic], a Pioneer Little Theater,” *Indianapolis News*, February 20, 1915. Saylor would later write several books on the theater, including *The Russian Theatre* (New York: Brentano’s, 1923) and *Inside the Moscow Art Theatre* (New York: Brentano’s, 1926); and would edit a collection of essays translated from the German and entitled *Max Reinhardt and his Theater* (New York: Brentano’s, 1924).

⁴⁵ “Wenn wir in der vom Eingang gegebenen Richtung nur einige Schritte weitergehen, umfängt uns eine neue, viel festlichere Baugruppe. Links das Künstlertheater Max Littmanns, zwischen Basar und Kaffeehaus, rechts die große Halle III von Bauamtmann Wilhelm Bertsch. Halle und Kaffeehaus sind durch einen einstöckigen Verbindungsgang zusammengezogen.” E. W. Bredt, “Die Ausstellung als Künstlerisches Ganzes,” *Dekorative Kunst* XI (10 July 1908): 432.

Bazaar, or *Verkaufshalle*. The main façade of the Café faced west, away from the Artists' Theater. [fig. 4.16] According to Bredt, the overall appearance of the architectural group was "more court than square. . . . The feeling of being enclosed governs us with all elegant festivity [*Festlichkeit*]."⁴⁶

Only three images remain of the front façade of the Artists' Theater. The most famous is a retouched photograph taken in 1908 that was used for promotional purposes. [fig. 4.17] It appeared, for example, in Littmann's booklet about the theater, which also contained five photographs of the building's interior as well as three ground plans and a section drawing. The photograph shows a modest two-story theater, perfectly symmetrical and remarkable for its flatness, set between two sets of cypress trees. The façade consists of three layers: the first, approached by six shallow steps, is square in shape, topped by a curved pediment on which a plaque announces "Münchner Künstler Theater," each word centered on the plaque. This square layer is itself divided into three bays. Within each, a set of doors, each surmounted by a window, is framed by a simple line of geometric decoration; above this, three decorative panels, each curving slightly inwards as if carved from the façade, sit below a trio of more windows. The façade's second layer, only a few feet wide, is set back slightly from the first, like an architectural frame. Behind it, the third layer, roughly double the width of the second, is set back slightly further. Along its center is a ledge supported by square columns to form a simple overhang. A single band of square ornaments that proceed across the top of the building

⁴⁶ "Es ist mehr Hof als Platz. . . . Das Gefühl des Umfriedetseins beherrscht uns mit aller vornehmen Festlichkeit." Ibid. Bredt further stated that, as a result of their architectural achievements at the exhibition, "WILHELM BERTSCH's name in connection with PAUL PFANN will be famous for all time in the art

with machinelike regularity visually stitches together the three layers. The impression is of a flat Jugendstil façade tempered stylistically by a sedate classicism.

Two other photographs of the Artists' Theater façade were published in 1931, the year of Littmann's death, in a book celebrating the architect's achievements.⁴⁷ In one, which includes a corner of the Theater Café next door, the sun casts long shadows across the lawn in the foreground. **[fig. 4.18]** Here, the trees planted to either side of the building appear much more sparse than the clearly retouched ones in the promotional photograph. They are also much taller, despite the fact that the photograph is taken from further away. Halfway up the third layer of the building, the ledge on which two plants had sat in the original photograph now carries a band of foliage. The other photograph was taken at night; the theatricality of the flat façade is dramatically emphasized by the glow of a streetlight in the upper left corner, the lights flanking the entrance, and the electric lights inside the building. **[fig. 4.19]** Judging by the growth of the trees, this image appears to have been taken even later. A canopy, seemingly of glass and iron, now frames the Theater's middle doorway.

Centered before the theater was a marble sculpture by Heinrich Düll and Georg Pezold entitled *Nymph of the Spring*. A reclining nymph, her placid form based on classical models, leans her right arm on an urn spilling water into the reflecting pool while holding a cornucopia upright with her left arm. **[fig. 4.20]** The same sculptors were also responsible for the colored terracotta decorations around the perimeters of the three main doors to the theater, as well as for the two large bronze lights that flanked these

historical annals of Munich." "Das allein schon könnte WILHELM BERTSCHS Namen in Verbindung mit PAUL PFANN für immer in Münchens kunstgeschichtlichen Annalen berühmt machen." Ibid., 433.

doors. Entering the lobby, visitors faced four double doors with a small box office nestled between them. [fig. 4.21] Printed words inscribed above the doors directed them to the first, second, third, and fourth rings, left and right. As Edward Gordon Craig wrote approvingly: “You enter the building and straight in front of you is the Box Office. On each side are steps leading to your seats, the words indicating the direction you are to take being made part of the decoration, not, as in England, a sort of label on the wall.”⁴⁸ Behind the lobby lay the inner foyer, with a wall of six cloakroom openings visible on the opposite wall. To the left and right of the entry lobby, staircases ascended to another foyer directly above, their first steps flanked by marble columns. With a marble floor below and a plain barrel vault above, the lobby itself conveyed an air of balanced geometries. The opulence of the materials was tempered by a neoclassical simplicity of design.

Extant photographs published both in Littmann’s booklet and in *Dekorative Kunst* show two other rooms for the circulation of theatergoers. The first depicts the foyer on the second floor, the size of the Theater lobby exactly below it but with a more domestic, private ambiance. A flat ceiling has replaced the barrel vault; classicizing wall ornamentation has replaced the marble accents. [fig. 4.22] The ground plan for this level of the building indicates that each one of the five doors along this room’s south wall led to a private box at the back of the auditorium. [fig. 4.23] The second photograph depicts the east hallway on the ground floor, with four doors to the auditorium at the right. [fig. 4.24] The first two doors are accessible by stairs; the two beyond them are entered at the

⁴⁷ Georg Jakob Wolf, *Max Littmann 1862-1931* (Munich: Knorr & Hirth, 1931).

⁴⁸ Edward Gordon Craig, “The Theater in Germany, Holland, Russia, and England,” 160.

level of the hallway floor. Each one offers access to two or three rows of seats within the auditorium, as may be seen on the ground plan for the building. [fig. 4.25] With this configuration of entryways, Littmann's theater echoed his own Prinzregententheater, which had relied on the model used at Bayreuth, which in turn made use of Semper's plan for a Munich theater for Wagner. [fig. 4.26] Before reaching this area, in other words, visitors to the Artists' Theater had encountered a small, original theater, modest in size and décor. From the points of entry to the auditorium onward, however, architectural references to these earlier theaters abound.

Two photographs of the auditorium remain, both of them publicity images produced for Littmann's 1908 booklet about the Theater. [figs. 4.27 and 4.28] These appeared in print far more often than the other images of the interior in the coming years; besides Littmann's booklet and *Dekorative Kunst*, they were also reproduced in several other journals. One was taken from the front row in the direction of the rear right corner; the other provides the reverse image, showing the view of the stage curtain from the right side of the Theater's last row. Together, they reveal a small auditorium, entirely paneled in wood, with a solid mass of seats, uninterrupted by aisles. Twenty-two identical rows curve very gently toward the stage. At the side walls, plain doorways stand in the place of the private boxes customary in horseshoe-shaped theaters. The windows of three private boxes, without special adornment, are visible along the auditorium's rear wall, a larger box at the center with two smaller ones at one side. The floor plan confirms what may already be presumed, given the formal regularity visible in the photographs: the two smaller boxes are echoed at the opposite side of the rear wall. The ceiling, too, adheres to this formal regularity. A line of seven recessed concentric squares across the width of the

ceiling is repeated to form a large grid pattern above the grid of seats. A row of electric lights descend from the ceiling on either side of the auditorium, one over each entry door.

Each row within the auditorium contained 30 seats, except for the last, which was missing a section of seats where the central box jugged slightly into the auditorium. As at the Prinzregententheater, Littmann arranged the seats in the form of an amphitheater, rejecting the horseshoe shape that he had used at the Schauspielhaus and that an article on theater construction in *The American Architect: The Architectural Review* would label “impractical and out of fashion.”⁴⁹ The article, published in 1922, endorsed instead the amphitheatrical model, which it described as follows: “Its earmarks are that it has no aisles—one enters from the end of the row,—the entire auditorium is a solid bank of seats, there are no balconies, and the auditorium is the safest, most practical and most comfortable ever devised.” These words not only provide an accurate description of the auditorium of the Artists’ Theater but also indicate how it might be seen as expressing the *sachlich* ideals of practicality and functionalism. In his essay in *Dekorative Kunst*, Bredt declared in reference to the auditorium and stage that “The architectural significance of MAX LITTMANN’s *Munich Artists’ Theater* lies more on the interior than on the exterior. . . . The *interior* will further broaden LITTMANN’s fame as a theater builder.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Roi L. Morin, “Design and Construction of Theaters,” *The American Architect: The Architectural Review*, vol. CXXII, no. 2406 (November 8, 1922): 542.

⁵⁰ “Die architektonische Bedeutung von MAX LITTMANN’S *Münchener Künstlertheater* liegt mehr im Innern als im Aeußern.” E. W. Bredt, “Die Ausstellung als Künstlerisches Ganzes,” 434 (*italics original*). Bredt believed that the façade was also architecturally noteworthy: “the *exterior* can, despite its very modest language and means, signify for Munich a pleasant small step in the emancipation from a practically sacred world of forms.” “Wird das *Innere* LITTMANN’S Ruhm als Theatergestalter noch mehr erweitern, so kann das *Aeußere* trotz seiner sehr bescheidenen Sprache und Mittel für München eine erfreuliche kleine Etappe in der Emanzipierung von nachgerade geheiligter Formenwelt bedeuten.” *Ibid* (*italics original*).

In his booklet promoting the Artists' Theater, Littmann explained the advantages of an amphitheatrical arrangement over the traditional, horseshoe-shaped auditorium, where loges and private boxes allowed spectators to see and be seen by one another but not to gain a good view of the stage itself. In such theaters, he wrote,

the relationship of one visitor to the others is the main thing, and the relationship of the spectator to the stage, from which the elevating effect derives, is so disturbed by the aforementioned defects that it is impossible for any serious, solemn mood, capable of producing the finest feelings of the human soul, to be achieved by the music and by the sung and spoken word.⁵¹

No such troubles would plague the Artists' Theater, Littmann maintained. There were no private boxes along the side walls oriented into the auditorium, toward the other spectators; instead, all seats faced the stage. A photograph of the wood model of the Theater made by Littmann in 1907 indicates that the rows of seats were raked at a steep angle to improve sight lines. [fig. 4.29] The amphitheatrical auditorium would ensure that all seats offered views of the stage that were as identical as possible.⁵²

Some differentiation of the seats remained, however, as the result of a system of assigned seating that enforced a hierarchy of admission prices. This system had been introduced to European concert halls and theaters only eighty years earlier, replacing the

⁵¹ "In dem Logenhaus ist aber das Verhältnis der Besucher zu einander die Hauptsache, und das Verhältnis der Zuschauer zu der Bühne, von der die erhebende Wirkung ausgeht, durch die erwähnten Mängel so gestört daß unmöglich durch die Musik, durch das gesungene und gesprochene Wort jene ernste, weihevollte Stimmung erzielt werden kann, welche die feinsten Empfindungen der menschlichen Seele auszulösen vermag." Max Littmann, *Das Münchener Künstler-Theater* (Munich, L. Werner, 1908), 19.

⁵² Once seated, spectators performed, as it were, as identical units in a group, foreshadowing what K. Michael Hays has termed the "posthumanist subject" of Weimar culture. According to Hays, "Posthumanism is the conscious response, whether with applause or regret, to the dissolution of psychological autonomy and individualism brought by technological modernization. It is a mobilization of aesthetic practices to effect a shift away from the humanist concept of subjectivity and its presumptions about originality, universality, and authority." K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject: The Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1992), 6. On posthumanist theater spectatorship, see my "Bauhaus Dolls at the Theater," in Kathleen James, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Bauhaus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

prevailing use of tickets for general admission. According to the music historian William Weber,

during the first seasons of the 1830s a few concert sponsors began setting aside reserved seats priced only in the upper bracket, and by 1840 the practice was almost universal in all three capitals (London, Paris, Vienna). The special tickets therefore afforded people a strong sense of social distinction.⁵³

By the early twentieth century, it was standard practice in Europe to charge more for the better seats at the theater. While ticket prices at the Munich Artists' Theater in 1908 are unknown, in 1914 they varied widely according to their distance from the stage. The seating plan for the Theater was reproduced on a flyer advertising the summer season that year.⁵⁴ [fig. 4.30] Seats in the first two rows were the most expensive, at seven and half marks apiece; those in the last four rows cost only two and a half marks. Notably, the flyer does not indicate prices for seats in the boxes.

In his promotional booklet for the Artists' Theater, Littmann cited an impressive list of precursors from the history of German theater architecture to support his design of the auditorium. Both Schinkel and Semper, he reminded his readers, had endorsed the amphitheatrical form. Schinkel had used it in his initial sketches for the National Theater in Berlin in 1817; Littmann asserted, with a certain proud pomposity, "*there lies the origin of the German amphitheater.*"⁵⁵ If Schinkel provided a point of origin, Semper's

⁵³ William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975), 25.

⁵⁴ "Münchener Künstler-Theater," announcement for 1914 summer season, Archive, Library of the Performing Arts, New York Public Library.

⁵⁵ "*Dort liegt der Ursprung des deutschen Amphitheaters.*" Max Littmann, *Das Münchener Künstler-Theater*, 19 (italics original). The same set of historical references, deriving from Fuchs himself, would be repeated by Walter Grohmann, who listed Schinkel, Semper, Wagner, and other German precursors on the first page of his book on the Artists' Theater. See Grohmann, *Das Münchener Künstlertheater in der Bewegung der Szenen- und Theaterreformen* (Berlin: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte, 1935), 3.

design for a Munich festival theater for Wagner constituted the historical apotheosis of the amphitheatrical design in modern Germany. Other examples of the form provided by Littmann—besides the festival theater at Bayreuth—included the festival theater built in the city of Worms in 1887 as well as, more recently, his own Prinzregententheater and his Schauspielhaus, both constructed in Munich in 1901.

The auditorium at the Artists' Theater might be seen as a cross between Littmann's two earlier Munich theaters. Once again, the architect used the amphitheatrical model, steeply raked both for better sight lines and a sense of grandeur, that he had relied on in creating the Prinzregententheater. Rather than creating a fan-shaped amphitheater, however, here the front row of seats was the same width as the last. The footprint of the auditorium thus approximated a square, a platonic form that echoed the rectangular frame of the stage. Meanwhile, Littmann used the modest proportions of the Schauspielhaus to create a more intimate auditorium, abandoning the flat floor and horseshoe shape. But to consider the auditorium of the Artists' Theater purely as a hybrid of the two earlier works, while helpful in attempting to understand its spatial arrangement and effects, runs the danger of ignoring the intentions of its creators. In fact the size of the Artists' Theater was not Littmann's choice, nor even that of Fuchs; rather, it was determined by the authorities of *Ausstellung München* 1908. Fuchs himself had hoped for an amphitheater that would hold a much larger audience, but the size of the auditorium was compromised in the final design, reduced from 1500 seats to 642.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ For an explanation of adjustments to the theaters's design, see Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism*, 205.

Oliver M. Sayler, an American journalist who had visited Munich in the summer of 1914, described his first vision of the Theater to the readers of the *Indianapolis News* several months later. With an effusiveness that warrants extended quotation, he described his impressions as follows:

In the mingled light of the dying sun and the flare of great torches extending in an alleyway from the entrance to the park, the facade of this charming building stood forth from the trees. There was something truly festive, something almost Greek, in the sense of freedom and space and the expansiveness that makes life worth living in the city that hung about the structure. Once inside the portals, the same sense of space prevailed. No crowded lobby, no corner coatrooms. Inside the auditorium, an auditorium which has never been surpassed for simple, effective beauty and harmony. . . , you looked down from a comfortable chair placed at an angle where no one in front of you broke the view of the stage. The side walls and ceiling were soft and quiet in paneled wood—an interior finish which has been found most effective acoustically by long experiment [sic]. A single row of boxes at the rear was the only concession to the theater of other days.⁵⁷

Several indications within the passage suggest that Sayler may have been assisted by Fuchs or Littmann in forming his impressions of the Theater: the reference to the festive, “almost Greek” nature of the building’s exterior, the emphasis on the clear view of the stage from all seats, and above all the tone of the description, lying comfortably between elegy and propaganda. Indeed, as Sayler confirms, he was guided through the Theater by Fuchs himself; owing to the lack of a shared language between the two men, the English mother of one of the actors acted as translator.

⁵⁷ Oliver M. Sayler, “The Munich Kunstler [sic], a Pioneer Little Theater.”

4. Viewing the Stage

“In a very pleasant building by Littmann,” Muthesius wrote in 1908, “a storm is under way against the overproduction of our contemporary stage performances, and the very happy attempt is made to return to simplicity, with a strong emphasis on the effects of silhouettes and relief.”⁵⁸ As Muthesius indicated, various factors were brought together on the stage of the Artists’ Theater: the rejection of theatrical naturalism, the embrace of *sachlich* performance ideals, the use of a shallow stage, the reliance on silhouetted forms, and, above all, the symbolic value of sculptural relief. As we have seen, Fuchs had already promulgated the use of a shallow stage in 1905, when he included in his book *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* the plans for a theater that Littmann himself had drawn. There, a shallow performance area was the focal point for a large amphitheater with three levels of seating arranged in the shape of a fan. At the Artists’ Theater, Fuchs at last realized his plan for a shallow stage.

In fact, like the design of the Artists’ Theater auditorium, that of the stage was compromised in construction. It was shallow in comparison to the stages of other, more traditional theaters, and it achieved some notoriety at the time, and some fame in the annals of theater history, on account of this shallowness (and owing, certainly, to Fuchs’s own promotional efforts). “First surprise was the fact that the stage itself was scarcely twenty-six feet deep, the merest shelf compared with the capacious depths of older theatres,” the theater historian Mordecai Gorelik wrote in 1940 of the opening perfor-

⁵⁸ “In einem sehr erfreulichen Bau von Littmann wird Sturm gelaufen gegen die Überausstattung unserer heutigen Bühnenaufführungen und es wird der sehr glückliche Versuch unternommen, unter starker Betonung der Silhouetten- und Reliefwirkung zur Einfachheit zurückzukehren.” Hermann Muthesius, “Die Architektur auf den Ausstellungen in Darmstadt, München und Wien,” 494.

mance at the Artists' Theater.⁵⁹ But Fuchs had wanted a stage with the proportions of ten measures wide by six deep in order to present to spectators an almost flat image. The stage that Littmann built was, in the end, not much wider than it was deep, and Fuchs was forced to rely on the judicious use of lighting and backdrops to achieve the desired stage image. But if, in 1908, his intentions were only partially realized, the Artists' Theater as it was constructed nevertheless embodied a particular understanding of theater and of the spectator's position in relation both to the action on stage and to the rest of the audience. Here, the flat wall of spectators faced a shallow stage stripped of traditional accessories; an aesthetic of flatness ruled on either side of the curtain.

This flatness was reinforced by the absence of an intermediary zone separating the seats from the stage. In the photograph of the stage curtain taken from the rear wall of the auditorium, no orchestra pit is visible. The section drawing reproduced in Littmann's booklet reveals that the architect here again used Bayreuth and the Prinzregententheater as his model. [fig. 4.31] Following these theaters, as well as his own section and plans that Fuchs had included in *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, Littmann tucked the orchestra pit under the stage. Removing the orchestra from the audience's sight caused the music to appear to emanate from the stage itself and brought the stage image closer to the audience. But where such proximity had been counteracted at Bayreuth by the use of a deep stage to distance the audience from the realm of art, the shallow stage at the Artists' Theater brought the performance closer to the audience. Like the façade of the Artists' Theater, productions made literal on stage the theme of flatness epitomized by Jugendstil design. Fuchs himself drew a parallel between his own attempts at theater reform and the

⁵⁹ Mordecai Gorelik, *New Theaters for Old* (1940; repr. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962), 176.

Jugendstil efforts of the Secessionists when he exclaimed hopefully: “Now we will have a ‘*secession in the dramatic arts*’ as well.”⁶⁰ The theme of flatness not only pervaded Jugendstil imagery but also, as we shall see, frequently appeared in German aesthetic discourse in the guise of sculptural relief.

Fuchs’s association of his interest in theater reform with the secession movement in the fine arts was appropriate on several levels. Not only was his concern with the notion of flatness in keeping with Jugendstil tendencies, but also he positioned his efforts as a rejection of theatrical naturalism in much the same way that the Secessionists considered their work as a rejection of naturalism in the visual arts. As we have seen in chapter two, the naturalist theater had enjoyed great success in Munich in the 1880s and 1890s, partly as a result of the presence of Richard Wagner and Henrik Ibsen in that city from 1864 to 1865 and 1875 to 1891, respectively. In the words of Peter Jelavich,

the Munich naturalists stressed the fact that “reality” was very much determined by the perceptions and interventions of the observer [and] the social relevance of art was to be achieved not through passive observation but active engagement. . . . With reference to Zola’s celebrated formulation of his naturalist credo—“a work of art is a corner of nature viewed through a temperament”—one might say that the Munich naturalists, as disciples of Wagner and Ibsen, stressed their “temperaments.”⁶¹

At the center of the Munich naturalist movement lay the journal *Die Gesellschaft* [The Society], which had been founded in 1884 by Michael Georg Conrad. When, six years later, Conrad founded the *Gesellschaft für modernes Leben* [Society for Modern Life],

⁶⁰ “Nun werden wir auch eine ‘*Sezession der dramatischen Kunst*’ haben.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 106 (italics original).

⁶¹ Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism*, 26.

one of his central aims was the establishment of an independent theater for the presentation of naturalist drama.⁶²

Owing to state censorship, naturalist dramas by such authors as Gerhard Hauptmann, Ibsen, and Conrad himself were presented either in censored form or in the private performances of such closed theatrical societies as the Verein “Freie Bühne,” or Voluntary “Free Stage” Association, founded in 1891 by Conrad and others. After 1901, such dramas appeared as well on the stage of Littmann’s own Schauspielhaus, which was built explicitly to showcase naturalist dramas. There, a deep stage accommodated illusionistic sets; perspectival scenery receded into depth as if to convince the audience of the reality of the interiors reproduced on stage. The curtain represented the removable fourth wall of the room reconstructed beyond it.⁶³ Productions were increasingly undermined by their own efforts at illusionism, particularly as the technical innovations of the late nineteenth century permitted increasingly complicated stage arrangements. While the introduction of electric stage lighting at the end of the nineteenth century allowed for a more realistic stage image by removing the gas footlights, for example, increased brightness called attention to the falsity of stage illusionism.

On its shallow stage, by contrast, the Artists’ Theater used electricity not in order to attain a more naturalistic image but to present abstracted tableaux dynamized by the

⁶² On naturalist drama in Munich in the last decade of the nineteenth century, see Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism*, 44-52.

⁶³ This naturalist stage was constructed in an effort to reform the more traditional Baroque stage, of which, Stanford Anderson has written, “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.” Anderson, “Peter Behrens’s Highest *Kultursymbol*, the Theater,” *Perspecta* 26 (New York: Rizzoli, 1990): 117.

lighting effects that electricity had recently made possible. Mordecai Gorelik described the initial moments of the Theater's first performance:

As the house lights dimmed, a glow of electric light sprang up from the recessed footlights, from behind the portals, and below the upper frame of the proscenium opening. Shafts of light, their sources discreetly hidden, outlined the portal opening. Noiselessly, the curtain rose on the first *Symbolist* production of Goethe's *Faust*.⁶⁴

The production of *Faust* was directed by Albert Heine and designed by Fritz Erler; music was provided by Max Schillings.⁶⁵ It used light as an abstract element in the stage composition, not merely as an advanced form of stage technology. Another element of the stage design also struck Gorelik because of its avoidance of naturalist illusionism. "Surprising beyond belief, the scenery," he wrote. "Not so much scenery as a kaleidoscope made up of simple prisms."⁶⁶

According to Fuchs, the perspectival scenery and "lifelike" acting characteristic of the naturalist theater indulged a bourgeois appetite for entertainment; they spoon-fed the imaginations of the spectators. "The conventional theater counts on the inability of the audience to retain visual impressions," he wrote; it encouraged lazy spectatorship.⁶⁷ By contrast, productions at the Artists' Theater would attempt to exercise spectators' imaginations and challenge their perceptual habits. Stylized images and visual hints would prod the spectator's imagination and induce an active and creative reception of the performance. Because, Fuchs argued, drama "occurs in the mind and spirit of the

⁶⁴ Mordecai Gorelik, *New Theaters for Old*, 175 (italics original).

⁶⁵ For an assessment of Erler's work from 1901, see Dr. Karl Mayr, "Fritz Erler, München," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* VII (October 1900-September 1901), 273-301.

⁶⁶ Mordecai Gorelik, *New Theaters for Old*, 177.

⁶⁷ Georg Fuchs, *Revolution in the Theater: Conclusions Concerning the Munich Artists' Theatre*, trans. Constance Connor Kuhn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959), 34. This book is an abridged

spectator in response to the happenings upon the stage,” theater should “be so constructed that these optical and acoustical impressions may be communicated to the spectator as directly and as forcefully as possible.”⁶⁸ Stage depth and such customary performance accessories as props and sets were extraneous. An actor’s raised eyebrow and whispered word were more noticeable on the simplified stage that encouraged, visually and acoustically, a more direct aesthetic experience.

Fuchs argued that a theater performance occurred within the spectator’s body and was merely facilitated by such elements as actors, costumes, props, sets, and lighting: “It is in the audience that the dramatic work of art is actually born,” he declared; “a work of art has value only insofar as it calls forth . . . a reaction and only so long as that reaction is in effect.”⁶⁹ The more intense the dramatic experience, the more successful the performance. The goal was re-enchantment; “retheatricalize the theater” was Fuchs’s motto. He wrote of the “strange intoxication which overcomes us when, as part of a crowd, we feel ourselves emotionally stirred.”⁷⁰ If art was located in the spectator’s subjective experience, a performance could never be reduced to a single, definable essence. But while sanctioning an infinite variety of experiences of a work of art, Fuchs allowed only a narrow conception of its purpose: to stimulate the emotions and carry the perceptually altered spectator “into a cosmos in which the world . . . is suddenly revealed . . . as a complete and perfect pattern.”⁷¹ Successful drama provided an intensity of

translation of Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters: Ergebnisse aus der Münchener Künstler-Theater* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909).

⁶⁸ Ibid., 67.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 43 and 42.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 39.

emotion and a vantage point from which to survey the earthly reality that provided its inspiration and material.

Two photographs remain showing performances at the Artists' Theater in the summer of 1908. The first depicts a scene from a production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, "newly reworked by Georg Fuchs for the German stage," that was presented in repertory in the theater's first season.⁷² [fig. 4.32] Scenery, masks, and costumes for the performance were designed by Julius Diez, the music was composed by Walter Braunfels, and Albert Heine directed. Viola's room, occupying the entire stage, is represented by three objects: a birdcage, a footstool, and a small sofa. The four actors appear almost as puppetlike as the fake caged bird; their uncomfortable, stilted poses articulate an aura of artificiality that cannot be taken as natural even in a photograph. On either side of the stage stand two side towers, flattened to abstraction. Each one contains entry doors below and blind balconies above, providing points of entry to the scene and marking the edge of a raised platform upstage that is accessible by two wide steps. On the rear wall of the stage is a painted backdrop depicting a herd of deer in a forest; its tripartite structure, the geometric frame around it, and the six delineated panels below it suggest that it represents a window, but the painting itself makes no pretension to realism.

The second photograph shows a scene (Act I, scene ii) from an adaptation by Joseph Rüderer of Aristophanes' *The Birds*. [fig. 4.33] For this production, Adolf Hengler designed the scenery, masks, and costumes; Anton Beer-Walbrunn composed the music; and Fr. Basil directed. Here, the use of puppetlike figures is more blatant and also

⁷² See Georg Fuchs, "Zum Spielplan des Münchener Künstlertheaters," *Münchener Künstler-Theater, Ausstellung München 1908* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1908), 5 and 17-18.

more appropriate, given the theme of the play. The seven actors on stage in the photograph are essentially large stuffed birds with human legs. Dispersed across the stage, they stand, sit, and crouch upon and in front of one large rock and several smaller rocks beside it. Their overstuffed bird bodies, boldly patterned and presumably brightly colored, are topped by large bird heads, each of a different design; their bird beaks shadow the human actors' faces. The creatures' spindly legs are the only visible parts of the actors' bodies. The same abstracted towers flank the stage, connecting the same raised platform. The backdrop behind the scene is blank. No pretension is made to the illusionism of the naturalist theater.

A third photograph of a performance at the Artists' Theater remains; like the other two, it was published in the Munich journal *Die Kunst* in 1911 to accompany an essay by Fuchs.⁷³ The photograph depicts the first scene of a production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that was designed by Fritz Erler for the summer season of 1909 or 1910. [fig. 4.34] Once again, the same side towers stand at either side of the stage, connected by the crenellated ramparts of the castle at Elsinore. The ghost of Hamlet's father, in a pale monochrome robe and bearing a large sword in a matching color, stands at a break in the crenellations. At stage center, a canon points through a crenel, away from the audience. To the right, four anonymous figures in darker clothing, all with hoods and hats and two carrying long-handled axes, huddle together while leaning away from the ghost as if in communal alarm. Snow covers the stage as well as the top surfaces of the canon and the merlons; the rear wall of the stage is entirely blank.

⁷³ Georg Fuchs, "Das Münchener Künstler-Theater," *Dekorative Kunst* XIV (December, 1910): 138-43.

A program booklet was published in the summer of 1908 by the Artists' Theater Association to coincide with the opening of Fuchs's Theater. While Littmann's booklet, entitled "Das Münchener Künstler-Theater," described and illustrated the architecture of the building and its theoretical precursors, this one, entitled "Münchener Künstler-Theater, Ausstellung München 1908," contained no illustrations and provided a different kind of information. It offered a list of the productions presented that summer, a bibliography of material relating to the Theater, and a few pages promoting several books written by Fuchs. It also contained three short essays by members of the Munich Artists' Theater Association. The first was by Adolf von Hildebrand, the sculptor and visual theorist on whose ideas the shallow stage had been based; we shall return to this essay in the following chapter in the context of Hildebrand's theoretical writings. The second essay was entitled "Gedanken über die Aufgaben der Kunst auf der Bühne" [Thoughts on the tasks of art on the stage]. It was written by Toni Stadler, a twenty-year-old Munich sculptor who announced that the Artists' Theater would present only a few dramas and comedies, but these would be presented "with fewer realities and greater effectiveness" [*mit weniger Wirklichkeiten und mehr Wirkung*] than was customary with the style of "brutal naturalism."⁷⁴ The third essay in the program booklet was by Fuchs himself and described the productions that summer in some detail.⁷⁵

The first summer season at the Artists' Theater hosted eight different productions, with performances held only on four evenings each week: Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays,

⁷⁴ Toni Stadler, "Gedanken über die Aufgaben der Kunst auf der Bühne," *Münchener Künstler-Theater, Ausstellung München 1908*, 11.

and Saturdays. For its opening night, as we have seen, Fuchs presented Goethe's *Faust*, Part One. In addition to *Twelfth Night* and *The Birds*, the following plays were also included in the repertoire that year:

- *Herr Peter Squenz*, a comic play from the seventeenth century by Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664); Wilhelm Schulz, designer; and Fr. Basil, director
- *Das Wundertheater* [The miracle theater], a translation of the comedy *Retablo de las maravillas* by Cervantes (1547-1616); Robert Engels, designer; and Fr. Basil, director
- *Die deutschen Kleinstädter* [The German smalltowners], a comedy by August von Kotzebue (1761-1819); Thomas Theodor Heine, designer; and Eugen Kilian, director
- *Die Maienkönigin* [The May queen], a *Schäferspiel* [shepherd's play] with music by Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787); H. Buschbeck, designer; and Prof. Anton Fuchs, director
- *Das Tanzlegendchen* [The dance legend], a *Tanzspiel* [play with dancing] based on a late nineteenth-century story by Gottfried Keller (1819-1890), with music by Hermann Bischoff; Hans Beatus Wieland, designer

"These eight works," Fuchs wrote, "have been arranged in a cycle of six evenings of theater and will be performed during the period of *Ausstellung München* 1908 in the special theater building built according to the designs of Prof. Max Littmann."⁷⁶

The Artists' Theater clearly favored the classics. The repertory predominantly comprised the most established works of German drama, with a flavor of internationalism provided by Aristophanes, Cervantes, and Shakespeare. The rejection of naturalist performance, in other words, implied a rejection of the naturalist dramas prevailing in the Munich theater, which Fuchs decried for their emphasis on literariness at the expense of

⁷⁵ Fuchs reprinted this essay in Russian the following year and, two years later, in German. See Georg Fuchs, "Myunkhenskii Khudozhestvennyi Teatr," *Apollon*, November, 1909: 47-53; as well as Fuchs, "Das Münchener Künstler-Theater," *Dekorative Kunst* XIV, 3 (December 1910): 138-42.

⁷⁶ "Diese 8 Werke wurden zu einem Zyklus von 6 Spielabenden zusammengestellt und werden in dem nach Entwürfen von Prof. Max Littmann errichteten besonderen Theatergebäude während der Dauer der

theatricality. “These days,” he had complained in 1901, this emphasis on the literary component of contemporary drama meant that “we absolutely understand *more* of a good theater play . . . if we read it than if we see it.”⁷⁷ Performances at the Artists’ Theater would avoid the works of Hauptmann and Ibsen and the visual and narrative verisimilitude that accompanied them, and would rely instead on the canon of classic works with productions exploring the use of mime and dance. By putting on productions of the classics, the Artists’ Theater aligned itself with the possibility of theatrical reinvention; for the “peculiarly modern style of drama which Goethe gave us in *Faust*,” Fuchs explained, “both classicism and naturalism were unsuitable.”⁷⁸ A new theatrical style would have to be created in order to present Goethe’s play. “The task of a truthful artistic staging of an old master play,” as Fuchs described it, was “to awaken in *the contemporary* spectator images, moods, and sensations as *identical* as possible to those that the old poet in *his* public in *his own* time wanted to arouse and also probably did arouse.”⁷⁹

According to Fuchs, the naturalist theatrical style, by emphasizing illusionistic stage images and realistic narratives, overvalued the literary component of drama at the expense of the purely dramatic. On the naturalist stage, he explained, the various forms of art were able not “to fulfill their independent functions but only to advertise literature as

Ausstellung München 1908 zu Darstellung gelangen.” Georg Fuchs, “Zum Spielplan des Münchener Künstlertheaters,” 6.

⁷⁷ “Jetzt aber ist es so, daßs wir von einem guten Theaterstücke . . . unbedingt *mehr* verstehen, wenn wir es lesen, als wenn wir es sehen.” Georg Fuchs, “Zur künstlerischen Neugestaltung der Schau-Bühne,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* VII (October 1900-March 1901), 204 (italics original).

⁷⁸ Georg Fuchs, *Revolution in the Theater*, 151.

⁷⁹ “Aufgabe einer wahrhaft künstlerischen Aufführung eines altmeisterlichen Schauspieles soll sein: in dem *heutigen* Zuschauer die möglichst *gleichen* Vorstellungen, Stimmungen, Empfindungen erwecken, welche

effectively as possible.”⁸⁰ Such a “dictatorship of literature” forced true drama to languish at the service of this other form of art.⁸¹ Ideally, all forms of art would work together at the theater, thereby fulfilling their independent functions in the manner that Wagner had described several decades earlier as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The invasion of one art form into the realm of another was a familiar trope of cultural criticism at the turn of the twentieth century, and the theoretical distinction between art and literature was particularly acute at the Artists’ Theater, which by its very name associated itself with the former rather than the latter. Where art symbolized the essential creative force of German culture in this theoretical dichotomy, literature represented a less imaginative and more technical kind of inventiveness.⁸² At the Artists’ Theater, Fuchs proudly asserted, “the dramatist is no longer required to use the theater as a mere makeshift device for the promulgation of literature. He is free to be theatrical—if he can be.”⁸³

Fuchs had already written about the relationship between painting and theater several years earlier. In *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, he had acknowledged the common complaint that the prevailing Munich style was more suitable for the decorative than the fine arts. The problem would be solved, he argued, if painters in that city applied their creative efforts to the theater:

der alte Dichter bei *seinem* Publikum zu *seiner* Zeit hervorrufen wollte und wohl auch hervorgerufen hat.” Georg Fuchs, “Zum Spielplan des Münchener Künstlertheaters,” 17 (*italics original*).

⁸⁰ Georg Fuchs, *Revolution in the Theater*, 126.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 114–15. Demanding a figurehead to supervise the details, the dictatorship of literature produced “the tyranny of the director in the modern drama.”

⁸² Evidence of the persistence, ten years later, of the theoretical opposition of art and literature is found in Thomas Mann’s declaration that “the German tradition is culture, soul, freedom, art, and *not* civilization, society, voting rights, and literature.” Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* (1918; New York: Ungar, 1983), 17.

⁸³ Georg Fuchs, *Revolution in the Theater*, 126.

It has long been proven that above all the *Munich* painting is governed by decorative traits; indeed its leading masters are often accused of being too “theatrical.” Perhaps—no, surely—this reproach will turn into high praise if our Munich [artists] with their wonderfully decorative temperament finally find a field of effectiveness on the new stage. . . . Many of them will be “in their element” only there.⁸⁴

To encourage Munich painters to work in the theater would not only put their talent to better use, in Fuchs’s eyes, but would also counteract the prevailing literary emphasis that he bemoaned. For Fuchs as for Wagner, the integration of all forms of art at the theater would ideally allow each one to achieve its highest potential.

As we have seen in chapter three, Fuchs was inspired by Wagner’s ideas of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, particularly as they had been represented by Nietzsche. Here again, the will to artistic fusion was predicated on a formal purification, on the refusal to permit one art form to contaminate any other. But Fuchs distinguished his aesthetic and cultural aims from those of his precursors. For example, where Wagner, according to Fuchs, had sought to combine the arts under the umbrella of his own music dramas, Fuchs intended to “retheatricalize the theater” by minimizing all other art forms. And where Wagner, according to Fuchs, had wanted to create an audience through its experience of the performance, the German *Volk* now only needed to be gathered by a cultural experience and alerted to their social and political function. In a propagandistic book on the Artists’ Theater published in 1936 and relying heavily on Fuchs’s own arguments, Walter Grohmann made the following distinction: “As opposed to Richard Wagner, who had

⁸⁴ “Es ist längst erwiesen, daß vornehmlich die *Münchener* Malerei von einem dekorativen Zuge beherrscht wird, ja, man macht ihren führenden Meistern oft den Vorwurf, sie seien zu ‘theatralisch.’ Vielleicht, nein, sicherlich wird sich dieser Tadel in hohes Lob verwandeln, wenn unsere Münchener mit ihren wundervollen dekorativen Temperamente endlich auf der neuen Schaubühne das Wirkungsfeld finden Viele von ihnen werden erst dort ‘in ihrem Elemente sein.’ ” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*,

first to create his public, Fuchs reckoned with a public that consisted of ‘tens of thousands,’ that ‘already wait for something,’ namely ‘the drama and the festival house that we are planning.’ ”⁸⁵

Fuchs published other material promoting the Artists’ Theater in addition to the program booklet. His most significant publication of this kind appeared in 1909, the year after the Theater opened, and was entitled *Die Revolution des Theaters* [Revolution in the theater]. Using liberal citations of Goethe, Nietzsche, and other German cultural giants, the book attempted to explain the theater’s significance. With such chapters as “The Theatre and Culture,” “The Function and Style of the Stage,” and “The New Art of the Stage and the Commercial Theater,” it would seem to be an important programmatic statement of Fuchs’s ideas. Much of its text, however, consists of rearranged sentences from Fuchs’s earlier publications. His central source for self-plagiarism was *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, the collection of essays that itself had reprinted many of his own earlier writings without acknowledging the repetition. At the back of the book, Fuchs included excerpts from the more favorable reviews of the Artists’ Theater’s first season.

54 (italics original). In this context, see Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

⁸⁵ “Entgegen Richard Wagner, der sich sein Publikum erst werben mußte, rechnet Fuchs mit einem Publikum, das sich aus ‘Zehntausenden’ zusammensetzt, ‘die bereits darauf warten,’ nämlich ‘auf das Drama und das festliche Haus, das wir planen.’ ” Walter Grohmann, *Das Münchener Künstlertheater in der Bewegung der Szenen- und Theaterreformen*, 6. Both the text and the quotations, unattributed, are in fact reproduced from Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, 8.

5. The Specter of Cinema

In the early twentieth century, precisely while Fuchs, following Wagner, was discussing the separation and integration of different forms of art on stage, a new art form was rapidly establishing a significant presence in Germany. While neither Fuchs nor any other commentators at the time linked the construction of the Artists' Theater to the invention of cinema, the two may productively be viewed in relation to each other, both literally and figuratively. From the architecture of its auditorium and stage to the model of spectatorship this architecture encouraged, cinema provided an important unspoken referent for the Artists' Theater. When Fuchs wrote about the role of the audience that he hoped to entice to the Theater and create with its performances, he derived his ideas from those of Wagner and Nietzsche; at the same time his writings reflect the rapidly growing mass audience in Germany as it was being configured at the cinema.

The first public presentation of a film for a paying audience occurred in Berlin on the first of November, 1895; in the following decade film presentations appeared more and more frequently in cities across Germany. At first, as the film historian Miriam Hansen has written,

films were primarily shown in the *Wanderkino* (travelling shows); around 1904 the establishment of permanent facilities gained momentum and the *Laden* — and/or *Vorstadtkino* (comparable to the nickelodeon) became the most popular locale of exhibition. In the years following 1910, the theatres designed specially for motion picture shows were going up in Berlin and elsewhere. . . .⁸⁶

When the Artists' Theater was built for *Ausstellung München* 1908, in other words, cinema was rapidly gaining popularity across Germany, but theaters were not yet being

⁸⁶ Miriam Hansen, "Early Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?" in Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker, eds., *Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 234-35.

designed explicitly as permanent homes for the presentation of films. The reform theater that was being developed on the stage of the Artists' Theater, meanwhile, paralleled the development of the first phase of the *Reformkino*, or cinema reform, movement, which attended to the moral implications of the new medium by means both of censorship laws and public debate beginning around 1907.⁸⁷

The medium of film began to be discussed in relation to other art forms only very slowly, beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century; even then, film was not treated as a form of art in its own right. As Anton Kaes has written, only in 1909, "with the establishment of permanent motion-picture theaters and with the improvement of recording and projection techniques did cinema edge into a competitive relationship with mainstream literature . . . and with theater (which lost famous directors and actors to the new medium)."⁸⁸ The field of literature in particular harbored legitimate fears that cinema might steal both its most creative producers and its public; according to Kaes, "heated discussions erupted over the perceived danger presented by cinema to the continued existence of literature; at the same time, a number of dissenting voices in the discussion pointed to the potential benefits that cinema might have on the non-reading lower classes."⁸⁹ Analyses of the relationship between theater and film were developed only after the construction of the Artists' Theater, when cinemas began to be built.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 235.

⁸⁸ Anton Kaes, "The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929)," *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 9.

⁸⁹ Ibid. While acknowledging "the frequent reference to cinema in the theater criticism of the time," Kaes maintains that whereas in the United States at the time "cinema was simply seen as a variant of the already commercialized boulevard theater," in Germany "cinema had to justify itself vis-à-vis literature—the classical medium of bourgeois (self-) representation." Ibid., 17 and 30.

One of the most famous of such analyses in these years was offered by Emilie Altenloh, a doctoral candidate in sociology who studied film audiences in the city of Mannheim and presented her findings in 1914 in *Zur Soziologie des Kino* [On the sociology of cinema]. Film, she announced in her book, offered “something completely new that lies between stage drama and the novel.”⁹⁰ The rejection of narrative on the theater stage might best be considered within the context of this triangulated relationship, with film as the unmentioned third term threatening to steal both audiences and ideas from the theater. Altenloh addressed the relationship between film and theater explicitly in the final pages of her book. “It would be false,” she wrote, “to describe the cinema as the heir to the theater. Cinema would indeed have administered this inheritance badly, but it certainly has attracted all the masses that have always gone only to the theater to give themselves a good evening’s entertainment.”⁹¹ Even if a straightforward formal similarity could not be established between the two media, in other words, audiences chose between them (as well as such other kinds of performance as musical concerts), rendering them competitors in the growing urban markets for evening entertainment.

Venues for cinematic presentations proliferated at a remarkable pace. “The development in Berlin is typical,” Altenloh wrote; “to the 34 variety theaters that existed there in 1908, 300 more cinematographs were added over the next few years.”⁹² The same statistics were repeated in Mannheim, she added; presumably they hold true for Munich

⁹⁰ “Innerhalb dieses Rahmens liegen unendlich viele Möglichkeiten künstlerischer Entfaltung, etwas ganz Neues, das Zwischen Bühnendrama und Roman liegt.” Emilie Altenloh, *Zur Soziologie des Kino* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1914), 29.

⁹¹ “Es wäre falsch, wollte man den Kino als den Erben des Theaters ansprechen. Er hätte dieses Erbe wahrlich schlecht verwaltet; aber er hat doch alle die Massen an sich gezogen, die von jeher nur ins Theater gingen, um sich einen Abend gut unterhalten zu lassen. . . .” *Ibid.*, 99.

as well. Theater, cinema, and music concerts all vied for the increasing leisure time of the expanding middle classes, but because film tickets were less inexpensive than were tickets for these other kinds of performances—and because they could be arranged at the last moment—cinema began to steal audiences from the legitimate theater. According to Altenloh, 1908 was the last moment at which theater could still ignore the growing presence of film. This year, as she put it, was the “turning point after which the decline first made itself noticeable. Since then, theater directors have had to watch their houses becoming more and more deserted from year to year, and watch the deserters flocking in throngs to the cinemas [*Lichtspieltheatern*].”⁹³

The writer Paul Ernst likewise addressed the relationship between cinema and the legitimate stage in 1913, in an essay entitled “Die Möglichkeiten einer Kinokunst [The possibilities of a filmic art].” According to Ernst, the art form most closely connected to film—at that time silent, presented with live musical accompaniment—was that of stage pantomime.⁹⁴ But while both art forms offered wordless stories to a live audience, only live theater could create a relationship with its audience. “Film,” by contrast, “gives us a pantomime without that spiritual bond between actor and spectator, but with certain possibilities of its own of a grotesque and fantastic kind.”⁹⁵ Fuchs’s own arguments about

⁹² “Typisch ist die Entwicklung in Berlin, wo zu den 34 Varietés, die es im Jahre 1908 daselbst gab, im Laufe der Jahre noch 300 Kinematographen hinzukamen.” *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁹³ “Das Jahre 1908 ist der Wendepunkt, von wo ab sich der Rückgang zuerst bemerkbar macht. Seitdem müssen die Theaterdirektoren zusehen, wie von Jahr zu Jahr ihre Häuser mehr veröden, und wie die Abtrünnigen in Scharen zu den Lichtspieltheatern strömen.” *Ibid.*, 100.

⁹⁴ “Die nächste Verwandtschaft hätte also die Filmkunst mit der Pantomime.” Paul Ernst, “Möglichkeiten einer Kinokunst,” *Tagebuch eines Dichters* (Munich: Albert Langen/Georg Müller, 1913), 44. Five years earlier, as we shall see in chapter six, Ernst had written a review of Wilhelm Worringer’s dissertation, *Abstraction and Empathy*, prompting the book’s professional publication.

⁹⁵ “Das Kino gibt uns also eine Pantomime ohne das seelische Band von Schauspieler und Zuschauer, aber mit gewissen eigenen Möglichkeiten grotesker und phantastischer Art.” *Ibid.*, 45.

the spiritual connection produced by theater performances between the spectators and the activity on stage may profitably be seen in light of such an argument, which represents a common point of view at this time. Cinema, mechanically produced, might be the quintessential form of art to represent its age, which, according to Ernst, “overall puts, in place of human work, the work of the machine.”⁹⁶ But it could never hope to achieve the real spiritual connection with its audience that could be created by the experience of live theater.

The Artists’ Theater was built not only at a liminal moment in the history of cinema construction—only two years after the international standardization of cinema screen format—but also at a liminal moment in the history of film itself. Writing primarily in reference to the context of the United States, the film historian Tom Gunning has characterized the period in film history “until about 1906-07” as offering a “cinema of attractions,” which he defines as “a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator.”⁹⁷ The term “cinema of attractions,” as Gunning explains, refers both to the later avant-garde film theory of Sergei Eisenstein and to the fairground culture that Eisenstein’s theory of the “montage of attractions” itself referred. The Artists’ Theater, despite focusing its attention solely on the classic theater repertoire, may be aligned with these early cinematic efforts insofar as the performances presented on their shallow stages

⁹⁶ “Unsere Zeit setzt ja überall an die Stelle der menschlichen Arbeit die Arbeit der Maschine.” Ibid., 48.

⁹⁷ Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde,” in Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker, eds., *Space, Frame, Narrative*, 59. Gunning characterizes the period in film after around 1907 as marked by the embrace of narrativity.

participated in the rejection of narrative, literariness, and other trappings of theatrical naturalism.

Besides the Artists' Theater, *Ausstellung München* 1908 also contained two other theater buildings, both of which were located on the other side of the central meadow on the Theresienhöhe. One was a theater for marionette shows; designed by the Munich architects Fritz Klee and Peter Danzer, it is visible on the right side of a photograph that was printed in *Dekorative Kunst* in 1908. [fig. 4.35] A simple triangular pediment is carried, visually if not physically, by four straight columns, while a central set of steps cuts through the plain plinth underneath the building. The structure stands like a parody of a temple. Like the Artists' Theater, it announces its function on a plaque centered on its façade: here, a large semicircular sign bears the words "Marionetten Theater Münchener Künstler" inscribed on it in traditional German lettering. This sign conveys an element of advertising that exists, in the structure's façade, in inverse proportion to its emphasis on architectural design. As objects of mass cultural entertainment, the marionettes demanded fewer of the trappings of high art than did performances at the Artists' Theater.

The other theater on the grounds of *Ausstellung München* 1908 was a cinema, or *Kinematographentheater*, designed by the Munich architect Orlando Kurz and likewise illustrated in *Dekorative Kunst*. [fig. 4.36] Notably, the structure created to house the technologically advanced medium of film was built in a style typical of turn-of-the-century Munich architecture, with traditional forms tempered by large, flat areas of Jugendstil decoration. As Wilhelm Michel wrote at the time, "Orlando Kurz has also shown much architectonic inventiveness in his cinematographic theater. Here, too, it is a

pronounced painterly spirit, which is the striving for amusing spatial and shadow effects, that governs the whole.”⁹⁸ Inside, the spatial and shadow effects were reproduced on the film screen itself. Just as with cinema palaces in the following decades, the more advanced technology was housed in more traditional architecture. While the classic dramas presented at the Artists’ Theater stood in stark contrast to that offered by the two other theaters at the exhibition, the three theaters may in retrospect be seen collectively as precursors to the avant-garde film culture of Eisenstein and others that evoked the presentations of exhibitions and fairgrounds with a “cinema of attractions.”

“A screen is quite a different thing to a stage,” explained P. Morton Shand in 1930 in his book on cinema and theater architecture.⁹⁹ He continued: “The first requires only a very modest area: width and height without depth; while the second calls for considerable three-dimensional space, besides a platform and roof, provided with a certain amount of fixed equipment.” Such a statement reflects a fundamental assumption about theatrical performances: that they are necessarily naturalistic; that they attempt to replicate reality by means of illusionistic sets and props. The distinction set out by Shand also illustrates the unusual position of the shallow stage at the Artists’ Theater, hovering in a liminal category between stage and screen in the minds of contemporary viewers. While Fuchs emphasized the audience’s experience of the performances at the Artists’ Theater, the stylized rejection of naturalism enacted in its productions corresponded more to the category of cinema.

⁹⁸ “Viel architektonische Erfindung hat auch O. ORLANDO KURZ in seinem Kinematographentheater an den Tag gelegt. Auch hier ist es ein ausgesprochen malerischer Geist, das heißt das Streben nach amüsanten Raum- und Schattenwirkungen, der das Ganze beherrscht.” Wilhelm Michel, “Wohn- und Wirtschaftsbauten auf der Ausstellung München 1908,” *Dekorative Kunst* XI (August 21, 1908): 476.

Like the stage itself, the amphitheatrical auditorium at the Artists' Theater may also be aligned with theaters that would soon be built for showing films. The flat square of seats within its auditorium mimicked the shape of the shallow stage faced by the audience. As we have seen, the configuration of seats was certainly inspired by Semper's designs for a theater for Wagner and by the festival theater at Bayreuth that copied these designs; the auditorium also repeated aspects of Littmann's earlier theater designs. At the same time, such a configuration foreshadows later developments in the seating arrangements of German cinemas, which increased in size in proportion to the rapidly growing audiences that they attracted. The auditorium of the Capitol Cinema, built in Breslau in the 1920s by the architect Friedrich Lipp, provides a revealing comparison to that of the Artists' Theater. [fig. 4.37] The cinema auditorium was, of course, far larger and far more ornate than that of the Artists' Theater; in addition to the seats at the orchestra level, it also contained a large balcony divided into several sections of seats. But as at the Artists's Theater, most of the audience occupied a solid block of seats to which they gained access from either side of the auditorium rather than by passing through central aisles. The stage itself was surrounded by a series of frames of decreasing size that receded backwards from the proscenium area to the screen.

In 1940, Mordecai Gorelik offered the following assessment of the significance of the first performance at the Artists' Theater:

Let the audience know that theatre is something better than life, that it is an insight into life. The theatre is not a vulgar peep-show. No longer must the audience watch costumed actors moving inside a gilt picture-frame. The dramatic action goes half-way to meet its public. The actors work far out on that ledge of

⁹⁹ P. Morton Shand, *Modern Picture-Houses and Theatres* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1930), 15.

the forestage, so that their bodies loom up in relief against the setting behind them. This “relief stage” will replace existing stages.¹⁰⁰

These words bear an oddly retrospective cast that contradicts the very nature of a prediction. But insofar as its “relief stage” can be linked to the development of the cinema screen, Gorelik’s claim might also be taken as truthful, with the Artists’ Theater comprising an implicit response to the development of other venues for housing, entertaining, and fostering the growing mass audience in Germany. The architecture of its stage and auditorium responded to the threat of cinema both as a cultural medium and as the creator of the mass audience.

¹⁰⁰ Mordecai Gorelik, *New Theaters for Old*, 178.

Chapter Five: Adolf von Hildebrand and the Relief Stage

While the historian might in retrospect link the productions on the shallow stage at the Artists' Theater in the summer of 1908 to those presented that year on film screens across Germany, Fuchs himself never acknowledged such a connection. Instead, his extensive writings promoting the Theater cited a different source of inspiration for the shallow stage. Rather than looking to a contemporaneous form of mass culture, he pointed to a book of visual theory that had been published in Germany fifteen years earlier: *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* [The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts], written by the sculptor and visual theorist Adolf von Hildebrand, a central figure in Munich's cultural world whose house was a meeting place for members of the city's artistic and literary establishment. Taking Hildebrand's theoretical claims literally, and expanding them in scale from the level of sculpture to that of stage architecture, Fuchs appropriated Hildebrand's promulgation of relief sculpture as the quintessential form of visual art; he commissioned Max Littmann to build a shallow stage for his new theater and called it the *Reliefbühne*, or relief stage.

Scholarly literature on the Artists' Theater, usually written from the point of view of either the history of theater or the field of German studies, has tended to minimize (or even ignore) the role of Hildebrand's theoretical writings in the formation of the Theater's shallow performance area. Peter Jelavich, for example, never mentions Hildebrand in "Retheatricalized Modernism: The Künstlertheater and Its Affinities," the fifth chapter of his book *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and*

Performance, 1890-1914.¹ Within an art historical context, meanwhile, Gunter Schöne's assessment in *Apollo* may be taken as typical: "Fuchs argued the case for a 'relief' stage as the only possible form of scenic representation. He conceived of its being done by a sort of relief, somewhat in the manner of the early mosaics at Ravenna."² When Schöne does mention Hildebrand, it is only to cite his analysis of the Artists' Theater as if it were that of an independent art critic, never acknowledging his role as theoretical inspiration for the development of the relief stage.

In labeling the new performance space, however, Fuchs explicitly referred to Hildebrand's discussion of sculptural relief; the present chapter describes this conceptual transfer from visual theory to theater architecture. I will begin by exploring Hildebrand's presentation of relief sculpture as the ultimate form of visual representation. Hildebrand embraced relief sculpture not only theoretically, in *The Problem of Form*, but also in his artistic practice, as I will describe; not by coincidence, his status as a relief sculptor ensured that his own artistic achievements epitomized his theoretical arguments. Besides providing inspiration and theoretical justification for the architectural design of the Theater, Hildebrand also helped to promote it; this chapter includes a discussion of his essay "*Münchener Künstler-Theater*," which first appeared in the pages of *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Munich's largest daily newspaper, and was subsequently reprinted in the Theater's program booklet.

An interest in relief sculpture, and in notions of sculptural shallowness and visual flatness more generally, pervaded the theory and practice of the visual arts in Germany at

¹ See Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 186-235.

the turn of the twentieth century; it was also not unknown in the theater, as we shall see. Hildebrand's discussion of relief sculpture also incorporated another theme prevalent in German aesthetics: the theory of aesthetic empathy, or *Einfühlung*, described in chapter two. In basing his theater stage on Hildebrand's discussion of sculptural relief, I will argue, Fuchs likewise appropriated empathy theory and its general presumptions about the activity of spectatorship. Facing the relief stage, spectators at the Artists' Theater were to engage together in an aesthetic activity that approximated the notion of empathy as Fuchs would have understood it from Hildebrand. By appropriating the discourse of relief sculpture, Fuchs looked backwards to nineteenth-century theoretical ideas about vision and spectatorship, all while presenting at his Theater the abstracted stage imagery and performance style more typical of the emerging theatrical avant-garde. The relief stage at the Artists' Theater thus reveals a unique interpenetration of architecture, stage imagery, and visual theory at the early twentieth-century threshold between theories of empathy and those of abstraction.

1. Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts*

When Hildebrand published *The Problem of Form* in 1893, he had been working as a sculptor for two decades, living much of the time in an abandoned monastery near Florence. He had established his artistic reputation in Italy, winning the competition to design the murals for the German Zoological Station in Naples with the painter Hans von Marées in 1873, and had already contributed examples of his work to a dozen exhibitions

² Günter Schöne, "The Munich Künstlertheater and Its First Season," *Apollo* XCIV, no. 117 (November 1971): 397. Later in his article, Schöne quotes the first sentence of Hildebrand's essay on the Theater, but

across Europe.³ In Munich in 1891, for example, he had his own exhibition at the Kunstverein and, several months later, he showed ten sculptures at the Glass Palace.⁴ While much of his output comprised small figural sculptures, he also worked on many larger projects, specializing in the design of fountains, graveyard sculpture and mausolea, and larger architectural creations. One of the more famous of his larger public creations is the Wittelsbach Fountain, begun in 1890 and unveiled at the center of the Lenbachplatz in Munich in 1895. [fig. 5.1] Other fountains include those in Jena (1893-94), Straßburg (1897-1902), Worms (1895-1914), and Cologne (1911-22). In addition to producing sculptures large and small, Hildebrand also worked as an architect; his designs for a house for himself in Munich were constructed by the office of Gabriel Seidl and completed in 1898.⁵ [fig. 5.2]

Hildebrand's attempts at sculptural relief began in 1870, at the age of 22, when he produced a terracotta panel to commemorate his sister's engagement. [fig. 5.3] The work, no longer extant, depicts two putti holding a cornucopia between them, while a butterfly hovers at the upper left. His efforts in this medium continued until 1916, five years before his death. Typical of his output is the *Dionysos Relief* of 1890, originally completed for installation in the wall of his own house in Munich and currently on permanent display in the National Gallery in Berlin. [fig. 5.4] The sculpture, also terracotta, depicts a drunken Dionysus, seated and asleep, with an empty cup in his hand; he is supported by a satyr

without linking the theorist to the design of its stage.

³ For more on Hildebrand's achievements as an artist, see Sigrid Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1993); as well as Joachim Geissler, "Die Kunsttheorien von Adolf Hildebrand, Wilhelm Trübner und Max Liebermann: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Kunstliteratur in Deutschland" (Ph.D. diss, Heidelberg, 1963), 35-39.

⁴ A partial list of Hildebrand's exhibited work is found in Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand*, 626-29.

⁵ See Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand*, 479-85. This house now contains the Monacensia Collection of the Munich State Library, which includes the archives of both Hildebrand and Georg Fuchs.

while a servant holding a jug stands by, ready to pour more wine should he stir.

Hildebrand frequently depicted classical Greek themes in his sculptures; a row of plaster casts hung in his Florence studio of the Parthenon metopes, which he had visited in London in 1877.⁶ His status as a sculptor in 1908 may be illustrated by the somewhat disparaging reference made by Joseph August Lux to “Hildebrand, who works in the shadow of the great Renaissance tradition, and who is full of its spirit and its noble emphasis on handicraft.”⁷

First published in 1893, *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts* was Hildebrand’s first and only book. It had been many years in the making; the ideas promulgated within it had been developed largely in dialogue with the visual theorist Conrad Fiedler. Hildebrand’s correspondence with Fiedler attests to the extent of Fiedler’s input; it lasted from 1870 until Fiedler’s death in 1895, when Hildebrand designed a bronze plaque for Fiedler’s grave. [fig. 5.5] The first reference in their exchange to the development of the artistic principles that would later appear in *The Problem of Form* is found in a letter from Hildebrand dated October 9, 1881. In this letter, Hildebrand thanked Fiedler for his comments on an initial manuscript and continued to present his argument that visual art should provide the viewer with an intense perceptual experience that was grounded optically. “This desire,” he declared, “this means of obtaining clarity, this method, expedient for recognition and based in the eye, shows itself most powerfully in relief.”⁸

⁶ Ibid., 173.

⁷ “. . . Hildebrand, der im Schatten der großen Renaissanceüberlieferung schafft, und von ihrem Geist und von ihrer edlen Handwerklichkeit erfüllt ist.” Joseph August Lux, *Das Neue Kunstgewerbe in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1908), 228.

⁸ “Dies Bedürfnis, dies Mittel, sich Klarheit zu verschaffen, diese fürs Erkennen zweckmäßige und in dem Auge begründete Methode zeigt sich am Schlagendsten im Relief.” Adolf von Hildebrand, letter of 9 October, 1881, to Conrad Fiedler, in Günther Jachmann, ed., *Adolf von Hildebrands Briefwechsel mit Conrad Fiedler* (Dresden: Wolfgang Jess, 1927), 161.

Over the next dozen years, he passed several drafts of his manuscript under Fiedler's editorial gaze. By all accounts, Fiedler was the main cause of the book's publication; in the words of Heinrich Wölfflin, "without Fiedler, Hildebrand might very well not have written his *Problem of Form*."⁹

The first basic premise laid out by Hildebrand in *The Problem of Form* was that "space in general, and the idea of form or delimited space in particular," provided the "essential content or the essential reality of things."¹⁰ Such other features of an object as color and line were only embellishments that helped to further the viewer's apprehension of its spatial appearance. The emphasis on space was not original to Hildebrand. That same year, for example, the art historian August Schmarsow famously defined architecture as spatial—as opposed to structural, material, or formal—at a lecture on the occasion of his inheritance of the chair of art history at Leipzig. "Our sense of space and spatial imagination press toward spatial creation," Schmarsow declared; "they seek their satisfaction in art. We call this art architecture; in plain words, it is the creatress of space [*Raumgestalterin*]."¹¹ In defining an object as essentially spatial, Schmarsow placed the orientation of the viewer's body at the center of the aesthetic experience. Similarly,

⁹ Heinrich Wölfflin, quoted in Henry Schaefer-Simmern, introduction to Conrad Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (1876), trans. Schaefer-Simmern (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), xii. On Hildebrand's relation to Fiedler, see Joachim Geissler, "Die Kunsttheorien von Adolf von Hildebrand, Wilhelm Trübner, und Max Liebermann," 41-43 and 45.

¹⁰ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts* (1893), in Harry Francis Malgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, eds., *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Malgrave and Ikonomou (Santa Monica: Getty Center Publications, 1994), 227.

¹¹ August Schmarsow, "The Essence of Architectural Creation," Malgrave and Ikonomou, eds., 287. Mitchell Schwarzer has traced the shift to a spatial understanding of architecture to the work of the Viennese architect Hanns Auer, whose essay "The Development of Space in Architecture" of 1883 "transplanted architectural discourse regarding materials to the arena of space." Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 192. The understanding of architecture as essentially spatial persisted for several decades, perhaps culminating in the late 1920s, when László Moholy-Nagy defined architecture as "the functionally and emotionally and satisfactory arrangement of space." László Moholy-Nagy, "The Concept of Space" (1925-

Hildebrand maintained that the relation between the viewer and the art object was a spatial one, although the experience was perceived visually. The ostensible purpose of *The Problem of Form* was to elaborate this experience at a theoretical level.

“The artistic representation,” Hildebrand announced, “is concerned precisely with evoking [an] idea of space through the appearance it produces and only through that.”¹² The purpose of a work of art, in other words, was to inspire the viewer’s spatial sense as forcefully as possible. Visual art, according to Hildebrand’s definition, represented the three dimensions of space in two dimensions; the artistic experience was located in the viewer’s struggle to reconstruct, from these two dimensions, a full perception of the object. The aim of art, then, was to provoke the highest degree of kinesthetic activity within the imagination of the viewer; “the appearance must draw the imagination into depth,” Hildebrand wrote.¹³ “The work of sculptor and painter is guided by the same representational needs,” he argued, “however different the means employed may be,” a statement belied by the fact that within the pages of his book he treated sculpture as the artistic medium most worthy of theoretical discussion.¹⁴ (While never fully explained within the text, this emphasis is unsurprising given the orientation of his own artistic practice.) The flattest image demanded the most intense expenditure of energy from the viewer and provoked the strongest aesthetic reaction; the flattest sculptural image—or, rather, the sculpture that most explored the notion of flatness—thus presented the artistic experience in its purest form.

28), in Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, eds., *Bauhaus 1919-1928* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938), 122.

¹² Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 239.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.

Hildebrand distinguished two modes of perception: the distant view, or *Fernsicht*, comprised a two-dimensional, static image of an entire visual field. From a distance, that is, the viewer could see a work whole, both literally and symbolically. By contrast, the near view, or *Nahsicht*, offered a three-dimensional view of an object, insofar as its three dimensions could be perceived up close as a juxtaposition of surfaces at various levels. With constant kinesthetic activity, the viewer's eye created an image of a close object that was essentially mobile and temporal. Hildebrand explained the distinction as follows:

The image received by the viewing eye at rest expresses three-dimensionality only by surface signs, through which coexisting elements are simultaneously apprehended. At the other extreme, the eye's mobility enables it to scan a three-dimensional object directly from a close vantage point and to transform the perception into a temporal sequence of images.¹⁵

Crucially, he associated distant vision with the notion of flatness: a remote view appeared flat, whereas an object's three dimensions could not be ignored when viewed from up close. The conceptual opposition between a distant, static image and a closely viewed succession of images suggests Nietzsche's own contrast between a static Apollonian image, cool and distant, and a frenzied Dionysian mobility. To a contemporary reader, the notion of the near view also hints at the development of the theory and practice of montage, through which a "temporal sequence of images" inspires an active, transformative kind of vision.

Hildebrand labeled the viewer's production of an image from a distance "seeing," or *Sehen*; he referred to close vision as "scanning," or *Schauen*. The conceptual distinction derived from Robert Vischer's 1873 treatise, *On the Optical Sense of Form*. "Scanning is a much more active process than seeing," Vischer had written; "because it does not simply rely on the natural impulse to seek a relative whole; instead, our eye

wanders up and down, left and right, making contact with the individual dimension.”¹⁶

Hildebrand, too, presented the distant view as static and the near view as mobile. By means of constant visual activity, a variety of discrete, localized images accrued, and a host of details was ascertained, but no coherent image of an entire object could ever be attained. Scanning was a kind of scientific vision, Hildebrand maintained; he described it in terms that evoke such developments in the field of science as microscope lenses and the microtome, both of which revealed to late nineteenth-century viewers far more of the small details of an object than had previously been possible.

Despite the visual activity it entailed, scanning was, for Hildebrand, a mechanical and passive form of visual reception; he associated it both with positivistic thinking and with photography. (Positivism, he wrote with a certain tone of disappointment, “has been very much supported by the invention of photography.”¹⁷) Scientists, photographers, and other such nineteenth-century positivists might attend to an infinite number of visual details, but such close vision—with or without the assistance of the camera lens—merely recorded the details before it. For Hildebrand, as for Vischer before him, a complete visual image of an object actively integrated these details into a larger image, distant and static, which by definition was an “artistic image,” formulated with the assistance of the creative imagination. Such vision, Hildebrand argued, “is certainly no purely mechanical act; it is only through experience that the imagination turns the mechanical retinal image into a spatial image, allowing us to recognize what it represents.”¹⁸ True artistic seeing was achieved when the viewer added a host of contextual material to the image, such as a

¹⁵ Ibid., 229.

¹⁶ Robert Vischer, *On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics*, in Harry Francis Malgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, eds., *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 94.

¹⁷ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 237.

spatial understanding and an aesthetic sensibility. “Artistic seeing,” Hildebrand wrote, “resides in a strong grasp of these sensations of form and not in the mere knowledge of the inherent form as a sum of isolated perceptions; the latter can have significance only for scientific analysis.”¹⁹

Scientific vision, achieved through scanning, could provide the viewer with factual information about what Hildebrand termed an object’s inherent form, or *Daseinsform*. When, in addition to this information, the point of view of the viewer and consideration of the viewing environment more generally were also taken into account, the result was a more complete perception of an object, which he labeled its effective form, or *Wirkungsform*. According to Hildebrand, while the former had a certain abstract and rational truth, only the latter truly reflected the object as it was encountered in the world. “The impression of form that we acquire from the appearance and that is contained in it,” he explained, “is always a joint product of the object, on the one hand, and of its lighting, surroundings, and our changing vantage point, on the other.”²⁰ It was this joint product, this impression of an object received by a viewer, that concerned him in *The Problem of Form*. The true “problem of form” was how form was perceived by artistic vision; how a viewer turned all of the local and contextual impressions into a larger, static, and distant whole. “This whole exists for the eye only in the form of effects that translate all actual dimensions into relative values,” Hildebrand explained; “only in this way do we possess it as a visual idea.”²¹

¹⁸ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹ Ibid., 235. “We are not machines for capturing the momentary record of nature,” he declared, “but beings who combine mental images and who use and interweave isolated perceptions only as incidental parts of the process.” Ibid., 263-64.

²⁰ Ibid., 233.

²¹ Ibid., 235.

Hildebrand set out a series of conceptual dichotomies in his book—near and distant vision, scanning and seeing, inherent and effective form—always favoring the second term. He defined art according to the notion of distance, opposing it to the close and isolated perceptions of scientific vision. Conflating the artist’s creative activity and that of the viewer, he argued that artistic vision was by nature active, whereas the model of mechanical reception that marked scientific vision was predominantly passive. The optical activity entailed in scanning an object was not tantamount to active vision; the activity that Hildebrand valued was, rather, perceptual and aesthetic. The ideal work of art would inspire within the viewer the greatest intensity of aesthetic movement. Just as he had argued in his letter to Fiedler in 1881, he maintained in *The Problem of Form* that relief sculpture best fulfilled the aim of art by spurring the spectator’s visual imagination most strongly into action. Relief sculpture offered the viewer not only the possibility of the distant image, artistic seeing, and effective form, but also the full range of the conceptual dichotomies to which each belonged. It presented the viewer, in other words, with the most pure example of the play between near and distant vision, between seeing and scanning, and between inherent and effective form; in so doing, it marked the epitome of the aesthetic experience.

Hildebrand explored the topic of relief sculpture in “The Concept of Relief,” the fifth chapter of his book. Here he defined art as the “evocation of a general idea of space by means of the appearance of the object.”²² The flatter the given object, the more intensely it might provoke the viewer’s spatial sense. The ideal art object, in other words, prompted the highest level of aesthetic activity by approximating two dimensions most closely; since it was almost flat but depicted a scene in space, it provided the most

effective “vessel in which the artist creates and holds nature.”²³ Both free-standing sculpture and painting presented a mimetic reproduction of an object, but relief sculpture could never rely on such lazy tactics. Rather, it used visual hints to convey a sense of space and provoked the viewer to merge the two-dimensional image held in the eye and a full perception of the object. “While evoking two-dimensional effects,” Hildebrand explained, relief sculpture “contains that which the eye needs in order to develop a recognizable image of the object on the surface and a coherent depth dimension for the sensation of volume.”²⁴ As if surprised by the logic of his own conclusions, he wrote: “This artistic method of representation, developed here in a very general way, is none other than the idea of relief that prevailed in Greek art.”²⁵ The relief image best fulfilled the aim of art, and Greek relief carvings constituted the most highly developed example of the genre. Indeed, the arguments within *The Problem of Form* make most sense as rationalizations of a predetermined conception of art that aimed from the beginning at justifying sculptural relief.

While Hildebrand oriented his artistic interests toward ancient Greece and Rome, and lived much of his life near Florence, the theories of vision he developed in the final decades of the nineteenth century evoke for a later reader the contemporaneous pictorial concerns of Impressionist painting. The parallel is particularly evident in his discussion of the distinction between the static, distant view of an entire visual field and the near view, which revealed an object’s three-dimensional status through surface contrasts. “The closer the observer comes to the object,” Hildebrand wrote,

²² Ibid., 252.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 253-54

²⁵ Ibid., 252.

the less coherent will be the visual impression. Finally the field of vision becomes so confined that he will be able to focus only on one point at a time, and he will experience the spatial relationships between different points by moving his eyes. Now seeing becomes scanning, and the resulting ideas are not visual but kinesthetic; they supply the material for an abstract vision and idea of form.²⁶

Close-up vision was kinesthetic; it involved the viewer's visual activity of scanning, creating an image by means of the accretion of details. At a greater distance from the work, the viewer's aesthetic activity increased and the viewer produced a more coherent and complete visual image. While objects that were too close could not be properly apprehended, "at a certain distance from a perceived object . . . our eyes begin to see parallel and take the object in at a glance, as a coherent surface image or distant image," he explained.²⁷ Hildebrand's intentions aside, his analysis of the viewing process might well describe a pointillist painting.

Hildebrand mentioned theater only once in *The Problem of Form*, in a stage metaphor intended to elucidate the process of artistic vision. Just as peripheral vision was blurrier than the center of a perceived image, he argued, so, too, did near vision blur the appearance of an object. In his words, "what lies directly on the near side of the distant plane—that is, in front of the stage—is perceived as being in transition."²⁸ If an actor stepped forward through the proscenium arch to approach the audience, that is, the moment was transitional, and not truly a part of the work of art that was being produced at the theater. According to Hildebrand, both on stage and in a painting, "the actual space is beyond this distant plane or only begins with it." In this analogy, the frame of the stage represents the frame of a painting, marking the difference between the real space

²⁶ Ibid., 229.

²⁷ Ibid., 243. On the German reception of French Impressionism beginning in 1890, see Lothar Müller, "The Beauty of the Metropolis: Toward an Aesthetic Urbanism in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin," Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr, eds., *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 41-47.

inhabited by the viewer and the imaginary space depicted within the work of art. But the viewer's "actual space" within his metaphor remains far behind the proscenium; the stage that Hildebrand imagined was clearly not a shallow one.

If Hildebrand imagined a metaphoric stage only in passing in his book of 1893, he also attended to theater in a literal way. According to Sigrid Esche-Braunfels, he began working on a design for a theater for Munich in the mid-1890s and was well aware of Semper's designs for a festival theater for Wagner in Munich, which had been published in 1893.²⁹ While Hildebrand's early plans for a Munich theater no longer exist, some traces of his later efforts remain, including plaster models for a Munich theater from 1907-08.³⁰ [fig. 5.6] In addition, in the spring of 1908, he collaborated with the architects Carl Sattler and August Zeh on a design for a theater. Under the group name Trio, the team entered a competition in the spring of 1908 to build a replacement for the Stuttgart Hoftheater, which had burned down in 1902. Their design, drawn by Hildebrand himself, consisted of two attached theaters, a larger one in the front and a smaller one behind it; together these formed a monumental and imposing structure. [fig. 5.7] Most important in this context are the ground plans for the two auditoria, both of which were also drawn by Hildebrand. The smaller theater in the back relied primarily on an amphitheatrical model; all the seats at the orchestra level faced the stage, with a row of private boxes at the back and two balconies above. [fig. 5.8] The auditorium within the larger theater, however, which could hold 1,070 spectators, relied on a conventional arrangement of seats. [fig. 5.9] In two respects this theater followed the design of Bayreuth and that of the Prinzregententheater: its orchestra was sunk below the level of the auditorium, and its

²⁸ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 243.

²⁹ See Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand*, 504.

stage—far from looking to Hildebrand’s own theories of sculptural relief—was as deep as any traditional theater stage.

All told, there were 23 entries in the competition for the new Stuttgart Hoftheater; the winning design, built between 1908 and 1912, was by the architect of the Artists’ Theater, Max Littmann. **[fig. 5.10]** Working within the firm Heilmann and Littmann, Littmann had been responsible for an initial design for the site in 1902, the year the previous theater had been destroyed, and his project had prompted the competition.³¹ Six years later, his winning proposal resembled that of the Trio group to which Hildebrand belonged, with the configuration of a larger theater in front and a smaller one in back occupying a similar footprint. In Littmann’s design, however, the front entrance of both theaters faced the same direction, placing the smaller theater at the end of a wing of the larger one and rendering the design more like that of his own Prinzregentheater, built in Munich in 1901. A contemporary photograph of the main façade of the larger theater reveals the similarity between the two designs, both of which evoke the front of the festival theater at Bayreuth. **[fig. 5.11]** The curved façade is topped once again by a pitched roof, but here the building is given yet more of a sense of monumentality by the use of stone and by such additions as six pairs of massive ionic columns, a balustrade, and a set of ten statues standing guard above.

³⁰ Ibid., 504-05.

³¹ Ibid., 501.

2. Hildebrand's Response to the Artists' Theater

Hildebrand's essay "Münchener Künstler-Theater" was first published in February 1908, three months before the Theater's opening night. "The goals pursued by the Artists' Theater," he thus proclaimed well in advance of their realization, "are based above all on a clarification of the relationship between the dramatic and the visual arts, insofar as the latter has a place on the stage."³² The two art forms were united in the service of aesthetic experience but operated by different rules; the stage image, framed by the proscenium, provided the ultimate formal expression of their theoretical relationship. The theater presented a work of art that was not simply enlarged to life size and enlivened by actors, but also witnessed by a community. Gathered together in the auditorium, the audience watched this framed image in unison, their emotional engagement in the drama tempered by their impression of the visual image represented on stage. Ideally, Hildebrand believed, performances would unite the emotional engagement that he considered to be characteristic of the drama and the aesthetic detachment that he associated with the visual arts. While he neither mentioned Richard Wagner nor showed any concern for musical performance, his discussion of the relationship of the individual arts on stage was inflected by the composer's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Hildebrand associated the visual arts with emotional distance, with a calmness and self-control that allowed the artist to apprehend the event and turn it into a work of art. Drama, by contrast, represented an emotional immediacy and a loss of control. The distinction held true both for the reception of a work of art and for its creation; only a

³² "Die Zwecke, welche das Künstler-Theater verfolgt, beruhen vor allem in einer Klärung des Verhältnisses zwischen der dramatischen und der bildenden Kunst, insoweit letztere auf der Bühne in Betracht kommt." Adolf von Hildebrand, "Münchener Künstler-Theater" in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1909), 71.

visual artist, he believed, could attain a true—which is to say, complete and detached—vision of an object or an event. As an example, Hildebrand described a dramatic scene in the annals of art history, the burning of Savonarola on the Piazza Signoria in Florence, declaring that “the pure appearance of the phenomenon could be observed only by an artist, who stood apart from the inner dramatic experience” while other witnesses of the scene were too engaged to achieve such aesthetic distance.³³ For these spectators, he argued, “the inner excitement and the impassioned witnessing of what happened there did not allow for the contemplation of the piazza as a phenomenon.”³⁴ Contemplation and passion—expressed most purely in the visual and the dramatic arts, respectively—were theoretically irreconcilable.

Implicitly, Hildebrand associated the visual arts with the solitary individual, who observed from a distance—whether physical, emotional, or psychic—in order to be capable of rendering an object as a work of art. “He who has time and tranquillity to separate the visual image from the event,” he explained, “is already beyond the purely dramatic context; the chain is broken and he is a visual artist.”³⁵ He associated drama, by contrast, with the crowd of people who were swept away by their experience of an event and were unable to maintain an emotional distance from it. By extension, Hildebrand implied, while the experience of the individual spectator might be described in terms of the visual arts, drama by its very nature had to be discussed with reference to a larger audience whose members experienced a work of art in unison. In the process of this

³³ “Das reine Bild der Erscheinung konnte nur ein bildender Künstler dabei beobachten, welcher abseits des inneren dramatischen Erlebnisses . . . blieb.” Ibid., 72.

³⁴ “Für das Publikum aber, welches hingerissen von dem Vorgang ihn auch miterlebte, war die Piazza der gewohnte äußere Rahmen, kein Augenerlebnis.” Ibid.

³⁵ “Der, welcher Zeit und Ruhe hat, das Augenbild abzulösen vom Vorgang, befindet sich schon außerhalb des rein dramatischen Zusammenhangs, die Kette ist gerissen und er ist bildender Künstler.” Ibid.

communal experience, the group was transported emotionally; each individual within the group witnessed an event through a combination of various senses mirroring the combination of art forms that comprised the performance itself.

Hildebrand never questioned the idea that the visual arts necessarily remained dependent on realism. But because drama operated by emotional intensity rather than psychic detachment, he believed, it was more free to engage in experimentation. Theatrical performances were meant to provide a communal stimulation of the spectators' imaginations; stage sets were therefore to hint at reality but not to attempt illusionistic realism. To present the burning of Savonarola as a scene on a theater stage, he wrote, for example,

the artistic truth for the stage décor must lie not in achieving the most true-to-life and realistic Piazza della Signoria possible, but rather in presenting it only insofar, and as strongly, as it comes into consideration during the real dramatic experience. . . . And so the state of the dramatic experience is the defining truth, not the reality, which is appropriate for the observant state, for the eye.³⁶

While the visual arts depended on superficial reconstructions of reality, drama aimed at an experiential truth that would affect the spectator far more profoundly.

In his essay on the Artists' Theater, Hildebrand sought to elucidate the relationship between visual and dramatic art primarily at the theoretical level. But he also attended to this relationship more literally, describing the function of visual artists in helping to prepare theatrical performances. Specifically, he advocated "the simplification of the means, in order to attain a more compelling effect," and declared that

the experience of the fine artist is capable of doing infinitely much here. To create with a pair of trees, properly placed, the impression of an entire forest; to prompt

³⁶ "Daraus folgt aber, daß . . . die künstlerische Wahrheit für die Bühnendekoration nicht darin liegen darf, eine möglichst wahrheitsgetreue und wirkliche Piazza della Signoria zu bringen, sondern sie nur so weit und nur so stark zu geben, als sie beim wirklich dramatischen Erleben noch in Betracht kommt. . . . Also der Zustand des dramatischen Erlebens ist die maßgebende Wahrheit, nicht die Wirklichkeit, welche für den betrachtenden Zustand, fürs Auge in Frage kommen kann." Ibid., 73.

with a street corner the image of a whole city in the imagination: these are the tasks that are the most interesting and important for the stage.³⁷

The tasks to be completed on the theater stage by painters were subsidiary, but they were crucial to the creation of a convincing performance. Fifteen years earlier, in *The Problem of Form*, Hildebrand had emphasized the use of suggestion and visual hints in relief sculpture in order to convey a sense of space without relying on reproduction. He now presented this objective in relation to the painter's work on stage. As he exclaimed: "Every addition subtracts from the dramatic experience!"³⁸

Just as Hildebrand disdained naturalist illusionism in painting, so, too, did he decry the naturalist theater, which, by relying on visual calculations and diversionary tactics, only encouraged passive enjoyment among its spectators. He grumbled about the existence of "plays possessing no actual, unified dramatic power, which wish to fill their gaps by keeping the eyes occupied—plays that thus calculate, in this way, right from the start."³⁹ Such tricks attempted simply to fool the visual capacities of the spectators rather than inspire their imaginations. Visual stimulation at the theater, Hildebrand believed, was valuable only if it caused an emotional reverberation. Such an argument was fully in keeping with the ideas expressed in *The Problem of Form*. For Hildebrand, the artistic value of a work of art depended on the intensity of the aesthetic response it provoked

³⁷ ". . . die Vereinfachung der Mittel, um eine schlagendere Wirkung zu erreichen. Die Erfahrung des bildenden Künstlers vermag hier unendlich viel zu tun. Mit ein paar Bäumen, die richtig gestellt sind, den Eindruck eines ganzen Waldes hervorzurufen, mit einer Straßenecke das Bild einer ganzen Stadt in der Phantasie anzuregen, das sind Aufgaben, die höchst interessant und wichtig für die Bühne sind." Ibid., 74.

³⁸ "Jedes Mehr zieht ab vom dramatischen Erleben!" Ibid., 73. "Finding the right measure of the visual impression, so that it only supports the situation and does not draw attention to itself and detract" from the dramatic experience, Hildebrand explained: "therein lies the problem for the stage, in the realm of real drama." "Das Maß zu finden für den Augeneindruck, insoferne es nur die Situation stützt, nicht aber die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich lenkt und abzieht—da liegt das Problem für die Bühne beim wirklichen Drama." Ibid.

³⁹ "Nun gibt es aber Theaterstücke, die nicht die eigentliche, geschlossene dramatische Kraft besitzen, und die ihre Lücken mit Augenbeschäftigung ausfüllen wollen, Stücke, die also von vornherein auf letztere rechnen." Ibid., 74.

within the viewer, and not on its power to deceive the eye; both on stage and off, art was not to indulge in *trompe l'oeil* effects, but to make the spectator intensely aware of the spatial character of the depicted object. The power of an aesthetic impression was thus based not on illusionistic depictions but on the intense energy expended by the spectator. Both in visual art and at the theater, naturalism was fundamentally misguided and doomed to fail.

Hildebrand illustrated his argument against naturalism with a metaphor that explicitly linked the notion of a play at theater and the kind of play engaged in by children. “For it is with the spectator as with the child,” he wrote:

Give him a doll that is too realistic and too detailed, and the imagination has nothing more to add; the doll spoils the child’s imaginary world with its excessive realism and the child has no use for it. It is exactly so with the stage that does not aim to set the imagination moving, but instead sets out with a completely opposing intention, to fool the eye by simulating real nature.⁴⁰

The audience that Hildebrand described was a gathering of admirably naïve spectators who attended a theater play in order to exercise their aesthetic imaginations. A reliance on theatrical naturalism—whether in the stage décor or in the performance style—only served to quell this potential, to destroy all that was truly theatrical about the experience at the theater. “Real drama wants the spectator to experience purely dramatically,”

⁴⁰ “Denn es geht dem Zuschauer wie dem Kinde. Gibt man ihm eine Puppe, die zu wirklich und zu ausführlich ist, so hat die Phantasie nichts mehr zu ergänzen, die Puppe mit ihrer allzu großen Realität verdirbt dem Kinde seine imaginäre Welt und das Kind kann nichts damit anfangen. Genau so mit der Bühne, die nicht darauf abzielt, die Phantasie in Bewegung zu setzen, sondern die in ganz entgegengesetzter Absicht darauf losgeht, dem Auge eine wirkliche Natur weißzumachen.” Ibid., 74-75. On the relation of child’s play and theater plays, see also Mikhail Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (c. 1920-23), in Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, eds., *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 74-79.

Hildebrand declared; “where it occurs genuinely, the dramatic power drives away all other interests.”⁴¹

3. Sculptural Relief, Metaphoric Flatness

Bühnenkunst, or the art of the stage, was a popular subject in Munich cultural circles at the beginning of the twentieth century, spawning numerous publications.⁴² One of these, by Karl Scheffler, the architect and the editor of the journal *Kunst und Künstler*, included extensive excerpts from the writings of Peter Behrens and such noted innovators in the theater as Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig. Published in the middle of March 1907—more than a year before Fuchs opened the Artists’ Theater—the essay explicitly advocated the use of Hildebrand’s ideas to further the cause of theater reform. “Every director should know Hildebrand’s *Problem of Form* and should study the laws of conceptions of surface and depth,”⁴³ Scheffler proclaimed. These laws, he believed, would help the director create a stage setting and a performance that surpassed mere illusionistic replication. “Even though the consciousness of the public demands the perspectival deception,” he argued, “the instinct always also requires the satisfaction of

⁴¹ “Das wirkliche Drama will aber den Zuschauer rein dramatisch erleben lassen. . . . Die dramatische Kraft, wo sie wirklich auftritt, verscheucht alle anderen Interessen.” Adolf von Hildebrand, “Münchener Künstler-Theater,” 72.

⁴² See, for example, Carl Hagemann, *Aufgaben des Modernen Theaters* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1906); Paul Marsop, *Weshalb Brauchen wir die Reformbühne* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1907); Max Burckhard, *Das Theater* (Frankfurt: Rütten und Loening, 1907); and Karl Scheffler, “Das Theater,” in Eduard Heyk, ed., *Moderne Kultur: Ein Handbuch der Lebensbildung und des guten Geschmacks*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anhalt, 1907), 405-23.

⁴³ “Jeder Regisseur sollte Hildebrands ‘Problem der Form’ kennen und die Gesetze der Flächen- und Tiefenvorstellungen studieren.” Karl Scheffler, “Bühnenkunst,” *Kunst und Künstler* V (1906-7), 231.

an inborn feeling for space.”⁴⁴ For a performance to enter the realm of art, and not merely to reproduce reality, it needed to offer the audience a visual play between the deep space of the stage and the shallow proscenium area. Scheffler likened this spatial relationship both to that between sculpture and architecture and that between the melody and the bass line in music. The spectator’s aesthetic sense would be activated by the full use of near and distant vision as Hildebrand had described these faculties in *The Problem of Form*.

While Hildebrand aimed to justify Greek relief sculpture, his analyses of the viewer’s experience of the background and foreground of a work in *The Problem of Form* almost demanded implementation on the stage. The attention to artistic vision and to the kinds of objects that might facilitate such vision seemed to encourage extrapolation. For Fuchs, reference to Hildebrand satisfied a desire to tie theatrical practice to aesthetic theory in a grand knot, ennobling the former, demonstrating the practical application of the latter, and allowing each to justify the other. The omission of playwright and theater director in the pages of *The Problem of Form* clearly did not deter him from appropriating the book as theoretical justification for his own ideas. In *Revolution in the Theater*, he claimed not only that the architectural innovations on the stage at the Artists’ Theater were supported by the formulations of contemporary aesthetic theory but also that the connection of visual and dramatic theory was entirely natural. “The laws of the spatial effectiveness of art which Hildebrand set forth in his treatise *The Problem of Form*,” Fuchs announced, “here were developed and realized organically from the essence of drama.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “Wenn auch das Bewusstsein des Publikums die perspektivische Täuschung fordert, so verlangt der Instinkt stets doch Befriedigung der eingeborenen Raumgefühls.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ “. . . die Gesetze der räumlichen Kunstwirkung, die Hildebrand in seinem Traktate ‘Das Problem der Form’ enthüllt hat, sind hier organisch aus dem Wesen des Dramas entwickelt und verwirklicht.” Georg

Where it helped Fuchs to prove his argument in *Revolution in the Theater*, he was not averse to transcribing extensive quotations from Hildebrand's book. But Fuchs emphasized the theoretical distinction between the two art forms: "If to explain our intentions we often refer to works of visual art," he wrote, "it is always with the reservation that the fundamental dramatic principle of movement really excludes an inner correspondence."⁴⁶ He was also careful to underline that theatrical developments, despite their theoretical underpinnings, were based fundamentally on the efforts of talented practical men: "The average director certainly does not torment himself . . . because he may have read Hildebrand's *Problem of Form*—he knows nothing of Hildebrand—but because his practical experience tells him that the situation otherwise will be neither understood nor effective."⁴⁷ Hildebrand provided a theoretical backdrop in front of which Fuchs could perform his explanations, and other writers likewise drew parallels between the Artists' Theater's artistic principles and those expressed in *The Problem of Form*. Clearly rehearsed by Fuchs, for example, the reviewer in *Le Figaro* of two of the Theater's performances—Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Goethe's *Faust*, part I—cited Hildebrand as theoretically analogous and quoted him to prove it.⁴⁸

As we have seen in chapter three, Fuchs was not alone in developing the idea of a relief stage; Peter Behrens, his colleague at the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, had also done so, in 1900, but without referring to Hildebrand. "The greater extension into breadth

Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters: Ergebnisse aus der Münchener Künstler-Theater* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909), 115.

⁴⁶ "Wenn wir zur Erläuterung unserer Absichten oftmals auf Werke der bildenden Kunst hinweisen, so geschieht das stets unter dem Vorbehalte, daß das dramatische Grundprinzip der Bewegung eine innere Uebereinstimmung unbedingt ausschließt." Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 117.

⁴⁷ "Der Durchschnitts-Regisseur legt sich diese Plage gewiß nicht auf . . . weil er Hildebrands 'Problem der Form' gelesen hätte—er weiß gar nichts von Hildebrand—sondern weil ihm seine Handwerks-Erfahrung sagt, daß die 'Situation' sonst nicht verstanden wird und nicht wirkt." *Ibid.*, 101-02.

causes the relief-like arrangement and the relief-like movement of the figures and of the scenes,” Behrens had declared in *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*; “relief is the most striking expression of the line, of the moving line, of the movement that is everything, in the drama.”⁴⁹ Behrens equated relief, line, and movement with drama itself, creating a tautological package to which Fuchs would be equally sympathetic. But where Behrens emphasized the visual process that caused an impression of relief, Fuchs approached the model of sculptural relief more literally, advocating the shallow stage that simply mimicked a work of relief sculpture at an architectural level. Quite naturally, Fuchs denied that his appropriation of Hildebrand’s theory of relief sculpture was entirely literal. “The ‘relief stage’ got its name from the fact that the visual impressions coming from it have an effect of relief,” he wrote. “But they achieve this relief effect not because one has arbitrarily imposed compulsory principles of the plastic arts on the dramatic performance . . . rather, they receive them because one has allowed the drama to develop *out of itself*. . . .”⁵⁰

One decade later, in an essay entitled “Über die Kunst auf der Bühne” [On Art for the Stage], Behrens once again endorsed the relief stage:

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

⁴⁸ See Robert Brussel, “La Saison à Munich: Le Künstler-Theater” (*Le Figaro*, August 18, 1908), reprinted in Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 236-42. Brussel’s discussion of Hildebrand is on 237-38.

⁴⁹ “Die grössere Ausdehnung in die Breite bedingt die reliefartige Anordnung und reliefartige Bewegung der Gestalten und Aufzüge. Das Relief ist der markanteste Ausdruck der Linie, der bewegten Linie, der bewegung die beim Drama alles ist.” Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als Höchsten Kultursymbols* (Darmstadt: C. F. Winter’shen, 1900), 19.

⁵⁰ “Die ‘Reliefbühne’ hat ihren Namen daher, daß die von ihr ausgehenden Augeneindrücke eine Reliefwirkung haben. Sie erlangen diese Reliefwirkung aber nicht dadurch, daß man der dramatischen Darstellung absichtlich plastische Zwangsmaßregeln auferlegt hätte . . . sondern sie empfangen sie dadurch, daß man das Drama *aus sich heraus* geschehen läßt. . . .” Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 99 (*italics original*).

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.⁵¹

Relying on the double authority of Greek drama and visual logic, Behrens presented the shallow stage as both historically established and fully appropriate for the contemporary German stage. “Only relief offers the possibility for rhythm, the primal element of all art, to achieve its full and palpable effect,” he declared.⁵² At the historical moment when the theatrical avant-garde in Europe was experimenting with the abstracted forms created by shadow puppets, tableaux vivants, and other formulations of shallow and static imagery reminiscent of the visual arts, both Fuchs and Behrens applied the visual principles of relief sculpture to the theater stage.

Like Nietzschean aesthetics, relief sculpture was already well established in German aesthetic discourse by the early twentieth century; perhaps its most notable advocate was Alois Riegl. In 1893, the same year that Hildebrand completed *The Problem of Form*, Riegl published his first book, *Stilfragen* [Questions of Style]. According to Riegl, the urge to flatness guided the entire scope of the history of art, leading over time from free-standing sculpture through relief carving and ultimately to drawing. “The earliest works of art are sculptural,” Riegl explained. “Since things in nature are seen only from one side, however, relief sculpture began to satisfy the same purpose. Subsequently, two-dimensional representation was established and led to the idea of the outline. Finally, sculptural qualities were abandoned altogether and replaced by drawing.”⁵³ Relief sculpture thus played a crucial pivotal role within this grand, undocumented, narrative of the historical development of art: it represented the initial

⁵¹ Peter Behrens, “On Art for the Stage,” trans. Howard Fitzpatrick, in *Perspecta* 26 (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 140. The original text appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* LIV, 78 (March 20, 1910).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 142.

abandonment of three-dimensional representation. Sculptural relief was the critical pivot within the overriding historical framework of Riegl's book; Hildebrand incorporated the spectator's perceptual experience into his analysis of the art form. By celebrating relief sculpture in their respective books of 1893, both Riegl and Hildebrand privileged the theme of flatness.

Until this time, flatness had possessed predominantly negative connotations. In 1873, for example, when Nietzsche wrote that modern man "lets himself be emptied until he is no more than an objective sheet of plate glass," there was no need to add that such emptiness, objectivity, and transparency were lamentable aspects of the modern personality.⁵⁴ But if the notion of cultural and personal flatness fully contradicted the nineteenth-century concept of *Bildung*, of the cultivated and educated individual, such flatness soon came to seem advantageous. In the visual discourse of early twentieth-century Germany, flatness shed its aura of shallowness to represent, increasingly, such valued modern qualities as efficiency and objectivity. The notion of flatness linked such disparate artistic phenomena as Jugendstil design, for which the unmodeled planar surface provided the background for the famous whiplash line; the development of abstract painting, imminent in Munich in 1908; and the film screens of the increasingly popular cinemas. The discourse of flatness, meanwhile, helped set the terms for theorizations of modernist subjectivity, extending into discussions of the mass audience in the 1920s.

⁵³ Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 29.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1873), in Daniel Breazeale, ed., *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (1873; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 105.

Thus, while Hildebrand's arguments, like his sculptures, exemplified aesthetic conservatism, by privileging flatness both his book and that of Riegl participated in a discourse that would prove highly productive for the theory and practice of art and architecture. And while the existence of the relief stage at the Artists' Theater was justified with Hildebrand's discussions of Greek relief sculpture, the performances presented on it shared affinities with the contemporaneous rumblings of visual abstraction in Munich. Only the relief stage was explicitly based on Hildebrand's discussion of sculptural relief, but the entire structure, as we have seen in chapter four, was oriented around an aesthetic of flatness. Its façade and interiors conformed to the Jugendstil reliance on planarity, albeit a decade after the movement's heyday in Munich. Within the auditorium at the Artists' Theater, flatness operated more figuratively, through the arrangement of spectators in identical rows.

Facing the Theater's shallow stage, spectators would be transported to an exalted realm of art that had no need for complicated props, illusionistic sets, and such elaborate equipment as the revolving stage (introduced in Munich a decade earlier), all of which only detracted from the pure theatrical experience as Fuchs envisioned it. Despite the avowed centrality of rhythm, this experience was to be primarily visual, and the visual theory on which it was based was likewise oriented around the notion of flatness. In *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft*, Fuchs had written of "the surface, the fundamental principle of painterly creation," lamenting that on the stage it might be "eliminated to feign a three-dimensional reality."⁵⁵ Fuchs had vowed instead that "we will have to bring painting, as the true art of the graphically and coloristically lively surface, back to its place of honor

on the stage.”⁵⁶ Only by allowing the visual arts to express their true nature on the stage, in other words, would the emphasis on surfaces be allowed to take its rightful place at the theater.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of flatness was applied to discussions of subjectivity as much as to those of the visual arts. If painterly perspective, presenting the canvas as a window on to deep space, had reflected the presumptions of Humanism, discussions of flatness prepared the ground for a new spectator, a “post-humanist” subject for whom individuality was less significant than membership within a group.⁵⁷ Georg Simmel had referred to “the resistance of the individual to being levelled” in his 1903 essay “Metropolis and Mental Life,” but individualism soon lost its appeal for theorists of modern spectatorship.⁵⁸ From the abstract model of relief sculpture to the discussion of the mass audience in the 1920s—from Hildebrand and Riegl to Siegfried Kracauer and Bertolt Brecht—the ideals and contradictions of modernist vision surfaced, both formally and rhetorically, in the theory and practice of flatness. Along with other

⁵⁵ “Die Fläche, das Grundprinzip des malerischen Schaffens, soll ja gerade aufgehoben und dafür die dreidimensionale Wirklichkeit vorgespiegelt werden.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin: Schuster und Löffler, 1905), 56.

⁵⁶ “Ein größerer Hohn auf alle Grundbegriffe von Bild und bildmäßiger Wirkung kann gar nicht ausgedacht werden. — Wir werden die Malerei als echte Kunst der zeichnerisch und koloristisch belebten Fläche wieder auf der Bühne zu Ehren bringen müssen.” Ibid.

⁵⁷ On the posthumanist subject, see K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject: The Architecture of Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Hilberseimer* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1992), 6.

⁵⁸ Georg Simmel, “Metropolis and Mental Life,” in Donald Levine, ed., *On Individuality and Social Forms*, trans. Edward A. Shils (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 324. Shallow spectators were ideal for viewing the modernist painting, which, as Clement Greenberg would famously write in 1965, “oriented itself to flatness as it did to nothing else.” Greenberg, “Modernist Painting” (1965), in Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, eds., *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 6. “The history of avant-garde painting is that of a progressive surrender to the resistance of its medium; which resistance consists chiefly in the flat picture plane’s denial of efforts to ‘hole through’ it for realistic perspectival space,” Greenberg famously declared. “But most important of all, the picture plane itself grows shallower and shallower, flattening out and pressing together the fictive planes of depth until they meet as one upon the real and material plane which is the actual surface of the canvas, where they lie side by side. . . .” Greenberg, “Towards a Newer Laocoon” (1940), *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 558.

markers of visual abstraction, the flatness of the pictorial plane denoted an accessibility common to all viewers. The celebrated “untutored eye” to whom abstraction was deemed accessible in 1908, however, invariably belonged to a highly tutored European gentleman. Given his Nietzschean bent, Fuchs thus struggled with a conundrum: how to create an audience of Nietzschean individuals without rendering each one shallow, a duplicate of the next?

4. Empathy, from Hildebrand to Fuchs

In his essay on the Artists’ Theater in 1908, Hildebrand emphasized the importance of emotional inspiration in the spectator’s experience at the theater. Rather than encouraging passive enjoyment among the spectators, he explained, theater was to present “the purely dramatic point of view, from which the poet puts the audience into a state of compassion [*Mitleidenschaft*].”⁵⁹ Discussions of sympathy and compassion, as we have seen in chapter two, were closely allied with the discourse of empathy, which likewise conceived of spectatorship as the viewer’s active engagement with the art object. This spectatorial engagement was emotional and physical, as opposed to purely optical; both the work of art and the spectator were in a sense constituted by this process. The vision of spectatorship contained within the text of *The Problem of Form* implicitly encompassed the experience of empathy as it had been theorized by Conrad Fiedler, Robert Vischer,

⁵⁹ “. . . daß der rein dramatische Gesichtspunkt, von dem aus der Dichter den Zuhörer in Mitleidenschaft versetzt, ein ganz selbständiger ist, der mit dem Gesichtspunkt der bildenden Kunst nichts zu tun hat.” Adolf von Hildebrand, “Münchener Künstler-Theater,” 71.

and others, and as Hildebrand had encountered these theories through his association with Fiedler.⁶⁰

“Since we do not view nature simply as visual beings tied to a single vantage point but, rather, with all our senses at once, in perpetual change and motion, we live and weave a spatial consciousness into the nature that surrounds us,” Hildebrand asserted in *The Problem of Form*.⁶¹ Our awareness of space, he argued, was not only visual but also spatial, remaining strong “even when we close our eyes.” This conception of vision as embedded in the body, as a temporal and spatial experience of the viewer’s surroundings, derived from the theoretical elaborations of empathy, a process by means of which, he explained, “we are able to relate everything to ourselves and to infuse it with our own bodily feeling.”⁶² Hildebrand made the reference to empathy theory explicit in his book, relying on it for the authority of scientific proof: “There is a psychology of art,” he declared, “a clear feeling for the effect of such stimulated movement on our sensibility as a whole. Such effects determine whether or not we breathe freely, for our general sensations are related to the spatial imagination and supported by kinesthetic notions.”⁶³ This psychology of art would be most famously promulgated by the perceptual psychologist Theodor Lipps, who was to explain the achievements of empathy theory in the following way: “It is a basic fact of psychology and even more so of aesthetics that there was no such thing, nor could there be such thing, as a sensuously-given object.”⁶⁴ In

⁶⁰ For more on the relationship between Hildebrand’s arguments and those of the empathy theorists, see Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, Introduction to *Empathy, Form and Space*, 36-37.

⁶¹ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 239.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 261.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁶⁴ Theodor Lipps, “Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure” (1905), trans. Karl Aschenbrenner, in Aschenbrenner and Arnold Isenberg, eds., *Aesthetic Theories: Studies in the Philosophy of Art* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965), 407.

perceiving works of art, in other words, an object was constructed via subjective experience; as a viewer, Lipps wrote, “I permeate them and that is their essence.”⁶⁵ A normal object presented an opportunity for empathetic experience; a work of art offered “a very special sort of case” of empathy: access to complete spectatorial absorption.

Like much late nineteenth-century perceptual theory, empathy often relied on physiological models of vision which, as Jonathan Crary has written, presented the observer’s body as “the active producer of optical experience.”⁶⁶ Hildebrand, for example, greatly admired the work of Hermann von Helmholtz, who had published his three-volume *Treatise on Physiological Optics* between 1856 and 1866. As Hildebrand wrote to Fiedler in 1892, one year before publishing *The Problem of Form*, “what he says about the laws regarding the fine arts is completely in accordance with my thoughts . . . and proves the correctness of my work—[which] I’ve always thought . . . would find a good reader precisely in Helmholtz.”⁶⁷ For his part, Fiedler warned Hildebrand that same

⁶⁵ Ibid., 409.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990), 69. Crary traces the origins of this idea to Schopenhauer, who, he writes, “maps out, with startling explicitness, the embeddedness of aesthetic perception in the empirical edifice of the body.” Ibid., 83. This embeddedness was then described theoretically, as opposed to empirically, as empathy. In *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), Crary again describes “the relocation of perception . . . in the thickness of the body” in the mid-nineteenth century, but subsequently argues: “It was these physiological conceptions of attention that so much late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century aesthetic theory attempted to escape from, by posing various modalities of contemplation and vision that were radically cut from the processes and activities of the body. The whole neo-Kantian legacy of a disinterested aesthetic perception, from Konrad Fiedler . . . to more recent ‘formalisms,’ has been founded on the desire to escape from bodily time and its vagaries.” Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 46. But empathy theory—if that is indeed the aesthetic theory to which Crary refers—itself attempted to describe “the processes and activities of the body.” The escapism begins, I would argue, with Wilhelm Worringer’s publication of *Abstraction and Empathy* in 1908. Crary himself presents empathy (in passing, elliptically) as describing a normative model of vision: a viewer “constructed . . . to counter the claims of an antihumanist stimulus-response psychology or behaviorism.” Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 158. In fact, theories of empathy were deeply embedded in contemporaneous claims and arguments in the fields of psychology and physiology.

⁶⁷ “Was er über die Gesetze bezüglich der bildenden Kunst sagt, ist ganz meinen Gedanken entsprechend, wird wohl auf seinem Feld gewachsen sein und beweist die Richtigkeit meiner Arbeit—ich habe ja immer gedacht—daß sie gerade an Helmholtz einen guten Leser finden würde.” Hildebrand to Fiedler, July 24, 1892, repr. in Bernhard Sattler, ed., *Adolf von Hildebrand und seine Welt: Briefe und Erinnerungen*

year of the similarity between his ideas and those of Helmholtz. “If you were ever to publish your research,” he wrote, “people would be able to say in some instances that Helmholtz has already touched upon it.”⁶⁸ Hildebrand not only engaged with Helmholtz’s ideas but was also personally acquainted with him, and was responsible for several sculptural works for the Helmholtz family. In 1891, for example, he was asked to make a bust of Helmholtz, and described the commission “a beautiful opportunity to get closer to this man.”⁶⁹ In 1897, three years after the death of Helmholtz, Hildebrand designed the Helmholtz family grave site [figs. 5.12 and 5.13]

In his book *Revolution in the Theater*, Fuchs provided no explicit evidence of his interest in the theory of aesthetic empathy, but he wrote in general terms of such an experience. “A ‘work of art,’ ” he wrote, “only exists if and insofar as it produces such movement, so long as it is ‘experienced,’ ” Fuchs explained. “The ‘work of art’ is newly created every moment in which it is ‘experienced.’ ”⁷⁰ According to his explanation, the theatrical performance occurred within the body of the spectator; it was merely facilitated

(Munich: Georg D. W. Callwey, 1962), 384. Hildebrand refers to a talk Helmholtz had presented at the general meeting of the Goethe Society in Weimar on July 11, 1892, published in *Deutsche Rundschau* 72: 115-32 (See Sattler, 741 note 232). Fiedler describes his reservations about the Helmholtz essay in his reply to Hildebrand of August 6, 1892, reprinted in Sattler, 384-85. See also Mallgrave and Ikononou, introduction to *Empathy, Form and Space*, 36.

⁶⁸ “Es sind ja nur Andeutungen, aber wenn Du Deine Untersuchungen einmal veröffentlichst, so wird man bei einzelnen Punkten doch sagen können, daß Helmholtz das schon berührt habe.” Helmholtz to Hildebrand, 6 August 1892, reprinted in Sattler, ed., *Adolf von Hildebrand und Seine Welt*, 385.

⁶⁹ “Ein weiterer Auftrag, der mir sehr viel werth ist, ist die Büste von Helmholtz zu machen. Eine schöne Gelegenheit, diesem Mann näher zu kommen.” Hildebrand to Nikolaus Kleinenberg, February 11, 1891, reprinted in Sattler, ed., *Adolf von Hildebrand und Seine Welt*, 359. See also two letters on the subject from Hildebrand to Fiedler of April 9 and 16, 1891 and one from Helmholtz to Hildebrand of December 26, 1891 in *ibid.*, 362 and 374. The bust is now in the Academy of Sciences in Berlin.

⁷⁰ “Der Kunstwert beginnt und hört auf mit dieser Bewegung. Ein ‘Kunstwerk’ ist nur vorhanden, wenn und insoferne es eine solche Bewegung auslöst, solange es ‘erlebt’ wird. Das ‘Kunstwerk’ wird in jedem Augenblicke, in dem es ‘erlebt’ wird, neu geschaffen.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 58-59. And again: “The ‘work of art,’ the ‘art,’ the ‘beautiful,’ is neither object nor subject, but rather is *movement*; it is a movement that arises from the contact and the interpenetration of the ‘subject’ with the ‘object.’ ” “Das ‘Kunstwerk,’ die ‘Kunst,’ das ‘Schöne’ ist nicht Objekt und nicht Subjekt, sondern ist *Bewegung*, ist eine Bewegung, die aus der Berührung und Durchdringung des ‘Subjekts’ mit dem ‘Objekte’ entspringt.” *Ibid.*, 59 (italics original).

by such elements as actors, costumes, props, sets, and lighting. “There is a strange intoxication that overcomes us when we feel ourselves within a crowd, within a crowd uniformly moved,” Fuchs declared.⁷¹ A successful performance, he argued, brought the spectator to such a level of intoxication within a gathered audience and, in so doing, constructed a unified group from a collection of individuals. But “on the stage itself,” he argued, “this unity, this artistic effectiveness, does not exist—nothing at all of what the spectator goes through exists.”⁷² Successful drama was to provoke such emotional intensity within the audience; the more intense the dramatic experience, the more successful the performance. Fuchs described this potential experience explicitly in terms of the physical properties of the stage, justifying the reform of the physical structure of the performance area at the Artists’ Theater by arguing that the shallow stage intensified the spectator’s aesthetic experience.

Hildebrand’s description of the effect of the work of art on the spectator was easily reversed to describe how altering the form of a work of art would change the spectator’s emotional experience. “If we take into account,” Hildebrand explained, “that every effect depends on the arrangement and opposition of individual factors and receives its value and scope only through them, then we can begin to realize how much imaginative resonance is conveyed by every change in the apparent structure of the view.”⁷³ If the vision of the work of art could affect the spectator at the physical level, then by implication the manipulation of form could produce, or at least encourage, the spectator’s empathetic response. Theater provided an ideal forum for exploring such an

⁷¹ “Es gibt einen seltsamen Rausch, der uns überkommt, wenn wir uns als Menge, als einheitlich bewegte Menge fühlen.” Ibid., 4.

⁷² “Auf der Bühne selbst, existiert diese Einheit, diese Kunstwirkung, nicht, gar nichts von dem, was der Zuschauer durchlebt.” Ibid., 99.

understanding of the process of empathy. The notion of a physical response to architecture was made literal on the stage of the Artists' Theater, confined within the temporal limits of a performance and the controlled environment of art. While empathy theorists had not set out to discuss theater reform, their considerations of an altered perceptual model were readily adopted by Fuchs, who was searching to bolster a rejection of naturalism and justify the innovations at the Artists' Theater. In adopting Hildebrand's ideas to describe both the relief stage at the Theater and the audience that faced it, Fuchs helped to bring empathy theory into the discussion of the creation of architecture.⁷⁴

Fuchs in fact used the word "Einfühlung" on at least one occasion, in an unpublished typescript from the late 1930s; thus, while the level of his familiarity with the theory of empathy is uncertain, his awareness of the term can at least be established. In reference to the appointment of a new editor-in-chief at the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* fifteen years earlier (Fritz Gerlich, the former General Secretary of the German Democratic Party), he referred in passing to the need for the "most careful 'psychological empathy into the mentality of the masses and that of the cultivated public.'" ⁷⁵ The concept stands in quotation marks within this passage as if it were a known theoretical quantity. Here, however, empathy is not a form of spectatorship engaged in by an individual viewer, an active participation in the creation of the art

⁷³ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 247.

⁷⁴ Four years after the inauguration of the Artists' Theater, Max Krüger discussed the theory of aesthetic empathy in relation to the theater, referring explicitly to Riegl, Lipps, Schmarsow, and Worringer—but not to Fuchs. See Max Krüger, *Über Bühne und Bildende Kunst* (Munich: R. Piper, 1912), 20-26.

⁷⁵ "Das müsse mit äusserster Vorsicht und ganz unmerklich auf Umwegen geschehen, mit sorgsamster 'psychologischer Einfühlung in die Mentalität der Massen wie des gebildeten Publikums.' Damit rechtfertige er auch die Wahl Gerlich's zum Chef der Schriftleitung: gerade weil wir 'Masse' und 'Publikum' für eine 'Rechts-Politik' gewinnen wollen, gerade deshalb müssen wir zunächst möglichs [sic] demokratisch-linksgerichtet und sozialistisch auftreten, damit man uns nicht von vornherein als 'Reaktionäre' in Misskredit bringt." Georg Fuchs, *Zur Vorgeschichte der Nazionalsozialistischen*

object. Rather, it is a process of identification that is attempted in an effort at a psychologically based manipulation of the larger public. Such an understanding of empathy was widespread in the late 1930s, by which time it had come to represent the passive spectatorship engaged in by the mass audience, an uncritical and identificatory form of reception that lent itself to manipulation.

Chapter six: “Worringer and the Artists’ Theater, or: The Critique of Empathy”

Hildebrand’s endorsement of the Artists’ Theater in 1908 can hardly be considered surprising; the shallow, or “relief” stage was based, after all, on his own theories of sculptural relief, and his essay was easily absorbed into the promotional material associated with the Theater. By contrast, Worringer’s essay on the Theater that same year dismissed Fuchs’s efforts as merely “the latest product of the German art-problematic.”¹ Where Hildebrand had willingly accepted Fuchs’s literal enactment of his theories and wholeheartedly endorsed the relief stage, Worringer scorned the extremism of its productions and mocked the stringent denial of pleasure on the part of the theater reformers who, he wrote, “appeal with doctrinaire pathos to the logical creativity of the eye.”² The “salient point of the new program,” he maintained, was the belief that “instead of enjoying sensually, the eye should work logically.”³

Like the two protagonists of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Worringer disliked the shallow stage and flimsy architecture at the Artists’ Theater. While his essay reads like the grumblings of a curmudgeon, it amounts to far more than the biting remarks of a disgruntled theatergoer. Rather, it represents the reaction of a central figure in German culture in 1908 and one of the major theorists in the history of twentieth-century art, a reaction that must be considered against the backdrop of his conception of spectatorship

¹ “Die Neuerungen des Künstlertheaters, des letzten Produkts deutscher Kunst-Problematik. . . .” Wilhelm Worringer, “Das Münchener Künstlertheater,” *Die Neue Rundschau* 19 (July-December 1908): 1709.

² “Dafür appellieren sie mit doktrinären Pathos an die logische Schöpferkraft des Auges.” *Ibid.*

³ “Statt sinnlich zu genießen, soll das Auge logisch arbeiten.” *Ibid.*

at that moment. Several months before publishing his essay on the Artists' Theater, Worringer had been catapulted to fame in the art circles of Munich by the publication of his first book, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* [Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style], a treatise describing the fundamental human "urge to abstraction," or *Abstraktionsdrang*. The rejection of naturalism in favor of a stylized modernism on the stage of the Artists' Theater might appear to participate in the contemporaneous development of abstraction in the arts; Fuchs's innovations could well have been fortified by the theoretical distinction between naturalism and style that Worringer set out in his book. But while Worringer found the explanations for Fuchs's innovations perfectly logical, as a member of the audience he was unimpressed.

This chapter presents Worringer's negative response to Fuchs's Theater, setting it within the context of the contemporaneous critique of empathy theory. I will begin by presenting Worringer's 1908 essay on the Theater before exploring his account and manipulation of the concept of empathy in his book of that year. Worringer's arguments in *Abstraction and Empathy*, as I will elaborate, incorporated the ideas of Adolf von Hildebrand, Alois Riegl, and Theodor Lipps while, crucially, placing the notion of discomfort at the heart of the aesthetic process. Rather than simply denigrating the model of empathy and embracing that of abstraction, as I will show, Worringer artfully intertwined the two concepts, using as his central rhetorical model Nietzsche's distinction between Dionysian frenzy and Apollonian calm. Despite the considerable theoretical differences between them, both Fuchs and Worringer were working under the strong influence of Nietzsche.

While art and architectural historians composed psychologically motivated treatises on empathy, the emerging field of psychology likewise attended to the topic, treating the viewer, more than the work of art, as the object of analysis.⁴ The subject of empathy theory allowed aesthetic debate to pass from the realm of philosophy—written, on occasion, by artists or architects making forays into the theoretical end of their discipline—to that of psychology, complete with its reliance on inductive reasoning and experimentation. Psychological research naturally produced a different kind of information about empathy from that of philosophical aesthetics. By 1905, when Worringer began writing *Abstraction and Empathy*—initially his dissertation—the theory of aesthetic empathy was steeped in self-critique in both fields. To provide a wider context for Worringer’s arguments, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the critique of empathy from the field of experimental psychology and a treatment of the afterlife of empathy, which occurred in the form of distracted absorption. It is my contention that in basing his theater on Hildebrand’s theory of relief sculpture—and, by extension, that of aesthetic empathy—Fuchs relied on outdated ideas of spectatorship, ideas that Worringer had critiqued, powerfully and famously, that same year.

⁴ The birth of experimental psychology within the domain of philosophy is generally taken to be the establishment of Wilhelm Wundt’s laboratory in Leipzig in 1879. See Stuart Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17-38. On the role of empathy theory in the relationship between psychology and aesthetics, see John Fizer, *Psychologism and Psychoaesthetics: A Historical and Critical View of their Relations* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1981), 45-57.

1. Worringer's Response to the Artists' Theater

Worringer's essay "Das Münchener Künstlertheater," a general discussion of the Theater (as opposed to a review of particular productions) appeared in the highbrow cultural periodical *Die Neue Rundschau* in the autumn of 1908. Worringer had no positive words for the Theater, and allowed only that its limited achievements were the result of compromise, of the incomplete fulfillment of its own intentions. With extensive use of irony, he derided the Theater's overreliance on the tenets of visual theory as well as its overly literal appropriation of these theoretical ideas. Above all, he mocked the stringent denial of pleasure on the part of the theater reformers. Where the traditional theater ideally provided emotional and aesthetic pleasure, the Artists' Theater, in his view, was based on a principle of denial; its modernizations, he complained, "aim chiefly at rationalizing all the irrational elements currently found in the theater."⁵ Taken to a logical extreme, in other words, this rationalization would dismantle the institution of theater entirely. Despite Fuchs's belief that the development of the reform stage facilitated such emotional transport, in seeking to reform theater at its very essence, the Artists' Theater ultimately destroyed the theatrical experience.

"These reform stage Protestants," Worringer wrote, winking at his predominantly Catholic readership in Munich, "perceive it as an unworthy situation that the good old peep-box stage, with its . . . absurdities and contradictions, appeals so strongly to the

⁵ "Die Neuerungen des Künstlertheaters . . . zielen in der Hauptsache auf eine Rationalisierung jener irrationellen Elemente, die nun einmal mit dem Theater verbunden sind . . ." Wilhelm Worringer, "Das Münchener Künstlertheater," 1709.

sensuality of the eye.”⁶ Led by Fuchs, the reform theater attempted to eliminate the pleasures of the traditional theater, replacing them with a literal architecturalization of aesthetic theory and, in so doing, enforcing a “paralysis of fantasy” among the spectators. Throughout his essay, Worringer cleverly conflated Fuchs’s efforts at theater reform with the Protestant Reformation. Unadorned by traditional theatrical accoutrements, he wrote, the shallow relief stage reminded him of the “distraction-shunning sobriety of Protestant churches with their unbroken surfaces and naked walls, although this Puritan impression fortunately is somewhat tempered by the southern German color-joyousness of those Munich artists assigned to the decorative design of the stage.”⁷ Luckily, that is, joyful painters had brought pleasure into the Theater, tempering the drab starkness of the stage with color. While the term “decorative” might have been derisory in Munich artistic circles, Worringer welcomed such material on the stage of the Artists’ Theater. “While the choice of these artists indeed contradicts the principle” according to which the Theater operated, he stated, “one has cause to rejoice at the inconsistency.”⁸ The colorful sets they provided for the stage at least brightened the drab views of actors “gesticulating in an airless room.”⁹

⁶ “Da empfinden die Protestanten der Reformbühne es als einen unwürdigen Zustand, daß die gute alte Guckkastenbühne mit ihren . . . Lächerlichkeiten und Widersprüchen zu stark an die Sinnlichkeit des Auges appelliert.” Ibid.

⁷ “So herrscht also auf der Bühne die feierliche jede Ablenkung vermeidende Nüchternheit protestantischer Kirchen mit ihren ungebrochenen flächen und nackten Wänden wenn auch dieser puritanischer Eindruck glücklicherweise einigermaßen temperiert wird durch die süddeutsche Farbenfreudigkeit jener Münchener Künstler, die man mit der dekorativen Ausgestaltung des Bühnenbildes beauftragt hatte.” Ibid., 1710-11.

⁸ “Die Auswahl dieser Kunstler widerspricht zwar dem Prinzip, aber man hatte allen Grund sich über diese Inkonsequenz zu freuen.” Ibid, 1710.

⁹ “Es ist für ein empfindliches Gefühl so, als ob die Akteure in einem luftleeren Raume gestikulierten.” Ibid., 1709.

Worringer was particularly displeased with the Theater's most famous attribute, the relief stage. "It is only a few meters deep," he explained to his readers, "and is terminated by a straight vertical wall, its fresco background painting giving the necessary hints for the spectator's image of a room without any illusionistic intention."¹⁰ Such hints operated precisely in the manner that Hildebrand had delineated in *The Problem of Form* as the ideal aesthetic operation, exemplified by sculptural relief; they were intended to inspire the spectator to create the complete visual image of the work of art. For Worringer, however, productions at the Theater overly intellectualized what rightly ought to be a profoundly sensual experience, an experience of aesthetic pleasure. At the Artists' Theater, he wrote, the spectator "literally sits before a wall that . . . unmercifully directs back the gaze, with its depth-needing sensuality."¹¹ Craving spatial depth, the eye was cruelly confronted by the wall at the rear of the relief stage.

Particularly egregious, in Worringer's opinion, were the towers that flanked the stage, "neutral but assimilated to the architectural attitude of the rest of the theater and therefore stylized in a discreetly modern way."¹² By a neat coincidence, these side towers (which are visible in the photographs of *Twelfth Night* and *The Birds*) perfectly enact the theoretical distinction that Hildebrand had articulated in *The Problem of Form* between an object's *Daseinsform*, or inherent form, and its *Wirkungsform*, or effective form; where the former remained constant, the latter changed according to its context.

¹⁰ "Denn sie ist nur wenige Meter tief und wird gleich durch eine senkrechte Wand abgeschlossen, deren freskenartige Hintergrundmalerei ohne jede illusionistische Absicht die nötigen Andeutungen für die Raumvorstellungen des Zuschauers gibt." Ibid, 1710.

¹¹ "Man sitzt also buchstäblich vor einer Wand, die sich drohend vor einem aufrichtet und den Blick mit seiner der Tiefe bedürftigen Sinnlichkeit unbarmherzig zurückweist." Ibid.

Hildebrand had illustrated this distinction in his book with the following example: “The very same tower . . . that impresses us as being slender when it rises as an isolated object above the houses may suddenly become thick and clumsy when it is placed alongside slim factory smokestacks.”¹³ Altering such elements on the stage as sets and lighting would thus reshape the towers beyond recognition from scene to scene and from one production to the next.

But Worringer had no interest in such a theoretical argument. “It should be noted,” he grumbled, “that these modern, stylized towers remain the same in all plays and scenes.”¹⁴ Despite changes in lighting and scenery, this fact was unavoidable. “Again and again they emerge,” he wrote,

like two admonishing index fingers which ceaselessly refer the eye, used to the beautiful illusion of the old stage décor, to those theoretical explications of the program booklet that attempt to convince the baffled reader, on countless pages, of the deeper meaning of this meaninglessness and, in case of disbelief, to rub his backwardness energetically under his nose.¹⁵

For Worringer, the ideas promulgated by Hildebrand and Fuchs were pedantic and dull, overly theoretical, and thoroughly out of place at the theater. No amount of theoretical text in the program booklet could make up for the lack of theatricality on stage. The “admonishing index fingers” on stage operated, for him, like warning signs against an

¹² “Hinzu kommt, daß alle Seitenkulissen wegfallen und statt ihrer zwei zwar neutral gehaltene aber der architektonischen Haltung des übrigen Theaters doch angepaßte und deshalb diskret modern stilisierte Seitentürme, die durch eine Überbrückung verbunden sind, das Bühnenbild einrahmen.” Ibid.

¹³ Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 234.

¹⁴ “Wohlgemerkt, diese modern stilisierten Türme bleiben sich in allen Stücken und Szenen gleich.” Wilhelm Worringer, “Das Münchener Künstlertheater,” 1710.

¹⁵ “Immer wieder tauchen sie auf, gleichsam wie zwei mahndend erhobene Zeigefinger, die das an den schönen Trug der alten Bühnenausstattung gewohnte Auge unablässig auf jene theoretischen Darlegungen des Programmbuchs verweisen, die den verdutzten Leser auf vielen Seiten von dem tieferen Sinn dieser Sinnlosigkeit zu überzeugen versuchen und ihm im Nichtglaubensfalle seine Rückständigkeit energisch unter die Nase reiben.” Ibid.

overly intellectualized understanding of art. In this opinion he followed Richard Wagner, who, sixty years earlier, had likewise lamented the overreliance on theoretical ideas at the theater, deriding the performance that “sees itself compelled to the ignominious expedient of acquainting the spectators with its particular intention by means of an *explanatory programme!*”¹⁶

Worringer mocked Fuchs not only for his aims at the Artists’ Theater but also for his inability to fulfill them. The reformers, he wrote with patronizing mockery, “striving for the alleged golden mean between reason and instinct . . . are satisfied with compromise, and for now reform only the stage décor.”¹⁷ His inspection of the auditorium clearly failed to reveal Littmann’s adoption of an amphitheatrical seating arrangement. Fuchs’s self-proclaimed “revolution in the theater” was thus reduced to the level of a minor and misguided insurrection conceived by a hesitant group of reformers who were guided mostly by their own fears of sinful aesthetic pleasure. With baroque sentences that evoke the ornate architecture of Munich’s Catholic churches, Worringer allied himself even syntactically with pre-Reformation theatricality. The reformers’ disapproval of theatrical sin was presented as a fear of the irrational, of emotion, of creativity—as a fear of theater itself.

Such fear, according to Worringer, was manifested at the Artists’ Theater not only in a generally censorious attitude to cultural pleasures, but also in a devotion to the twin

¹⁶ Richard Wagner, “The Art-Work of the Future” (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1933), 109 (italics original).

¹⁷ “Die Konsequenz wäre ja allerdings, von diesem Standpunkt aus das Theater überhaupt zu verneinen, aber da man nur den angeblich goldnen Mittleweg zwischen seinem Verstande und seinen Instinkten sucht, begnügt man sich mit einem Kompromiß und reformiert einstweilen nur das Bühnenbild.” Wilhelm Worringer, “Das Münchener Künstlertheater,” 1709.

idols of visuality and logic. The relief stage presented an alliance of visual and cognitive truth, with the eye offered clues to be processed entirely according to the dictates of logic.

At the Artists' Theater, he wrote,

every attempt at illusionistic deception is stringently avoided. Only hints are given, and it is left to the eye to work these hints logically into a whole. It appears that, as a concession to the sensuality of the eye, this merely intimated stage décor is simultaneously formed into an artistic whole through a finely calculated distribution of colors and lines.¹⁸

All work and no pleasure, Worringer implied, made for a dull evening at the theater. The only successful elements at the Artists' Theater were those that had infiltrated despite the efforts of the stage reformers. The "artistic whole" that Worringer desired could happen only by accident.

His Catholic leanings notwithstanding, Worringer was no wholehearted defender of the traditional theater stage, which, he conceded, could easily confuse the eye. "While the stage design strives to create from a scenic arrangement of details an impression of depth," he wrote, "its perspectival layout is contradicted by the actor's consistent size in each position on stage."¹⁹ In other words, while the stage set remained immobile, an actor approaching the audience or receding from it existed only occasionally in proportion to the surrounding set; the spectator's spatial understanding was undermined by this continually shifting disparity. "It must be admitted," he wrote, that in the traditional

¹⁸ "Darum wird jeder illusionistische Täuschungsversuch krampfhaft vermieden. Nur Andeutungen werden dem Auge gegeben und ihm die Aufgabe überlassen, diese Andeutungen logisch zu einem Ganzen zu verarbeiten. Als Konzession an die Sinnlichkeit des Auges erscheint es, daß dieses nur angedeutete Bühnenbild gleichzeitig durch wohlberechnete Verteilung von Farben und Linien zu einem künstlerisch Ganzen abgestimmt wird." Ibid.

¹⁹ "Das nur logisch arbeitende Auge wird bei der konventionellen Bühne am meisten dadurch verletzt, daß die szenische Ausgestaltung des Bühnenbildes eine Tiefenwirkung erstrebt, mit deren perspektivischer Anlage die an jeder Stelle der Bühne gleichbleibende Größe der Akteure im Widerspruch steht." Ibid., 1710.

theater “this perspectival attempt to simulate depth is betrayed and destroyed again and again for the logical gaze by the actor, who steps back into the simulated stage depth but becomes no smaller.”²⁰ But if the correction of this flaw was “the great achievement of the relief stage,” it was so minor as to be almost irrelevant; it was “probably noticed only occasionally, by one of 500 spectators.”²¹ The advantages achieved at the Artists’ Theater were thus outweighed by the annoyance its productions provoked in the bulk of the audience—presumably the 499 spectators whose ocular logic failed to determine the visual inconsistency of actor and set.

Worringer was no more pleased with the situation of the actors than he was with the architecture of the stage. “Placed before a painted screen like silhouettes,” he wrote, these unfortunate people “lose all the dynamic possibilities of their art.”²² They were reduced to being mere objects, rendered lifeless and inert on stage by the stultifying emphasis on visual theory. Performing for the flat wall of spectators in the auditorium, they became almost mechanomorphic. But Worringer was uninterested in the possibilities of modernist abstraction on stage. Rather than embrace the developments on stage as those of the avant-garde, for example, he demonstrated his own absolute lack of interest in such work by deriding Fuchs’s ideas. Proceeding logically, he wrote with scorn, “one should therefore be consistent and work with marionettes or even just silhouettes,” as if

²⁰ “Dieser perspektivische Tiefentäuschungsversuch wird, das muß zugegeben werden, für den logisch eingestellten Blick immer wieder verraten und zerstört durch den in die vorgespiegelte Bühnentiefe zurücktretenden aber nicht kleiner werdenden Schauspieler.” Ibid.

²¹ “Das ist nun die große Tat der Reliefbühne, daß sie mit diesem unleidlichen Mißstand, der von fünfhundert Zuschauern wohl nur einem dann und wann mal zu Bewußtsein kommt, gründlich bricht.” Ibid..

²² “Als Schattenrisse vor eine bemalte Leinwand gestellt, büßen sie alle dynamischen Möglichkeiten ihrer Kunst ein.” Ibid. “In brief,” Worringer declared, “on the relief stage, the actor’s physicality seems in bad

such objects operated below the exalted realm of the true art of theater. “For, as it is, the contradiction between the actor’s style and the style of the scenic arrangement is intolerable.”²³

At the conclusion of his essay, Worringer returned to the extended metaphors of the Catholic religion. “After one has seen the Artists’ Theater,” he declared, “one begs forgiveness of the old theater that one has so heartily slandered. One grows fond of it anew and becomes attached to it, with every *predilection d’artiste* with which one loves Catholicism.”²⁴ The spectator’s experience at the Artists’ Theater, in other words, led Worringer to repent for his earlier cultural sin: that of complaining about the state of the theater. Unable to tolerate Fuchs’s theatrical modernism, Worringer declared reform entirely irrelevant and unnecessary. “The much discussed problem of the theater,” he wrote, was in fact “ridiculously simple. How strange—faced with the stage décor reform of the Artists’ Theater it hits you like a revelation: put good actors on the stage and the problem of the theater is solved.”²⁵

Worringer’s disdain for the relief stage sprang from many sources, only one of which was his own visual boredom. Fuchs had relied too heavily on the theoretical arguments of the visual arts in order to develop his reform theater; in the process he had

taste. He is too illusionistic for it.” “Kurz: auf der Reliefbühne wirkt der Schauspieler mit seiner Körperlichkeit stillos. Er ist für sie zu illusionistisch.” Ibid.

²³ “Man sollte deshalb konsequent sein und mit Marionetten oder sogar bloßen Schattenrissen arbeiten. Denn so wirkt der Widerspruch zwischen dem Stil des Schauspielers und dem Stil der szenistischen Ausgestaltung unerträglich.” Ibid.

²⁴ “Nachdem man das Künstlertheater gesehen, bittet man der alten Bühne, an der man so herzhaft gelästert, vieles ab. Man gewinnt sie von neuem lieb und hängt an ihr mit jener *predilection d’artiste*, mit der man den Katholizismus liebt.” Ibid., 1711.

²⁵ “Und das vielberedete Problem des Theaters erscheint einem plötzlich lächerlich einfach. Sonderbar: vor der Bühnenbildreform des Künstlertheaters fällt es einem wie Offenbarung ein: stellt gute Schauspieler auf

bored his spectators with an overabundance of explications. Additionally, his reliance on a discussion of Greek sculptural relief and on the visual theory that supported this particular form of art was too literal; it assumed that sculpture, architecture, and theater provided interchangeable visual experiences. Perhaps most egregiously, Fuchs had made use of an outmoded theoretical discourse in order to justify the construction of the stage of the Artists' Theater. He had relied on Hildebrand's ideas, in other words, precisely when Worringer himself had already begun to advocate abstraction and when Munich artists were beginning to explore this newly theorized artistic urge. But to claim that Fuchs should have presented the shallow stage at the Artists' Theater as a site of abstraction—that he should have made use of Worringer's theoretical writings instead of those of Hildebrand—is not entirely fair. Fuchs was not aiming to locate the aesthetic discourse most appropriate for promoting the shallow stage. He had become interested in developing the theoretical possibilities of sculptural relief for use on the theater stage while working in Darmstadt with Peter Behrens, and Hildebrand's arguments, however out of step they were in 1908 with some members of the Munich art world, had encouraged this interest.

2. **Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy***

Worringer's status as one of the most important art theorists of the twentieth century rests almost exclusively on *Abstraction and Empathy*, which was embraced as the aesthetic

die Bühne und das Problem des Theaters ist gelöst." Ibid. In fact, the actors performing on the stage of the Artists' Theater in its first season were from the court theater of Munich.

theory for the new century even before its professional publication in Munich in 1908 and was reprinted frequently in the following decades. As the literary historian Neil Donahue has written, it was “read by painters and art critics, poets and novelists, in Germany and abroad, as well as by literary and social theorists, and even early critics of film, as well as psychologists.”²⁶ Turning from the artistic naturalism of their predecessors, artists and writers in particular welcomed its confident polemical account of the twin artistic urges of abstraction and empathy, an account that appeared not only to rework the ponderous foundations of German aesthetics but also to endorse their own artistic leanings. “It’s certainly very welcome that [he] has undertaken to portray and to develop further the basic principles of [Riegl’s] view of art,” the critic Egon Friedell wrote in 1920, for example, for Riegl’s work was important, but “not in the least accessible,” and Worringer helped the reader to navigate “the oppressive fullness of purely archeological detail . . . to get at the genial thoughts at the core.”²⁷

Yet *Abstraction and Empathy* retains the curious invisibility often suffered by monuments, particularly within the discipline of art history; it is generally—and reductively—considered a primer for a concept of abstraction that is taken as strictly antithetical to a notion of empathy.²⁸ Analysis of the book has been particularly

²⁶ Neil H. Donahue, “Introduction: Art History or ‘Sublime Hysteria?’,” in Donahue, ed., *Invisible Cathedrals: The Expressionist Art History of Wilhelm Worringer* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1995), 1.

²⁷ Egon Friedell, “Der Sinn des Expressionismus,” in *Neues Wiener Journal*, 25 June 1920; quoted in Neil H. Donahue, *Forms of Disruption: Abstraction in Modern German Prose* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 32, note 10.

²⁸ “Certainly all of Worringer’s own work was informed by the inadequately theorized tendency, first, to favor ‘abstraction’ . . . and, second, to disparage ‘empathy,’ in spite of his occasional disclaimers to the contrary,” Geoffrey C. W. Waite has written, for example, before confiding that “one really does suspect that there is something more than slightly mad about his writing.” Waite, “After Worringerian Virtual

constrained by a widespread unfamiliarity among art historians with the development of empathy, a theory of spectatorship that Worringer presented only in shorthand within its pages. Often relying on tautology rather than proof, it freely alternates between pseudohistorical explanation and essentialist argument, usually conflating its three central characters: spectator, artist, and historian. Its tendency toward rhetorical simplification has furthered its fame but obscured its significance.

Scholarly reception of the book has also been complicated by its author's political circumstances. From 1928 until the end of 1944, through the rise of National Socialism and the duration of World War Two, Worringer held an appointment as chair of modern art history at the Albertus University, Königsberg. When the city became Kaliningrad and reverted to the Soviet Union after the War, he moved to East Germany and taught at the University of Halle until 1950, when he left for Munich, and retirement, as a political refugee.²⁹ Unlike, for example, Erwin Panofsky and Aby Warburg, in other words, Worringer entered Anglophone criticism not by force, but indirectly, mostly through the writings of Joseph Frank and T. E. Hulme; his absorption into art historiography was primarily accomplished by Rudolf Arnheim and Herbert Read.³⁰ *Abstraction and*

Reality: Videodromes and Cinema 3, MassCult and CyberWar," in Donahue, ed., *Invisible Cathedrals*, 166.

²⁹ In an obituary of Worringer, Herbert Read wrote more sympathetically that in Königsberg Worringer "survived as in a besieged fortress, fighting with every word against the hated enemy. . . . But in the end he had to flee." See Read, "Wilhelm Worringer," in *Encounter*, vol. 25, no. 5 (1965): 58. Documents pertaining to Worringer's departure from the University at Halle are found in the Worringer papers, Fine Arts Archive, Germanisches Museum, Nuremberg, folder ZR ABK 146: 5 and 15-17.

³⁰ See Rudolf Arnheim, "Wilhelm Worringer on Abstraction and Empathy," in *New Essays in the Psychology of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 50-62; Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Literature" (1945), in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 3-62; T. E. Hulme, *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art* (London: Kegan Paul, 1936), 82-91; and Herbert Read, *Art and Alienation: The Role of the Artist in Society* (New York: Horizon, 1967), 127-28 and 142. In 1927, Read published his translation of Worringer's *Formprobleme der Gothik*, which appeared in German in 1911. For more on Worringer's

Empathy appeared in English (in an unsatisfactory translation) only in 1953; until 1996 it had been out of print in German for two decades and in English for three.³¹

Worringer began the first chapter of *Abstraction and Empathy* as if contributing with boundless respect to an unassailable theory. “Modern aesthetics,” he declared, “culminates in a theory that can be described with a general and broad name as the doctrine of empathy.”³² Following the requirements for the doctorate in his day, Worringer published a few copies of his dissertation and distributed them to potentially sympathetic acquaintances. One recipient was the writer Paul Ernst who, unaware the book had not been published professionally, reviewed it in the journal *Kunst und Künstler*. “The little book deserves to be closely heeded,” he declared; “it contains nothing less than a program for a new aesthetics.”³³ Providing both a synopsis of the book’s argument and an insightful assessment of its significance, Ernst’s review sparked enough interest to cause the professional publication of *Abstraction and Empathy* the following year.

reception, see Geoffrey C. W. Waite, “Worringer’s *Abstraction and Empathy*: Remarks on Its Reception and on the Rhetoric of Criticism,” in Neil H. Donahue, ed., *Invisible Cathedrals*, 13-41.

³¹ For the English version of the book, see Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock and with an introduction by Hilton Kramer (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997). The translation offers “they were so intercaleted” for *sie gingen so ineinander über* and “pellucid” for *klar, schön*. Perhaps most egregiously, on page 56 “*linear-anorganisch*” becomes “linear-organic.”

³² “Die moderne Ästhetik, die den entscheidenden Schritt vom ästhetischen Objektivismus zum ästhetischen Subjektivismus gemacht hat . . . gipfelt in einer Theorie, die man mit einem allgemeinen und weiten Namen als Einfühlungslehre bezeichnen kann.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* (Amsterdam: Verlag der Kunst, 1996), 36. Worringer’s remark follows that of Theodor Lipps, who in 1905 had labeled empathy the “basic idea of present-day aesthetics.” Lipps, “Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure,” trans. Karl Aschenbrenner, in Aschenbrenner and Arnold Isenberg, eds., *Aesthetic Theories: Studies in the Philosophy of Art* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965), 403.

³³ “Das kleine Buch verdient sehr beachtet zu werden. Es enthält nichts weniger als ein Programm neuer Ästhetik” Paul Ernst, review of *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* in *Kunst und Künstler* 6 (September, 1908): 529. Worringer refers to “the poet Paul Ernst” in the foreword to the 1948 edition of his book; Karl

A poet, dramatist, and dramatic theorist, Ernst was a central figure in the classic revival in German literature at the beginning of the last century—a neoclassicism that, according to the theater historian Marvin Carlson, “grew from the same roots as the sociological writings of [Georg] Simmel.”³⁴ It entailed a rejection of the theatrical naturalism which Ernst himself had embraced in the 1880s, but which no longer appeared to him politically efficacious. While he believed that political action alone was not enough to combat the alienation of modern life, he was also disillusioned with the artistic movement of naturalism, which had come to represent social and political complacency. In such essays as “Die Möglichkeit der klassischen Tragödie” [The Possibility of Classical Tragedy] of 1904, he advocated instead the presentation of traditional dramas to provide models of engagement—moral and social, if not always overtly political—for the audience. As Carlson has written, “In these bleak conditions, if the drama were to serve as a way of keeping alive a vision of man that was not yet politically realizable, the drama must return to the aristocratic hero, who could preserve this ideal until the masses were able to share it.”³⁵

Thus, in reviewing *Abstraction and Empathy* in 1908, Ernst was receptive to its turn away from naturalism and its attempt to theorize the prevalent condition of modern

Scheffler mentions “the dramatist Paul Ernst, who may be described as the leader of the neoclassical school in Germany.” See Scheffler, “Bühnenkunst,” *Kunst und Künstler* V (March 1907): 222.

³⁴ Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, 331. Carlson also describes an 1890 letter from Friedrich Engels to Ernst in which “Engels takes Ernst to task for a simplistic pigeon-holing of Ibsen and for an assumption that class structures in contemporary Germany and Scandinavia are identical.” *Ibid.*, 256.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 332. Carlson’s treatment of Ernst’s ideas follows a discussion of the contemporaneous theater theory of Georg Lukács, who wrote on Ernst, and who likewise emerged from the context of Simmel’s sociological thought. See Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, 328-31. According to Richard Sheppard, “Lukács had a long-standing friendship with Paul Ernst . . . until the latter’s flirtation with the Nazis.” See Sheppard, “Georg Lukács, Wilhelm Worringer, and German Expressionism,” *Journal of European Studies* XXV (1995): 282, note 2.

alienation. “For a long time in our art as well as in our art appreciation we have remained under the influence of Greek antiquity and the Renaissance,” Ernst wrote in summary of the book. “But there are people and ages who had completely different artistic feelings and expressed these in their works. As a rule, we interpret these today as achievements of a deficient ability, when in reality they are the achievements of a differently directed will [*Wollen*].”³⁶ For Worringer as for Riegl before him, artistic will, not ability—the *Kunstwollen*, not the *Kunstkönnen*—determined the creation of a work of art.³⁷ Borrowing a rhetorical model from *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which Nietzsche had divided Greek art into the duality of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses, Worringer posited empathy and abstraction as two creative urges that, between them, constituted the *Kunstwollen* and governed all forms of artistic creativity. His argument overthrew the tyranny of ancient Greece and of the Renaissance, while remaining under the influence of Nietzsche.³⁸

By his own account, Worringer’s source for empathy theory was an essay entitled “Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure” that had been published in 1905 by Theodor Lipps, a central figure in the attempt to furnish a scientifically based aesthetics by means of a

³⁶ “Wir stehen seit langem, in unserer Kunst sowohl wie in unserer Kunstbetrachtung, unter dem Einflusse der griechischen Antike und der Renaissance; es giebt aber Völker und Zeiten, die ien ganz anderes Kunstempfinden hatten und dieses in ihren Werken ausdrückten. Diese fassen wir heute in der Regel als Leistungen eines mangelhaften Könnens auf, während es in Wirklichkeit Leistungen eines anders gerichteten Wollens sind.” Paul Ernst, review of *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 529.

³⁷ Somewhat disingenuously (and again following Riegl), Worringer presents the *Kunstwollen* as Riegl’s critique of misguided Semperians, but not of Semper himself (see Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 42). Riegl had argued fifteen years earlier: “Technical factors surely played a role as well . . . but it was by no means the leading role that the supporters of the technical materialist theory of origin assumed. The impetus did not arise from the technique but from the particular artistic impulse.” Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament* (1893), trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 30.

³⁸ The reference here is to E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry over the Great German Writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935). One might argue that with *Problems of Style* Riegl had offered a theoretical justification of Jugendstil ornament, while still allowing for the tyranny of Greece.

discussion of empathy. Owing to its “clear and comprehensive formulation,” Worringer wrote, Lipps’s essay could “serve pars pro toto as a foil” for his own arguments.³⁹ Ignoring Lipps’s major works (as well as three decades of aesthetic debate on the topic), Worringer offered a version of empathy theory condensed into a single sentence. “Aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment,” Lipps had written in 1905; the experience of empathy was simply a pleasurable sensation rendered in the form of an object.⁴⁰ Appearing initially as a straightforward formula to convey the theory of empathy, the sentence appeared subsequently four times in Worringer’s first chapter, each time to slightly different effect. By its fifth and final appearance, Worringer had dislodged empathy from its theoretical pedestal and set a complementary theory of abstraction beside it. Perhaps more significantly, I will argue, he had placed discomfort at the heart of the aesthetic experience.

After a summary of empathy theory that reads as an endorsement, Worringer repeated Lipps’s words. Immediately, however, he announced that his book’s very purpose was to demonstrate that “with this theory of empathy, we stand helpless in the

³⁹ “Eine klare und umfassende Formulierung hat diese Theorie durch Theodor Lipps gefunden. Sein ästhetisches System soll darum als pars pro toto zur Folie der folgenden Ausführungen dienen.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 36. See Lipps, “Einfühlung und Ästhetischer Genuß,” *Die Zukunft*, vol. LIV (1905).

⁴⁰ “Ästhetischer Genuß ist objectiver Selbstgenuß.” Theodor Lipps, as quoted in Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 37. The bibliography of Worringer’s dissertation also includes Lipps, *Asthetik*, vols. I and II (1903 and 1906). See Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Neuwied: Heuser’sche Verlags-Druckerei, 1907), 117, in Special Collections, Getty Research Institute. Worringer’s main source for empathy theory was Paul Stern, *Einfühlung und Association in der neueren Ästhetik: Ein Beitrag zur Psychologischen Analyse der ästhetischen Anschauung* (Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1898). See Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Amsterdam: Verlag der Kunst, 1996), 170, note 2. Further references are to this edition of the text. On Worringer’s productive misreading of Lipps, see also Geoffrey Waite, “Worringer’s Abstraction and Reality,” 23-28.

face of the artistic creations of many ages and peoples.”⁴¹ Empathy, that is, operated as the theoretical basis for the naturalist art of ancient Greece and the Renaissance, and reflected a sense of comfort with the environment on the part of both artist and viewer, a happy and wholesome relation to the outside world that had encouraged artistic naturalism. Earlier theorists had not recognized that, while empathy described the *Kunstwollen* of particular ages and places, it could not be universally applied. According to Worringer, the art of other cultures was based on the urge to abstraction, which governed style, or stylized representation. The impulse toward abstraction, Worringer argued, conflated a basic artistic urge on the part of primitive cultures and the modern theories produced by the most advanced intellects of western Europe. Stating that “with primitive peoples, as it were, the instinct for the ‘thing in itself’ is at its strongest,” he posited a primitive man who was Kantian by nature. “What was once instinct,” he asserted, “is now the ultimate product of knowledge.”⁴²

The third appearance of Lipps’s formula in *Abstraction and Empathy* indicated neither agreement nor dissent. “What modern man calls beauty,” Worringer wrote, “is a satisfaction of that inner need for self-affirmation that Lipps sees as the prerequisite of the empathy process. In the forms of a work of art, we enjoy ourselves. Aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment.”⁴³ According to this description, a beautiful object was, in effect, created by the modern spectator’s experience of it. The spectator did not simply

⁴¹ “Vielmehr stehen wir mit dieser Einfühlungstheorie den künstlerischen Schöpfungen vieler Zeiten und Völker gegenüber hilflos da.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 40.

⁴² “. . . bei dem primitiven Menschen ist gleichsam der Instinkt für das ‘Ding an sich’ am stärksten. . . . Was vorher Instinkt war, ist nun letztes Erkenntnisprodukt.” Ibid., 52.

⁴³ “. . . was der moderne mensch als Schönheit bezeichnet, ist eine Befriedigung jenes inneren Selbstbetätigungsbedürfnisses, in dem Lipps die Voraussetzung des Einfühlungsprozess sieht. Wir

respond with pleasure, in other words, but rather made use of the object as a repository for the emotions it inspires, reconceiving his enjoyable experience of self-affirmation as if it were located within the object. The viewer, in this scenario, found psychic repose in the activity of aesthetic contemplation.

For Worringer, however, aesthetic activity did not necessarily entail comfort. He first suggested as much with a passing reference to Lipps's distinction between positive and negative empathy, or between a sense of freedom and one of reluctance felt in the face of the work of art.⁴⁴ But the term "negative empathy" did not sufficiently articulate the emotional unease that Worringer wished to discuss. Such an emotion could be felt, he believed, not only in the contemplation of a work of art, but also as a general existential condition. Perhaps the true flaw of empathy theory, beyond its unsuitability for describing the creation and reception of some works of art, was its failure to account properly for discomfort; what he termed the urge to abstraction may thus be seen as an attempt to theorize this fundamental, universal condition. This urge not only led the artist to create abstracted images, but also led the viewer to contemplate abstract art. For both of these individuals, Worringer declared, abstraction was "the consummate . . . expression of emancipation from the chance and temporality of the world picture."⁴⁵

The inspiration of Simmel was evident in Worringer's decree that one could trace "all aesthetic enjoyment, and perhaps the entire human sensation of happiness generally,

genießen in den Formen eines Kunstwekes uns selbst. Ästhetischer Genuß ist objektivierter Selbstgenuß." Ibid., 48.

⁴⁴ See Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 39.

⁴⁵ "Sie ist der vollendete und dem Menschen einzig denkbare Ausdruck der Emanzipation von aller Zufälligkeit und Zeitlichkeit der Weltbildes." Ibid., 81.

in its deepest and ultimate essence, to the impulse of self-estrangement.”⁴⁶ Worringer had in fact attended two of Simmel’s lectures as a student in Berlin; he later conferred a deeply symbolic status on these occasions. In a foreword to the 1948 edition of *Abstraction and Empathy*, he famously wrote of an encounter with Simmel outside the classroom. As an art history student wandering through the galleries of the Trocadéro Museum in Paris one morning, Worringer saw Simmel from a distance, briefly sharing the space of the museum with the famous professor. Later that day, he reported, he conceived of his dissertation topic. Worringer described the encounter with reverence, as something simultaneously evanescent and deeply significant: “a connection of mere atmospheric presence with Simmel.”⁴⁷ While clearly no guarantee of biographical fact, the story reveals Worringer’s desire to align his ideas in *Abstraction and Empathy* with those of Simmel.

Within his book, Worringer set the twin urges of empathy and abstraction parallel to the concepts of naturalism and style, associating empathy with naturalist depiction. In so doing, he ensured that his discussion of the naturalist art of ancient Greece and the Renaissance would simultaneously situate his argument within recent developments in Munich culture. Two decades earlier, naturalism had referred to the most radical artistic

⁴⁶ “Es kann also in diesem Sinne nicht zu kühn erscheinen, alles ästhetische Genießen, wie vielleicht sogar alles menschliche Glücksempfinden überhaupt, auf den Selbstentäußerungstrieb als sein tiefstes und letztes Wesen zurückzuführen.” Ibid., 60. I have translated *Entäusserung* as “estrangement,” not “alienation,” in order to distinguish it from Marx’s concept of alienation, or *Entfremdung*. I hope with this word to evoke *Verfremdung*, Bertolt Brecht’s later neologism for estrangement.

⁴⁷ “. . . eine bloß gegenwartsatmosphärische Verbindung mit Simmel.” Wilhelm Worringer, foreword to the 1948 edition of *Abstraction and Empathy*, in *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 10. “Ein stimmungslos grauer Vormittag. Das Museum völlig menschenleer. . . . Da . . . eint Unterbrechung! Im Hintergrund öffnet sich eine Tür und läßt zwei weitere Besucher ein. Beim nähertreten welche Überraschung: ich kenne sogar den einen von ihnen! Es ist der Berliner Philosoph Georg Simmel.” Ibid., 9. For a description of this

creations in that city, but by the early twentieth century, artists and art theorists, like writers and dramatists, considered it outmoded.⁴⁸ Primarily in drama, but in other areas as well, naturalism had come to stand for an obsessive imitation of reality and the abandonment of true creativity. Rather than denigrating the mimetic capacities of naturalist art, however, Worringer presented naturalism as historical, not theoretical—as a tendency in art that, in 1908, was on the wane. He thus distinguished it from imitation, which (like the urge to abstraction) existed in every era and among all cultures. “The drive to imitation, this elemental human need, stands outside aesthetics proper,” he argued; “in principle its satisfaction has nothing to do with art.”⁴⁹

Despite Worringer’s efforts to distinguish naturalism and imitation, the two were clearly linked in artistic discourse; artists and designers engaged in the rejection of the former had for years been disparaging the latter. In 1900, Peter Behrens had written, for example: “It’s not difficult for a man with a *talent for imitation* to put on a mask and represent a well observed character; even if not everyone can do this, it still is not necessarily *art*.”⁵⁰ True art required a level of creativity beyond the simple craft of imitation. At least theoretically, the sinuous Jugendstil tendrils that Behrens himself was

tale as “empathetic discourse in the crudest sense,” see Geoffrey C. W. Waite, “Worringer’s *Abstraction and Empathy*,” 30.

⁴⁸ On the Naturalist movement in Munich at the end of the nineteenth century and its demise two decades later, see Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 26-52. Theater historian Harold B. Segal has described the “disenchantment with language and the growing appeal of nonverbal expression” in the century’s early decades, a tendency epitomized in literature, according to Segal, in the work of Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Segal, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 32.

⁴⁹ “Hier ist es notwendig, sich darüber zu einigen, daß der Nachahmungstrieb, dieses elementare Bedürfnis des Menschen, außerhalb der eigentlichen Ästhetik steht und daß seine Befriedigung prinzipiell nichts mit der Kunst zu tun hat.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 44.

designing at the turn of the century did not reproduce plant forms but, rather, expressed in abstract visual terms the force of vegetal growth. And by 1908, Behrens had abandoned his Jugendstil roots. “We have in the fine arts as in poetry reached the outermost point of Naturalism,” Paul Ernst explained in his review of *Abstraction and Empathy*; “the pendulum will now swing to the other side, and it is Worringer’s achievement to have explained this process historically and philosophically.”⁵¹

Where empathy theory had treated the viewer’s response to all genres of art, from painting and sculpture to architecture, Worringer’s book focused, with the theory of abstraction, on two-dimensional creations. “Space is . . . the greatest enemy of all efforts at abstraction,” he explained, “and must therefore be the first thing to be suppressed in the representation.”⁵² This antagonism to space had long lurked in German aesthetic theory; as we have seen, Riegl himself had described the history of world art as a grand trajectory from three-dimensional objects to two-dimensional representations. “If we ignore concrete examples for a moment and try in a purely deductive way to reason out abstractly which of them came first in the development,” he had claimed, “then we will find ourselves forced a priori . . . to conclude that three-dimensional sculpture is the

⁵⁰ Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst, eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultur-Symboles* (Leipzig: Diederichs, 1900), 22 (emphasis added).

⁵¹ “Wir haben in den bildenden Künsten sowohl, wie in der Dichtung den äussersten Punkt des Naturalismus erreicht; der Pendel wird jetzt nach der andern Seite schlagen und es ist das Verdienst der Worringerschen Arbeit, diesen Vorgang historisch-philosophisch erklärt zu haben.” Paul Ernst, review of *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 529.

⁵² “So ist der Raum also der größte Feind alles abstrahierenden Bemühens, und er mußte also in erster Linie in der Darstellung unterdrückt werden.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 75-76. His words foreshadow those of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried half a century later, an association that may explain how *Abstraction and Empathy* has become a bible of formalist visual theory. Introducing the reissued English edition in 1997, Hilton Kramer presents Worringer as a proto-Greenbergian: “what remains central to *Abstraction and Empathy* is the essential distinction it makes between art that takes pleasure in creating some recognizable simulacrum of three-dimensional space . . . and art that suppresses

earlier, more primitive medium, while surface decoration is the later and more refined.”⁵³

Carefully avoiding the archaeological detail that made *Problems of Style* so intimidating, Worringer reproduced Riegl’s claims using psychological arguments.

“The urge to abstraction stands at the beginning of every art and remains the governing urge for certain peoples at higher cultural levels,” Worringer famously declared.⁵⁴ Like the rhetorical primitive Kantian, abstraction was both a fundamental urge and the result of a highly developed culture; like discomfort, it was universal, pervading all eras and cultures. It appeared in the form of the flat style of Egyptian ornament, and could therefore help contemporary European spectators understand the art of the Egyptians (a people existing, in his writing, only in the past tense).⁵⁵ Worringer’s claims encouraged such Munich artists as Vassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, as well as other future members of the *Blaue Reiter*, to investigate painterly abstraction. Indeed, Kandinsky’s advocacy in 1911 of “the rejection of the third dimension, that is to say, the attempt to keep the picture on a single plane,” evoked the ideas of *Abstraction and Empathy*.⁵⁶ As one critic wrote on the occasion of Worringer’s seventieth birthday, there

that spatial illusion in favor of something flatter, more constricted and abstract.” Kramer, introduction to *Abstraction and Empathy*, ix.

⁵³ Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 14.

⁵⁴ “Der Abstraktionsdrang steht also am Anfang jeder Kunst und bleibt bei gewissen auf hoher Kulturstufe stehenden Völkern der herrschende. . . .” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 49.

⁵⁵ Here again, Worringer followed Riegl, for whom Egyptian vegetal ornament epitomized abstraction. See Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 51-83. For a discussion of the symbolic value of Egyptian art in the work of Riegl and Worringer in relation to early silent film, see Antonia Lant, “Haptical Cinema,” *October* 74 (Fall 1995), 45-73.

⁵⁶ Vasilii Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. M. T. H. Sadler, trans. (1911, repr. New York: Dover, 1977), 44. “The more abstract form is, the more clear and direct its appeal,” Kandinsky wrote. “The more an artist uses these abstract forms, the deeper and more confidently will he advance into the kingdom of the abstract. And after him will follow the viewer . . . , who will also have gradually acquired a greater familiarity with the language of that kingdom.” *Ibid.*, 32.

existed “hardly a single member of the avant-garde of modern art who was not deeply excited by this book.”⁵⁷

According to Worringer, “the urge to abstraction is the result of man’s great inner unease, caused by the phenomena of the outside world.”⁵⁸ Artists and viewers were led to create, or seek out, images of abstract purity, approximations of visual planarity that soothed both eye and soul—that affected the spectator’s body, in other words, in a process reminiscent of empathy. Worringer described the psychic unease that governed abstraction as “a tremendous spiritual aversion to space [*geistige Raumscheu*],” likening it to “physical agoraphobia [*körperlicher Platzangst*].”⁵⁹ This “primitive fear” persisted in the modern era among those “people of oriental cultures [*Kulturvölker*]” that had resisted civilizing influences.⁶⁰ Enjoying simultaneously an aura of artistic originality and a certain privilege of otherness, the urge to abstraction was both the ultimate achievement of advanced civilization and a basic human urge. In a classic primitivist configuration, abstraction was exotic and foreign as well as the most basic and natural form of creativity. While cautioning against generalizing about primitive people on the grounds

⁵⁷ “Klee, Marc, Kandinsky, Hoelzel—, kaum einer aus der Avantgarde der modernen Kunst, der nicht durch dieses Buch auf tiefst erregt wurde.” Werner Haftman, “Gruß an Wilhelm Worringer,” *Der Neue Zeitung*, 9 January 1951. Worringer papers, folder 3R ABK 146: 278. “We have known each other since the beginnings of the postimpressionist development of art,” Gabriele Münter wrote Worringer, a development “for which you prepared the intellectual ground. I still have from those early years the original copy of your book *Abstraction and Empathy*, which had at the time such a profound effect.” Münter to Worringer, 13 January 1951, Worringer papers, folder ZR ABK 146: 377-80. According to Peg Weiss, however, Kandinsky was “not likely to have seen the book [*Abstraction and Empathy*] in any case before 1909, when his own ideas . . . were already well formulated.” See Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 159.

⁵⁸ “. . . ist der Abstraktionsdrang die Folge einer großen inneren Beunruhigung des Menschen durch die Erscheinungen der Außenwelt. . . .” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 49.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Nur die orientalischen Kulturvölker, deren tieferer Weltinstinkt einer Entwicklung im rationalistischen Sinne entgegenstand. . . .” Ibid., 50.

that the term covered disparate cultures of varying talents, Worringer privileged human instinct in a manner worthy of Freud. The fear of space was fundamental and universal, he explained, felt by artists and viewers alike. But the “rationalistic development of mankind represses this instinctive fear, which is caused by man’s lost position in the world.”⁶¹ To acknowledge the urge to abstraction was thus to confront human instinct on its own terms, stripped of the repressive forces of Western civilization.

Worringer’s discussion of the importance of suppressing space in artistic representation might well seem to endorse the relief stage at the Artists’ Theater, with the reduction of stage depth corresponding to an embrace of abstraction. But according to Worringer, in contrast to the scopic pleasure and imaginative indulgence offered by the traditional theater, the relief stage sternly rebuked the spectator, inhibiting the freedom of visual movement craved by the human eye. In presenting the need for visual depth as a fundamental human requirement in his essay on the Artists’ Theater, Worringer contradicted his argument in *Abstraction and Empathy* that the eye is afraid of depth—an argument that itself followed Hildebrand’s notion of the horror of space. Worringer thus followed Hildebrand only in theory; in practice, as a spectator, he found the theoretical justifications of painting and sculpture intolerable on stage.

Other visual theorists before Worringer, as we have seen in chapter five, had privileged the concept of flatness, describing the history and formal attributes of relief sculpture as crucial to the development and status of art. Here as elsewhere, Worringer’s central sources were most likely the same two books from 1893: Riegl’s presentation of

⁶¹ “In seiner weiteren Entwicklung aber machte sich der Mensch durch Gewöhnung und intellektuelle Überlegung von dieser primitiven Angst einem weiten Raum gegenüber frei.” Ibid.

relief sculpture in *The Problems of Style* as the crucial intermediate step in a grand historical trajectory from sculpture to drawing, and Hildebrand's embrace of it as the ideal form of artistic representation in *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts*.⁶² But where Hildebrand had associated two-dimensionality and distance (on the grounds that flat images resulted from distant views), Worringer linked two-dimensionality not with the literal distance measured between the eye and the work of art, but rather with an emotional distance that occurred within the body of the spectator: a psychic aversion to space. Because the process of abstraction transformed spatial depth into planar relations—and because his precursors had laid the theoretical ground for his arguments—he presented relief sculpture as the epitome of abstraction.

According to Worringer, the urge to abstraction was “the attempt to rescue the single object of the outside world from its connection with and dependence on other things, to snatch it from the course of events, to render it absolute.”⁶³ This creative urge expressed the human aversion to space. It manifested itself as the need to set objects free from the existential terror of three dimensions, a terror that could be escaped only through artistic creation and reception. Thus, Worringer explained, what Hildebrand had labeled

the agonizing quality of the cubic [*das Quälende des Kubischen*] is ultimately nothing else than a remnant of that agony and unease that governed mankind in the face of the things of the outside world in their unclear connection and

⁶² See Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 29-30; as well as Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, especially 251-60.

⁶³ “Vielmehr sehen wir darin das Bestreben, das einzelne Objekt der Außenwelt, soweit es besonders das Interesse erweckte, aus seiner Verbindung und Abhängigkeit von den anderen Dingen zu erlösen, es dem Lauf des Geschehens zu entreißen, es absolut zu machen.” Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 55-56.

interplay; it is nothing else than a final memory of the point of departure for all artistic creation, namely of the urge to abstraction.⁶⁴

Hildebrand had intended his passing reference to discomfort in *The Problem of Form* to help construct a theoretical justification of ancient Greek sculptural relief, but Worringer appropriated it as the justification for artistic creations yet more flat.

With the fourth appearance of Lipps's formula, Worringer began to clarify his own position: "aesthetic enjoyment" and "objectified self-enjoyment," it now seemed, were polar opposites. "On one side," he stated, lies "the ego as . . . interference in the work of art's capacity to bring happiness, on the other the deepest connection between the ego and the work of art, which receives all its life from the ego alone."⁶⁵ Thus while the term "aesthetic enjoyment" described the urge to abstraction, "objectified self-enjoyment" stood for empathy. Abstraction was associated with unease, that is, and with an aesthetic enjoyment that encompasses the experience of its own interference; empathy implied the comfortable relation between the viewer and the work of art by means of which aesthetic enjoyment is delightfully rendered in the form of an object. But, for Worringer, more important than their differences was the element of discomfort they shared. Both the urge to abstraction and the urge to empathy, he wrote, "are only degrees of a common need that is revealed to us as the deepest and ultimate essence of all

⁶⁴ "Das, was Hildebrand hier 'das Quälende des Kubischen' nennt, ist im letzten Grunde nichts anderes als ein Überbleibsel jener Qual und Unruhe, die den Menschen den Dingen der Außenwelt in ihrem unklaren Zusammenhang und Wechselspiel gegenüber beherrschte, ist nichts anderes als eine letzte Erinnerung an den Ausgangspunkt alles künstlerischen Schaffens, nämlich an den Abstraktionsdrang." Ibid., 58.

⁶⁵ "Auf der einen Seite, das Ich . . . als Beeinträchtigung der Beglückungsmöglichkeit des Kunstwerkes, auf der anderen Seite innigste Verbindung zwischen dem Ich und dem Kunstwerk, das all sein Leben nur von dem Ich erhält." Ibid.

aesthetic experience: that is the need for self-estrangement [*Selbstentäußerung*],” or a distance measured within the self.⁶⁶

As if to emphasize its insufficiency, Worringer quoted Lipps’s formula one last time before reiterating that even the experience of empathy involved that of self-estrangement. In this psychic transfer, Worringer wrote, the spectator invested the work of art with a portion of his self, sacrificing his autonomy as an individual in order to exist, momentarily and aesthetically, within the work. In the act of empathy, he wrote,

we are delivered from our individual being as long as we . . . are absorbed in an external object, in an external form. We feel, as it were, our individuality flow into fixed boundaries, as opposed to the boundless differentiation of the individual consciousness. In this self-objectification lies a self-estrangement.⁶⁷

Metaphorically speaking, the spectator let down his guard, allowing himself to dissolve into the work of art. With rhetorical cruelty, Worringer quoted Lipps himself—this time from the two-volume *Aesthetics*—who had argued that “in empathizing I am not the real ego, but rather . . . this ideal, this observing ego.”⁶⁸ Even the highest authority on empathy theory, in other words, acknowledged the viewer’s bifurcated subjectivity. Daily speech could also be mobilized to prove the presence of estrangement within the aesthetic

⁶⁶ “Jene beiden Pole sind nur Gradabstufungen eines gemeinsamen Bedürfnisses, das sich uns als das tiefste und letzte Wesen alles ästhetischen Erlebens offenbart: das ist das Bedürfnis nach Selbstentäußerung.” *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁷ “Wir sind von unserem individuellen Sein erlöst, solange wir mit unserem inneren Erlebensdrang in ein äußeres Objekt, in einer äußeren Form aufgehen. Wir fühlen gleichsam unsere Individualität in feste Grenzen einfließen gegenüber der grenzenlosen Differenziertheit des individuellen Bewußtseins. In dieser Selbstobjektivierung liegt eine Selbstentäußerung.” *Ibid.*, 59-60.

⁶⁸ “Ich bin also in die Einfühlung nicht dies reale Ich, sondern bin von diesem innerlich losgelöst, d. h. ich bin losgelöst von allem dem, was ich außer der Betrachtung der Form bin.” Theodor Lipps, as quoted in *ibid.*, 60.

response, Worringer noted; “popular usage speaks with striking accuracy of a ‘loss of self’ in the contemplation of a work of art.”⁶⁹

In the first chapter of *Abstraction and Empathy*, Worringer announced in its final paragraph, he had set up in theoretical terms the polar opposites that constituted the aesthetic experience. On one side stood the universal impulse to self-estrangement, which played itself out formally in the urge to abstraction; on the other, an individualistic urge to self-estrangement that appeared in the guise of a need for empathy. Both sides, in other words, existed at opposite extremes along an existential continuum of emotional discomfort. For if, as Lipps had argued, “aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment,” and if, as Worringer himself maintained, “in this self-objectification lies a self-estrangement,” then even the most enjoyable instance of the aesthetic response would have to entail the estrangement of the viewer. In constructing an opposition between abstraction and empathy, Worringer presented empathy as a general sense of identification, as an emotional state, rather than as an embodied perceptual response to space. His critique refused to acknowledge that empathy was abstract, insofar as it described a viewer’s basic physiological response to pure form. It also left little room for the spatial concerns of empathy theory—concerns that, along with the associated notion of embodied vision, helped to maintain the presence of empathy theory within the discourse of modern architecture for over a century.

Worringer presented the urge to abstraction as the theoretical apparatus that could usher the creations of overlooked ages and peoples into aesthetic discourse; indeed, he

⁶⁹ “Die Volkssprache spricht treffend von einem Sich-Verlieren in der Betrachtung eines Kunstwerkes.” Ibid., 60.

subsequently wrote a book on Egyptian art.⁷⁰ But while his work added to the canon of art historical objects, he showed no interest in the expanding art audience. He wrestled with notions of universal vision within the framework of an aesthetic discourse that had been in place since Kant; his conception of the spectator as a cultured individual remained constant from the discussion of empathy. Nevertheless, *Abstraction and Empathy* provided, at the level of the individual viewer, a theoretical understanding of a universal, visceral response to art. In conflating the psychic experience of the Egyptian artist and the contemporary European spectator, and in describing the work of art as both cause and effect of this experience, he allowed for the possibility that untrained eyes—those not belonging to middle class Europeans, for example—might likewise be capable of appreciating art.

Worringer's discussion of the universal aesthetic response was a crucial preliminary step in the analysis of the emerging mass audience, a sociocultural phenomenon that would become central to German aesthetics in the 1920s. In describing the experience of spectatorship with the term "self-estrangement," or *Selbsentäußerung*, he followed the example of Nietzsche, who had explained this experience more or less as a form of aesthetic schizophrenia. According to Nietzsche, writing in 1876 of Richard Wagner's music dramas, the spectator

is from time to time compelled . . . to ask himself: what would this nature have with you? To what end do *you* really exist? — Probably he will be unable to find an answer, and will then stand still, amazed [*befremdet*] and perplexed at his own being. Let him then be satisfied to have experienced even this; let him hear in the fact that he *feels alienated* [*entfremdet*] from his own being the answer to his question. For it is precisely with this feeling that he participates in Wagner's

⁷⁰ See Wilhelm Worringer, *Ägyptische Kunst: Probleme ihrer Wertung* (Munich: Piper, 1927).

mightiest accomplishment, the central point of his power, the demonic *transmissibility* and self-estrangement [*Selbstentäusserung*] of his nature. . . .⁷¹

The spectator, in Nietzsche's conception, underwent both a depletion of his sense of self and an active participation in the work of art. The experience was both liberating and disturbing, conflating two seemingly different sensations: a paralyzing loss of self and an active engagement in the art object. This simultaneous presence of detachment and absorption, of estrangement and identification, defined both artistic creation and aesthetic reception.⁷²

The art historian John Adkins Richardson has argued that "the period of what is called modernism coincides with a profound sense of estrangement that lies sunken beneath the iron veil of progress, infecting every thought we feel and chilling all our aspirations."⁷³ And according to the architectural historian Anthony Vidler, "estrangement and unhomeliness—*unheimlichkeit*, or the uncanny—have emerged as the intellectual watchwords of our [twentieth] century."⁷⁴ In bringing Nietzsche's concept of self-estrangement to the visual arts and fusing it with a notion of distance long treated in visual theory, Worringer helped set these watchwords. His treatment of abstraction transposed the aesthetic response from the individualistic experience of empathy to the

⁷¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (1876), in Daniel Breazeale, ed., *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 222 (translation altered). The German is found in Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (*Unzeitgemässige Betrachtungen* IV), Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke* IV, 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 38.

⁷² Describing an artist viewing the subject for a painting, Nietzsche referred to "that aesthetic phenomenon of detachment from personal interest with which a painter sees in a stormy landscape with thunder and lightning, or a rolling sea, only the picture of them within him, the phenomenon of complete absorption in the things themselves. . . ." Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1873), *Untimely Meditations*, 91.

⁷³ John Atkins Richardson, *From Pure Visibility to Virtual Reality in an Age of Estrangement* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 1-2.

communal one of estrangement. Active and uncomfortable, yet not necessarily negative, his discussion of self-estrangement became the basis for later models of spectatorship that would address the communal aesthetic experience of the mass audience. Siegfried Kracauer likewise linked abstraction and estrangement, using the concept of distraction to describe them as primitive sensations resurfacing in 1920s Berlin. In his view, mass audiences faced mute abstractions that both inspired and symbolized their own psychic state.⁷⁵ With Bertolt Brecht's presentation of the estrangement effect, or *Verfremdungseffekt*, in 1936, estrangement discarded its individualistic prefix to surface as a creative and participatory force. While Worringer's mention of alienation denotes an abandonment closer to the Dionysian revelry already described by Nietzsche than to Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, the word's acquisition of a positive connotation in the first decade of this century signals the concept's birth as the productive basis of a model of spectatorship that encompasses an active, uncomfortable, and potentially political experience.

3. The Psychological Critique of Empathy

In 1921, the psychologist Edward Bullough summarized the state of research in experimental aesthetics in the years leading up to World War One. Blithely ignoring the discourse of art theory, he declared that "psychological examination produced the various

⁷⁴ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1992), 9.

theories of *Einfühlung* or Empathy which reached their flowering period between 1895 and 1905.”⁷⁶ As a transitional discourse, empathy had shown that aesthetics needed a psychological foundation. “Aesthetics is either psychological aesthetics or an expression concerning the requirements of individual taste, incidental mood or vogue,” Lipps declared in 1907; “a collection of declarations of some individual who possesses a sufficiently loud voice to proclaim his private predilections or his dependence on fashion.”⁷⁷ But empathy had also shown that the discipline of psychology was insufficient to describe the aesthetic response. Thus, while theorists relied increasingly on the legitimizing function of psychological argument, their work also served to demonstrate that the laboratory was not the ideal environment for inducing an aesthetic experience. Against the background of its white walls, no number of measurements of individuals’ responses to color and line could determine the precise nature of the aesthetic response. In the early twentieth century, it likewise appeared not only that a viewer could feel empathy in the absence of a work of art, but also that an aesthetic response might occur with no experience of empathy.

⁷⁵ See Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament” (1927), in Thomas Y. Levin, ed. and trans., *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 84. Kracauer’s appreciation of Simmel, written in 1920-1921, is found in Levin, ed., 225-57.

⁷⁶ Edward Bullough, “Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics,” *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. 12 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 77. Bullough described only developments from before World War One, owing, as he put it, “precisely to the lack of experimental work during the last six years.” *Ibid.*, 76. Two remarks within the essay betray its time period by showing sympathy for the notion of defamiliarization or estrangement: “The once prevalent idea that familiarity is a source of aesthetic satisfaction, is of the same category, but manifestly untrue,” Bullough wrote; for in fact “it is characteristic of aesthetic experiences to surprise us by their originality.” *Ibid.*, 90 and 95.

⁷⁷ Theodor Lipps, “Psychologie und Aesthetik,” in *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* IX (1907): 117; quoted in John Fizer, *Psychologism and Psychoaesthetics*, 224, note 15. In fact, despite the position of authority in which Worringer placed him, Lipps had abandoned psychologism several years earlier, after receiving criticism from Edmund Husserl. See Fizer, 224, note 18.

For Bullough, the limitation of empathy theory was not merely that it described a generic solitary individual, but that this individual was simply a universalized version of the researcher himself. As theories of empathy “were exclusively based upon introspection on the part of their authors,” they could not necessarily be extended in order to posit fundamental aesthetic principles:

Indeed, the great varieties of views of their mechanism and the acrimonious wrangles which took place at the end of the last century between the upholders of rival doctrines arose precisely from the generalization of such purely personal introspective evidence. Experimental work on large numbers would, I believe, have shown that no single one of the explanations championed by different adherents of the theory could claim the monopoly of truth.⁷⁸

Introspection on the part of aesthetic theorists could only lead to inconclusive claims, he maintained, but laboratory research could help to further the understanding of empathy.

Bullough was not convinced by empathy theorists’ claims that empathy defined the aesthetic experience; not only was empathy sometimes absent in the appreciation of art, but what was worse, the process “occurs occasionally with exceptional clearness in what is admittedly bad art, or not an object of aesthetic appreciation at all. In any case it is fairly clear that Empathy may occur in aesthetic experience, but that it need not, and that it is neither a complete nor wholly satisfactory explanation of it.”⁷⁹

In Bullough’s assessment, one of the central themes in the field of experimental psychology between 1900 and 1914 was the differentiation of viewing subjects. As early as 1903, four types of apprehension had been ascertained in French research, for example:

⁷⁸ Edward Bullough, “Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics,” 78. He continued: “In justice it must, however, be added that experimental tests of Empathy are extremely difficult to carry out.” “Until the conceptions with which Philosophies of Art are wont to operate are illuminated by actually and accurately observed experiences of many persons, instead of being vaguely apprehended and rashly generalised personal introspections of their authors, little good will be done by interminable discussions of such topics.” *Ibid.*, 99.

describing, observing, erudite, and imaginative (or emotional). The former two types, it was believed, entailed a straightforward relation to the object under review, often labeled “scientific,” whereas the latter two types of apprehension possessed “an aesthetic significance.”⁸⁰ Bullough offered a similar scheme:

As a result of an extensive series of individual tests of over 100 persons on their appreciation of single colours and simple colour-combinations, I found the existence of four clearly distinguishable types of apperception which I called respectively the “objective,” “physiological,” “associative” and “character” types.⁸¹

Such viewer categories as “objective” and “physiological” were no less abstract than earlier presentations of the generic spectator had been in the discussion of empathy; reference was made neither to class nor to gender differences, for example. But the recognition of differentiation was crucial, as it demonstrated a willingness to include the viewer as a subject of analysis. Rather than merely offering visual theories that used empathy as a constant element within the aesthetic experience, aesthetics was able to incorporate the concept of variety into its arguments.

While the sample pool that Bullough experimented on was clearly limited in scope, the tests revealed that “persons differ in the manner of apperceiving” and that the viewer’s filtering process of “aesthetic adaptation occurs in various degrees of frequency, stability and permanence in different individuals.”⁸² Yet more striking was the fact that

⁷⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁰ A. Binet, *Etude expérimentale et l'Intelligence* (Paris, 1903), as quoted in Edward Bullough, “Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics,” 81 and 82. “According to one experimenter,” Bullough explained, “it was especially the scientists who were distinguished by their systematic and patient analysis of every detail, quite irrespective of its importance for the whole or its intrinsic value, prompted by an impersonal curiosity to solve every obscurity and by an equally impersonal passion for completeness.” Ibid., 83.

⁸¹ Ibid., 86. “The types appear to be not merely momentary attitudes of the subject,” Bullough declared, “but fundamental and permanent modes of apprehending and appreciating colour.”

⁸² Ibid., 85 and 97.

even individual viewers might respond differently to the same image. Experiments in 1905 revealed, for example, that “the same subject found oblique straight lines sometimes pleasant and sometimes unpleasant, occasionally on one and the same day.”⁸³ While Bullough admitted that “it is not improbable that the apparent diversity of types will prove much smaller than seems at first sight,” the very act of categorizing such responses both encouraged and reflected a profoundly altered conception of the spectator.⁸⁴

Perhaps psychology’s central achievement in the domain of empathy was the promulgation of the very idea of a range of spectatorial responses; the idea fully contradicted the universalizing approach to human vision demonstrated in 1873 by Robert Vischer’s confident decree that a “horizontal line is pleasing because the eyes are positioned horizontally” while a “vertical line . . . can be disturbing when perceived in isolation for in a certain sense it contradicts the binocular structure of the perceiving eyes and coerces them to function in a more complicated way.”⁸⁵ When Heinrich Wölfflin had posited physical pain as a universal response to asymmetry, he implicitly allowed only one kind of viewer: the cultivated and sensitive individual. Bullough’s sample pools were numerically limited and his viewer categories abstract, but psychological research into empathy acknowledged the possibility of perceptual difference. As Bullough put it, “experimental work on large numbers would . . . have shown that no single one of the explanations championed by different adherents of [empathy] theory could claim the

⁸³ Ibid., 93.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁸⁵ Robert Vischer, “On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics,” in Harry Francis Malgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, eds., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Malgrave and Ikononou (Santa Monica: Getty Center Publications, 1994), 97.

monopoly of truth.”⁸⁶ The shift of aesthetic debate toward the field of psychology both mirrored and encouraged the recognition of individual differences among viewers.

The differentiation of viewer types, ostensibly the result of experimentation in the psychology laboratory, represented a profoundly altered conception of the spectator. Sociological changes in the European audience for culture in the last decades of the nineteenth century provoked increased attention to the topic of the aesthetic experience. While researchers in the psychology laboratory measured subjects’ responses to color, increasing numbers of Europeans were engaged in the act of art viewing. Aesthetic discourse had treated the spectator as an educated and cultured individual, his elite status dependent on a presumed superiority to an uncultured public. With the expansion of working class leisure in the nineteenth century, middle class audiences became increasingly visible; the immense popularity of cinema, for example, gathered spectators into a community that could not be ignored, and the activity of art viewing was being radically redefined.⁸⁷ While not explicitly mentioned in discussions of the viewer’s relation to the work of art, new audiences hovered in the background of aesthetic discourse, challenging the traditionally narrow parameters of visual theory. And where researchers in psychology labs had begun to indicate the possibility of these larger audiences, Worringer elaborated their experience in theoretical terms.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁷ For a treatment of German socioeconomic transformation between 1870 and 1918, see Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (London: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 42-61. While film was not initially treated as an art form in the realm of cultural discourse, an omission reflecting (among other things) its popularity among the lower classes, the rapid growth and rising social status of cinema audiences caused their increasing prominence, both in German society and in discussions of spectatorship, beginning in the second decade of the century. In this context, see Anton Kaes, “The Debate about Cinema: Charting a Controversy (1909-1929),” *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 7-33.

4. The Afterlife of Empathy

In appropriating Hildebrand's ideas, as I have argued, Fuchs also absorbed the discourse of empathy at the historical moment when, and in the precise location where, Worringer was all but pronouncing the obsolescence of this discourse. Fuchs demonstrated neither knowledge of nor interest in Worringer's ideas, nor did he show concern with the critique of empathy more generally. But his extensive writings demonstrate a desire to encourage audiences at the Artists' Theater to participate in a form of spectatorship that would expand the notion of empathy to encompass a wider audience. Facing the relief stage, Fuchs hoped, individual spectators would be lost in their own private contemplation of the work of art. At the same time, their presence within the amphitheatrical auditorium would encourage them to participate as identical members of a larger group audience. As an essentially individualistic form of spectatorship, however, the model of empathy was increasingly at odds with this larger conglomeration in the theater. This widening gap caused the decline of empathy as a description of active and engaged viewing.

But if Worringer—along with many psychologists—rang the death knell of empathy theory in Munich in 1908, the notion of embodied vision maintained a rich and varied afterlife. Over the subsequent decades, it adapted in various ways to the changes in the forms of art and in the audiences that attended to them, and it is worth exploring some of these theoretical peregrinations here. While empathy disappeared from the discourse of

the visual arts, the tradition of making universalizing claims based on individual experience and legitimized by psychological research was continued in the field by such figures as Rudolf Arnheim and Ernst Gombrich.⁸⁸ Vestiges of the concerns of empathy, often traveling under cover of phenomenology, also remained in a variety of discussions of the viewer's perception of a work of art.⁸⁹ And References to empathy, and to embodied vision more generally, have recently begun to reappear in such diverse fields as theater, dance, and performance studies as well as in the visual arts and architecture.⁹⁰

Empathy provided a useful antimodel not only for Worringer's discussion of abstraction in 1908 but also, two decades later, for Bertolt Brecht's promulgation of estrangement, or *Verfremdung*. Empathy had been conceived in the nineteenth century to connote active viewing, an embodied and emotional engagement stemming from the viewer's identification with an object. It was not intended to foster critical reflection, however, and progressive Weimar theorists valued critical awareness over emotional activity. Empathy came to signify spectatorial passivity, and Brecht used the concept as a conceptual foil for his own theory of estrangement, which he articulated in 1936 in

⁸⁸ See Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954); and Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon, 1960).

⁸⁹ See, for example, Yve-Alain Bois, "Perceiving Newman," *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990), 186-213.

⁹⁰ In a 1998 interview, the architecture critic Herbert Muschamp criticized the achievements of high modernism and commended the current "opportunity for empathy." Significantly, he attributed this opportunity in part to the achievements of feminism; he cited surrealist art and Denis Diderot as historical precedents and Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao as a contemporary example. Presenting the viewer's body as the locus of contextualization for the work of art, he argued that artists, architects, and theorists should attend to empathy, which he described as the spectator's physical, emotional, and psychological response. Cynthia Davidson and Matthew Berman, "How the Critic Sees: A Conversation with Herbert Muschamp," *ANY* 21 (Spring 1998): 16.

response to a theater performance he had attended in Moscow the previous year.⁹¹ Empathy involved a process of identification and a loss of identity, he explained; rather than encouraging passivity, theater should “refunction” the spectator’s emotions to produce both emotional identification and critical reflection and thus force audience members to consider the drama’s unresolved contradictions. Estrangement would reinstate the spectator’s self-control both within the auditorium and outside it; it would form the basis of a new “epic theater,” a radical departure from the “empathy theater” that relied on the suspension of disbelief and was devoid of political effect. Maintaining that empathy encouraged uncritical absorption, Brecht advocated estrangement as the radical conceptual tool that called attention to the visual and perceptual distance between spectator and object and thereby facilitated critical analysis.⁹²

In the first few decades of the twentieth century in Germany, discussions of embodied and absorbed vision, previously couched in terms of empathy, continued to exist; rather than treating performances of *Faust* in small theater auditoriums, they now

⁹¹ See Bertolt Brecht, “Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting” (1936), in John Willett, ed., *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. Willett (1957; repr. New York, 1994), 91-99. Although *Verfremdung* described the theatrical technique that Brecht had developed over the past decade in Germany, he used the term only after meeting the playwright Sergei Tretyakov in Moscow in 1935, when he learned of the Soviet application of the Russian Formalist concept of *ostranenie* (estrangement or defamiliarization). Brecht linked *Verfremdung* to Marx’s concept of *Entfremdung* by way of Soviet cultural practice: just as *ostranenie*, coined by the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky in 1914, had perverted the Russian word for *Entfremdung* (the term Marx had borrowed from Hegel to denote alienation), Brecht’s term also played on Marx’s vocabulary. The role of specific sources for *Verfremdung* has long been debated in Brecht scholarship, often without the aid of historical research and invariably with little awareness of Russian aesthetics. See, for example, Stanley Mitchell, “From Shklovsky to Brecht: Some preliminary remarks towards a history of the politicisation of Russian Formalism,” *Screen* XV, no. 2 (summer 1974): 74-81; Ben Brewster, “From Shklovsky to Brecht: A Reply,” in *ibid.*, 82-102; and Peter Demetz, introduction to *Brecht: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Demetz (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

⁹² The intermittent presence of empathy, as I have argued elsewhere, is necessary to achieve the powerful oscillations of the *Verfremdungseffekt*; despite Brecht’s public statements, the concept of empathy was central. See my essay “Playing Politics with Estranged and Empathetic Audiences: Bertolt Brecht and Georg Fuchs,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 96, no. 4 (Duke University Press, 1998): 809-20.

served to describe the popular embrace of mass culture. But the absorption engaged in by the mass audience, as it turned out, operated differently from that of the isolated individual. The distinction is well illustrated by Walter Benjamin's claim in 1936 that "he who concentrates before the work of art becomes absorbed within it; he enters into this work. By contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art into itself."⁹³ Where the traditional model of spectatorship, requiring time and erudition, lifted the individual viewer to the nobler plane of art appreciation, the masses crudely drew the work of art down to their own cultural level in a process akin to consumption. Benjamin opposed distraction, or *Zerstreuung*, to concentration, or *Sammlung*; he associated the former with the embodied and spatial perception of architecture, which, he declared, "has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction."⁹⁴

The use of the term *Zerstreuung* may be traced back half a century to Richard Wagner, who described the distracted spectator as someone temporarily rendered shallow by quotidian tribulations. "When a prince leaves a heavy dinner, the banker a fatiguing financial operation, the working man a weary day of toil, and go to the theatre," Wagner lamented, "they ask for rest, distraction, and amusement, and are in no mood for renewed effort and fresh expenditure of force."⁹⁵ For Wagner, the experience of distraction had no

⁹³ "The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behavior toward works of art issues today in a new form. The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation." Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 239 (translation modified).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* For a discussion of Benjamin's use of *Zerstreuung*, see Samuel Weber, "Mass Mediauras; or, Art, Aura, and Media in the work of Walter Benjamin," in David S. Ferris, ed., *Walter Benjamin: Theoretical Questions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 39.

⁹⁵ Richard Wagner, "Art and Revolution," *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Essays*, W. Ashton Ellis, trans. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 44.

place in the discussion of art. If distraction were needed, he explained, “it would be more decorous to employ for this purpose any other thing in the wide world, but not the body and soul of art,” which required the concentration and absorption of an erudite spectator.⁹⁶ According to Nietzsche, recognizing the role of distraction at the theater had marked a crucial shift in the work of Wagner, for whom disgust with the distracted audiences at Bayreuth had prompted dissatisfaction with theater generally. “After [Wagner] had realized the connection between our theatrical world and theatrical success and the character of contemporary man,” Nietzsche wrote, “his soul ceased to have anything to do with this theater; he was no longer concerned with aesthetic enthusiasms or the jubilation of excited masses, indeed he was filled with wrath to see his art fed so indiscriminately into the gaping maw of insatiable boredom and thirst for distraction.”⁹⁷

In the early twentieth century, perhaps the most famous treatment of distraction is that of Siegfried Kracauer, who described the activity of a group of spectators who, lost in contemplation, lost their identities as individuals.⁹⁸ “When a congregation forms, the

⁹⁶ Also unwilling to sully theater with money, Wagner demanded that performances be free. “To make this public fully free and independent when face to face with Art,” he wrote, “the public must have *unbought* admission to theatrical representations.” Richard Wagner, “Art and Revolution,” 63-64 (*italics original*).

⁹⁷ “Nachdem ihm der Zusammenhang unseres heutigen Theaterwesens und Theatererfolges mit dem Charakter des heutigen Menschen aufgegangen war, hatte seine Seele Nichts mehr mit diesem Theater zu schaffen; um ästhetische Schwarmerei und den Jubel aufgeregter Massen war es ihm nicht mehr zu thun, ja es musste ihn ergrimmen, seine Kunst so unterschiedlos in den gähnenden Rachen der unersättlichen Langenweile und Zerstreungs-Gier eingehen zu sehen.” Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” in Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe IV*, no. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 54. Nietzsche contrasted distracted listening with the true artistic appreciation inspired by Wagner’s music, declaring that “earlier music inspires in us only for brief hours that happiness which we feel in Wagnerian music all the time: rare moments of forgetfulness when it [lesser music] speaks to itself alone and . . . directs its glance away from its listeners, who demand of it only distraction, merriment or scholarliness [Zerstreuung, Lustbarkeit, oder Gelehrsamkeit].” Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” 240. The German is found in Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” in Colli and Montinari, eds., *Nietzsche Werke IV*, 62.

⁹⁸ On Benjamin’s assumption of the concept of *Zerstreuung* from Kracauer, see Miriam Hansen, “Benjamin, Cinema, and Experience: ‘The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,’” *New German*

differences between people disappear,” he pronounced.⁹⁹ The undifferentiated mass of cinema viewers formed an emblematic product of the modern metropolis. If in hotel lobbies one could observe “unfamiliar people who have become empty forms . . . and who now file by as ungraspable flat ghosts,” these same figures appeared together at the cinema, entertaining themselves by watching on the screen a set of ghosts yet shallower than they were themselves.¹⁰⁰ The cinema, he argued, was the preferred environment for this audience, whose shallow aesthetic reception was both paralleled and architecturally embodied by the literal flatness of the cinema screen: “The large picture houses in Berlin are palaces of distraction; elegant *surface splendor* is the hallmark of these mass theaters.”¹⁰¹ Pantomimes and ballets were performed on the stages of these new palaces, he wrote, “until finally the white surface [of the cinema screen] descends and the events of the three-dimensional stage blend imperceptibly into two-dimensional illusions.”¹⁰²

Kracauer ascribed the change in spectatorship to the increased number of salaried workers and to the growing presence of women in the work force, citing above all the exacerbation in the late 1920s of the rationalizing impulses typical of capitalism. The salaried masses, increasingly resembling cogs in the capitalist machine, simultaneously escaped and reenacted their highly rationalized lives by visiting the cinema.¹⁰³ Distraction

Critique, no. 40 (Winter 1987): 179-224. *Zerstreuung* was a common literary trope of 1920s Germany, appearing, for example, in Vladimir Nabokov’s first novel, written and published in Russian in Berlin in 1926: “He was in the kind of mood that he called ‘dispersion of the will.’” Nabokov, *Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 18.

⁹⁹ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Hotel Lobby” (1922-25), *The Mass Ornament*, 178.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁰¹ Siegfried Kracauer, “Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Picture Palaces” (1926), *The Mass Ornament*, 323 (italics original).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 324.

¹⁰³ “The change has been caused by the oft-mentioned rationalization,” Kracauer wrote. “Ever since capitalism has existed, of course, within its defined boundaries rationalization has always occurred. Yet the

signified, simultaneously, an escape from the rigors of alienated labor and the weak efforts of spectators incapable of traditional aesthetic contemplation. But if cinema audiences were distracted, the films on view, he wrote in 1930, “drug the populace with the pseudo-glamour of counterfeit social heights, just as hypnotists use glittering objects to put their subjects to sleep.”¹⁰⁴ Audiences diverted their attention from the dull routine of their daily employment by visiting the new picture palaces, but during their visits they were fully absorbed in the entertainment. Distracted viewing thus entailed a form of concentration. “Mass culture provided thrills and the excitement lacking in the humdrum and boredom of one’s daily life,” as Anton Kaes has written; “it filled the void created by alienating and meaningless work.”¹⁰⁵ By providing an opportunity for empathy, in other words, the mass cultural form of cinema helped combat the fundamental alienation of modern life.

Kracauer believed that women visiting the cinema on their evenings off work—the “little shopgirls,” as he put it—were particularly prone to the pleasures and perils of distracted viewing. Rather than confront the banality of their daily life, they happily succumbed to passive film spectatorship. They became fully absorbed in the stories they watched unfold on screen, identifying with the characters and abdicating all

rationalization period from 1925 to 1928 represents a particularly important chapter, which has produced the irruption of the machine and ‘assembly-line’ methods into the clerical departments of big firms. Thanks to this reorganization carried out on the American pattern—and which is still far from complete—large sections of the new salaried masses have a lesser function in the labour process than they had before.” Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany* (New York: Verso, 1998), 29-30.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁰⁵ Anton Kaes, “Mass Culture and Modernity: Notes Toward a Social History of Early American and German Cinema,” in Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 327.

powers of critical awareness. As the film they watched ended, Kracauer wrote with a patronizing tone, they put away their empathy and returned to their alienated existence: “Furtively, the little shopgirls wipe their eyes and quickly powder their noses before the lights go up.”¹⁰⁶ But, as the film historian Patrice Petro has explained, while “the little shopgirls may be momentarily distracted from everyday life . . . they are clearly in a state of concentration at the movies.”¹⁰⁷ Rather than opposing each other in the manner set out by Benjamin, concentrated attention and scattered distraction would appear to be mutually embedded. They exist, as the art historian Jonathan Crary has argued, on “a continuum in which the two ceaselessly flow into one another, as part of a social field in which the same imperatives and forces incite one and the other.”¹⁰⁸ The conceptual relation of abstraction and empathy likewise appears more complicated than Worringer had allowed; mass audiences distract themselves at the theater by becoming absorbed in the presentations of mass ornament, which Kracauer termed “a *mythological cult* that is masquerading in the garb of abstraction.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Little Shopgirls go to the Movies,” *The Mass Ornament*, 303. “The affinity with a disposition attributed to female spectatorship crucially distinguishes Benjamin’s notion of ‘distraction’ from a Brechtian concept of distanciation (*Verfremdung*),” according to Miriam Hansen. “Certainly, the political valorization of a distracted mode of reception (as first elaborated by Kracauer) converges with the intentions of epic theater in its negation of the bourgeois cult of culture, in its radical critique of fetishistic illusionism and corresponding attitudes of individual contemplation and catharsis.” Hansen, “Benjamin, Cinema, and Experience,” 218-19.

¹⁰⁷ Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 67. Kracauer’s explanation of feminine distraction may reveal more about himself than about the audience in question. For, as Petro writes, “it is Kracauer himself who is distracted by the presence of women in the cinema, shifting his gaze restlessly from audience to image, he looks at women in the act of looking rather than focusing his attention exclusively on the screen. It should be recalled that Kracauer holds distraction in the cinema to be reactionary only when spectators passively consume abstract, ornamental patterns and fail to recognize the loss of individual mastery under the changed conditions of modern social reality.” *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 51.

¹⁰⁹ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament,” *The Mass Ornament*, 83 (*italics original*).

Kracauer's use of female viewers as emblems of the Weimar mass audience conforms to a tendency described by the literary historian Andreas Huyssen in relation to modernism more generally. "It is indeed striking to observe," Huyssen has written, "how the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine."¹¹⁰ Kracauer's association of distraction and female spectators was likewise not uncommon. When the notion of absorption, central to the late nineteenth-century concept of empathy, was reconfigured to discuss the response of the mass audience in the twentieth, it, too, was frequently recoded in cultural discourse both as passive and as feminine. No longer describing the individual spectator's active and destabilizing engagement with a work of high art, empathy now generally referred to an uncreative process of identification to which weak-willed female audiences easily and happily succumbed. A hint of this recoding had appeared in 1908, when the art critic Karl Scheffler labeled the woman artist "the imitatrix par excellence, the empathizer who sentimentalizes and trivializes manly art forms" rather than creating art herself.¹¹¹

By the 1920s it was common to characterize the spectator's absorption as passive and feminine. The empathy process is illustrated in an American advertisement from 1922 seeking advertisers for *Photoplay* magazine. [fig. 6.1] Four drawn images in the guise of film stills descend from the top of the page to show how "Every Woman Lives

¹¹⁰ Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986), 47.

¹¹¹ "Da die Frau also original nicht sein kann, so bleibt ihr nur, sich der Männerkunst anzuschließen. Sie ist die Imitatorin par excellence, die Anempfinderin [experiencer], die die männliche Kunstform sentimentalisiert und verkleinert. . . ." Karl Scheffler, *Die Frau und die Kunst* (Berlin: Julius Bard, 1908), 42. "Die Frau blickt das Kunstwerk auf die darin enthaltene Natur hin an; die Abstraktion bleibt ihr fremd." *Ibid.*, 38

Herself on the Screen.” In the first drawing, on the right, labeled “reel 1,” a woman watches her cinematic double play a record for her guests. In “reel 2,” we read, “with the spell of remembered scenes still strong upon her, she finds in . . . her favorite screen magazine . . . a welcome guide to the goal of her desires.” Our heroine next appears as consumer, listening to a record played to her by a salesman. In the fourth and final scene, she adopts the role of the actress she had been watching, and plays a record for her own guests. The process is complete: having watched the film, she has, through an act of consumer’s will, substituted herself for its lead character; the process of empathy—here unnamed, but linked to music in a manner worthy of Wagner and Nietzsche—has merged with the apparently feminine activity of consumption.

With contributions from a wide range of fields, including philosophy, perceptual psychology, optics, and visual and architectural theory, empathy offered a forum for abstract discussions of the active perceptual experience of the individual spectator. Empathy theorists articulated a kind of visual and spatial perception that occurs with the body, not despite it. Such an understanding of perception might seem to oppose the notion of pure opticality, as it was put forward by Conrad Fiedler in the 1870s and later, more famously, by Clement Greenberg, as the defining concept of modernism in the visual arts. But it might be more productive to consider theories of empathy and those of pure opticality as embedded within each other. Not only developed contemporaneously, they are also enmeshed theoretically. As the concept of empathy was revised to describe the middle class embrace of mass culture, it incorporated a notion of distraction in which absorption was emphasized while the element of educated and cultivated appreciation

disappeared. Rather than treating empathy merely as a foil for later avant-garde theory and practice, we might instead consider how it, as a discussion of absorbed and embodied vision, became threatening to visual theorists just as new bodies—middle class bodies, women's bodies, bodies in large groups—entered the aesthetic arena.

Chapter Seven: Epilogue

Worringer and the protagonists of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* were not alone in criticizing performances at the Artists' Theater; many of the reviews in the Munich press were negative. The conservative repertoire disappointed some patrons, while such architectural innovations as the shallow stage and amphitheatrical auditorium annoyed others. And, as one reviewer stated, "Herr Georg Fuchs . . . is not always clear in his reasoning."¹ In the more diplomatic words of the theater historian Claudia Dickhoff, "the first season of the Artists' Theater did not pass as successfully as the selected reviews in Georg Fuchs's *Revolution in the Theater* would have us suppose."² After supervising only one summer season on the Theresienhöhe, the Munich Artists' Theater Association disbanded at the end of January 1909 and attempted without success to sell the building. The Exhibition Park Society inherited control of the Theater and retained Fuchs as an outside adviser; a series of tenants occupied the Theater over the next few years. First, Max Reinhardt's company visited for two summer seasons; far from putting Munich on the map, in other words, the Theater provided a showcase for the famous Berlin director. For the next three

¹ "Nicht immer klar ist Herr Georg Fuchs, der literarischer Sachwalter der Reformbühne, in seiner Begründung." Georg Schaumberg, "Münchener Theatersommer," *Bühne und Welt* XI (1908-09): 156.

² "Die erste Saison des Künstler-Theaters verlief jedoch nicht so erfolgreich, wie die ausgewählten Rezensions-Ausschnitte in Georg Fuchs' "Die Revolution des Theaters" vermuten lassen." Claudia Dickhoff, "Das Münchener Künstler-Theater—die Geschichte eines Experiments," in *Vom Ausstellungspark zum Internationalen Messeplatz München, 1904 bis 1984* (Munich: Stadtmuseum, 1984), 63. As Lenz Prütting has written, "die Betrachtung des Spielplans zeigt . . . das große Gefälle zwischen dem hohen Anspruch, den Fuchs erhoben hatte, und der Realität, die er bieten konnte. . . . es bleibt festzustellen, daß sich der Spielplan des Münchener Künstler-Theaters von dem der übrigen Theater der Zeit grundsätzlich in nichts unterschied." Prütting, "Die Revolution des Theaters: Studien über Georg Fuchs" (Ph.D. diss., University of Munich) 199.

summers, from 1911 to 1913, it hosted the *Drei-Masken-Verlag* company, run by Felix Sobotka, a patron of Reinhardt. The Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus then performed at the Theater in the summer of 1914, but its term was cut short with the outbreak of World War One.³

Also in the summer of 1914, the imminent Dadaist Hugo Ball wrote two essays about the Artists' Theater in the Munich journal *Phöbus*, shortly before he moved to Zurich. Ball described the four aims of the Artists' Theater as the reduction of scenery by means of the relief stage, the simplified décor and backdrop, the subordination of the performance to the laws of dramatic style, and the productive unification of the applied arts. He appreciated these achievements—commending in particular the relief stage—but contrasted Fuchs's theater reforms with the efforts of a truly revolutionary group, the Theater for a New Art. This new group, which included Ball himself, hoped to take command of Littmann's building that summer; it proposed the presentation of plays that unified “dance, color, mime, music, and word.”⁴ With a repertoire ranging from Euripides' *Bacchae* to a new play written by Kandinsky and entitled *The Yellow Sound*, the Theater for a New Art would incorporate the latest aesthetic theory. While Hugo Ball did not use these terms, the Theater for a New Art sought to jettison empathy theory and embrace, in its stead, abstraction.

³ See Claudia Dickhoff, “Das Münchener Künstler-Theater,” 63-64.

⁴ “Es handelte sich darum, ein Repertoire aufzustellen, das zugleich in die Zukunft und in die Vergangenheit wies, Stücke zu finden, die nicht nur ‘Drama’ wären, sondern den Geburtsgrund alles dramatischen Lebens darstellten und sich so aus der Wurzel heraus zugleich in Tanz, Farbe, Mimus, Musik, und Wort entluden.” Hugo Ball, “Das Münchener Künstlertheater,” *Phöbus* I, no. 2 (May 1914): 73. See also Ball, “Das Psychologietheater,” *Phöbus* I, no. 3 (June 1914): 139-40, as well as Hans Joachim Bähr, *Die Funktion des Theaters im Leben Hugo Balls: Materialien zur Bestimmung der Jahre 1910-1914* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982), 75-78.

Ball's plans never materialized, and the Artists' Theater closed in 1914, after only six summers' operation, remaining dark through the War. It was used for several different functions after the War. The Bavarian State Theater occupied the building for three summer seasons—in 1922, 1923, and 1927—and hired some of the designers from its first year. After 1928, when the city claimed ownership of the building, it became the occasional site of exhibitions and congresses. Perhaps most notably, the Artists' Theater was used most frequently as a cinema; finally, the shallow stage framed a film screen, while the amphitheatrical auditorium hosted the mass audience to which Littmann's designs seemed to refer. Like most of the buildings surrounding it, it was destroyed in the summer of 1944 by Allied bombs. The grounds of *Ausstellung München 1908* have in recent years been used for commercial expositions—"Drinktec Interbräu 1997" was one occupant—and are currently under development for middle-income housing.

After the 1908 summer season ended, Georg Fuchs spent several years working in association with the Artists' Theater, adapting plays and supervising productions. A heart ailment brought him to a sanatorium for several months at the beginning of World War One, from November 1914 until the following May, and again from June to October 1915. While there, he composed a *Kriegspassionspiel*, or War Passion Play; he spent much of the rest of the War period occupied with this play, traveling frequently to Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest for performances. He worked to raise money and enthusiasm to establish a German National Theater, hoping that his new play would be its first production.⁵ These experiences, he would later write, brought him into contact with "high

⁵ When the Kaiser saw a performance of his passion play, Fuchs asserted, he would be moved to support the establishment of a German National Theater "mit oder ohne Reinhardt." At the same time, Fuchs

finance and intellectual circles” and led him to believe that “without the continued interest of Jewish intelligence—and, closely linked with this, Jewish finance from Berlin—nothing more of significance could happen, and above all nothing more could be financed.”⁶

Fuchs’s extensive travels at this time, he later explained, led him to believe that threats external to Germany—the ostensible political causes of the War—were in fact less troublesome than those that he perceived within the nation. “We had first to defeat the *inner* enemy,” he became convinced,

before Germany could think of forming, in relation to the outside and to other people, a position that was appropriate to it and in which alone its world and cultural mission would be just. And this knowledge was, for the generation that consciously experienced the World War, the key to the National Socialism of Adolf Hitler.”⁷

Fuchs abandoned theater work after World War One in order to devote his attention entirely to politics, concentrating especially on helping to organize the Bavarian separatist movement. With the tacit encouragement of Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, he attempted to raise money through the Hansabank in Munich to establish “Austro-Bavaria,” the capital of which would be Vienna.⁸ “The goal would be,” Fuchs later wrote, “to obtain for Germany the Rheinland-Pfalz, the left bank of the Rhine, and the Austrian

wished to ally himself with Reinhardt, as otherwise it would be impossible to finance the project. Georg Fuchs, “Zur Vorgeschichte der Nationalsozialistischen Erhebung: Aufzeichnung persönlicher Erlebnisse aus den Jahren 1919 bis 1923” (Unpublished mss. “nach 1936 geschrieben,” Fuchs Archive, Monacensia Library, folder L4174), 29.

⁶ “Auch wir haben uns daran gewöhnen müssen, das ohne das fördernde Interesse der jüdischen Intelligenz und mit dieser eng verbundenen jüdischen Hochfinanz von Berlin nichts von Bedeutung mehr geschehen, vor allem nichts mehr finanziert werden kann.” *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷ “. . . wir erst den *innerem* Feind niederringen müssten, bevor das Deutschtum daran denken dürfte, sich nach aussen hin und anderen Völkern gegenüber die Stellung zu schaffen, die ihm gebührt und in der allein es seiner Welt- und Kultur-Mission gerecht zu werden vermag. Und diese Erkenntnis wurde für die Generation, welche den Weltkrieg bewusst erlebte, der Schlüssel zum Nationalsozialismus Adolf Hitlers.” *Ibid.*, 33.

lands, in order that a new, anti-Marxist and anti-Judaistic Germany, independent from the bolshevized Berlin and based in southern Germany, would be created under the Wittelsbach crown.”⁹

In February 1923, in Munich—nine months before Hitler’s Beer Hall Putsch in that city—Fuchs was arrested for his efforts to overthrow the government. He was convicted of high treason and sentenced to twelve years in prison for his participation in the Bavarian separatist movement. Released in 1927, he wrote a book describing his experiences there. In the guise of a memoir and an argument in favor of prison reform, *Wir Zuchthäusler: Erinnerungen des Zellengefangenen Nr. 2911* [We Prisoners: Memories of Inmate No. 2911] offers an extended rant concerning the downfall of Western civilization. “Where one would expect a higher level of culture” as a result of technological and industrial developments, he explained, for example, “this decline is accompanied by an ever more rapidly approaching extinction of civilized populations that are being overrun by a devitalized, spiritually bankrupt chaos, by members of the human race who are incapable of civilization.”¹⁰

Evincing a remarkable propensity for graphomania, Fuchs continued to write copiously until his death in 1949. His journals from the 1930s reveal an enthusiasm for National Socialism that is unsurprising, given the conservative politics—and the

⁸ Ibid., 130-32.

⁹ Das Ziel wäre, die Pfalz, das linke Rheinufer und die Oesterreichischen Länder dadurch dem Deutschtume zu erhalten, dass ein von dem bolschewisierten Berlin unabhängiges, antimarxistisches-antijudaistisches neues Deutschland auf süddeutscher Basis geschaffen werde und zwar unter der Krone Wittelsbach.” Ibid., 132.

¹⁰ Georg Fuchs, “We Prisoners: Memories of Inmate No. 2911,” in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 737. The German is found in *Wir Zuchthäusler: Erinnerungen des Zellengefangenen Nr. 2911* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1931), 2.

inseparability of cultural analysis and political aims—that characterized his earlier writings. In *The Stage of the Future*, he had described the need to create a new culture and the audience to accompany it: “As our fathers created a *culture* through the rhythmically formed influence of their simple, handicraft civilization, so do we wish to create for ourselves a *modern* culture through the same mastery of our complicated machine civilization.”¹¹ This new German culture would, he hoped, encourage audiences to adopt a cohesive political identity that he believed to be necessary for forming a strong German nation. “For almost a hundred years the Germans have not been gentlemen,” he had complained in 1907 in *German Form*, “but instead unimportant, submissive people who borrowed from their neighbors and humbled themselves before the schoolmaster’s cane.”¹² By building audiences comprising the important and powerful German elite, the Artists’ Theater would help redress this lamentable trend.

When Fuchs adopted from Hildebrand the presumptions of empathy theory to describe how the performance could prompt the spectator’s aesthetic response, he fused psychological principles then current in visual theory with architectural and scenographic design. He did so against the background of a profound shift in German aesthetics then taking place in Munich: the reconfiguration of nineteenth-century empathy theory as passive while the individual, bourgeois, male spectator implied by this theory metamor-

¹¹ “Wie unsere Väter sich durch rhythmisch gestaltende Beeinflussung ihrer einfachen, handwerklichen Zivilization eine *Kultur* schufen, so wollen wir uns eine *moderne* Kultur schaffen durch ebensolche Beherrschung unserer komplizierten Maschinenzivilization.” Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin: Schüster und Löffler, 1905), 6.

¹² “Seit bald hundert Jahren waren die Deutschen keine Herren mehr, sondern geringe, unterwürfige Leute, die von den Nachbarn borgten und sich vor dem Stöcklein des Schulmeisters erniedrigten. . . .” Georg Fuchs, *Deutsche Form: Betrachtungen über die Berliner Jahrhundertausstellung und die Münchener Retrospektive, mit einer Einleitung: Von den ‘letzten Dingen’ in der Kunst, von Georg Fuchs* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1907), 398.

phosed into the communal mass audience described by the new theory of visual abstraction. Fuchs never distinguished the empathy felt communally by an audience from that felt by an individual. Although empathy had been conceived by Vischer, and treated by Fiedler and Hildebrand, as an active perceptual response, the audience of perceptually active spectators that Fuchs imagined presented its own set of questions. To paraphrase Vischer, although spectators only ostensibly retained their identities during a performance, what had they become? How, in other words—both theoretically and in practice—was the empathy experienced by an individual viewer to be extended to the communal response felt by a mass audience? And finally, with retrospective allegations of protofascism looming over the history of German aesthetics in the early twentieth century: can a member of a group audience ever be anything but passive?

Allegations of protofascism, however, are both easy to produce and impossible to sustain. But the effort to recuperate a tarnished reputation, to elevate the stature of a historical figure, is likewise not the central focus of “Empathy Abstracted,” which ultimately seeks neither to bury nor to praise. Its aim, rather, has been to posit the creation and reception of the Artists’ Theater in Munich in 1908 as a moment of convergence both between visual theory and artistic practice and between theater, architecture, and the visual arts. While the solitary viewer epitomized by nineteenth-century aesthetic discourse was giving way to the emerging mass audience that would be attended to more commonly in the 1920s, the Theater provoked intense debate over the very nature of spectatorship itself. Aesthetically and politically, it was neither avant-garde nor retrograde; it can be assimilated neither with the emerging values of abstraction nor

the outmoded concerns of empathy. Rather, it crystallizes the complex relationship between these two foundational concepts in modernist aesthetic discourse and artistic production; its study raises concerns about the mixing of disciplines both theoretically and in practice, both historically and in contemporary scholarship.

Appendix A: Hildebrand's review of the Artists' Theater

Adolf von Hildebrand, "Münchener Künstler-Theater," *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* (February 1908); reprinted first in *Münchener Künstler-Theater, Ausstellung München 1908* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1908), 7-10; and subsequently in Adolf von Hildebrand, *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Strassburg: Heitz, 1909), 71-75.

Die Zwecke, welche das Künstler-Theater verfolgt, beruhen vor allem in einer Klärung des Verhältnisses zwischen der dramatischen und der bildenden Kunst, insoweit letztere auf der Bühne in Betracht kommt.

Es liegt da ein Problem vor, welches je nach der Gattung der dramatischen Dichtung verschieden gelöst werden muß. Ueber eines muß man sich aber klar sein: daß der rein dramatische Gesichtspunkt, von dem aus der Dichter den Zuhörer in Mitleidenschaft versetzt, ein ganz selbständiger ist, der mit dem Gesichtspunkt der bildenden Kunst nichts zu tun hat. Ich möchte dies an einem Beispiel klar machen. Denken wir uns den Vorgang der Verbrennung des Savonarola auf dem Platz der Signoria in Florenz und versetzen wir uns in die Aufregung des Publikums und das ungeheure dramatische Erlebnis. Der Vorgang spielte sich freilich auf der Piazza ab, aber es ist klar, daß die innere Aufregung und das leidenschaftliche Verfolgen dessen, was da geschah, es nicht zuließ, sich mit der Betrachtung der Piazza als Erscheinung zu beschäftigen. Das reine Bild der Erscheinung konnte nur ein bildender Künstler dabei beobachten, welcher abseits des inneren dramatischen Erlebnisses und außerhalb der inneren Mitaktion blieb. Für das Publikum aber, welches hingerissen von dem Vorgang ihn auch miterlebte, war die Piazza der gewohnte äußere Rahmen, kein Augenerlebnis. Der, welcher Zeit und Ruhe hat, das Augenbild abzulösen vom Vorgang, befindet sich schon außerhalb des rein dramatischen Zusammenhangs, die Kette ist zerrissen und er ist bildender Künstler. Hier

liegen die Gesichtspunkte der beiden Künste beim Erlebnis weit auseinander, und sie müssen es, sobald jeder einheitlich bleiben soll.

Das wirkliche Drama will aber den Zuschauer rein dramatisch erleben lassen, weshalb wir seiner Wirkung auch beim bloßen Lesen erliegen. Was den Eindruck auf der Bühne erhöht und was der Zuhörer dabei noch seinem Auge verdankt, hat nichts mit dem Erleben des bildenden Künstlers zu tun und darf es auch nicht, weil es den inneren Zustand sofort ändert und weil es ein ganz anderes Verhältnis zur Natur voraussetzt. Die dramatische Kraft, wo sie wirklich auftritt, verscheucht alle anderen Interessen. Darin liegt eben ihre Gewalt. Ich will von den Dramen Shakespeares gar nicht reden, sondern eine Erzählung wie den Kohlhaas erwähnen, worin Kleist den Leser so fest mit seinen eisernen dramatischen Klammern packt, daß er nichts von Beschreibung und anschaulicher Zutat bedarf, um ihn gänzlich mitzureißen und erleben zu lassen.

Daraus folgt aber, daß, wenn wir uns die Verbrennung des Savonarola auf der Bühne dächten, die künstlerische Wahrheit für die Bühnendekoration nicht darin liegen darf, eine möglichst wahrheitsgetreue und wirkliche Piazza della Signoria zu bringen, sondern sie nur so weit und nur so stark zu geben, als sie beim wirklich dramatischen Erleben noch in Betracht kommt, d. h. als erklärender, individueller Rahmen. Also der Zustand des dramatischen Erlebens ist die maßgebende Wahrheit, nicht die Wirklichkeit, welche für den betrachtenden Zustand, fürs Auge in Frage kommen kann.

Jedes Mehr zieht ab vom dramatischen Erleben!

Das Maß zu finden für den Augeneindruck, insoferne es nur die Situation stützt, nicht aber die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich lenkt und abzieht — da liegt das Problem für die Bühne beim wirklichen Drama.

Damit ist zugleich gesagt, daß es nicht gleichgültig ist, was gesehen wird. Es ist wohl zu bedenken, daß das Augenstörende ebenso abziehen kann wie das Zuviel, und daß es sich innerhalb des Maßes und der Stärke der Wirkung stets um eine Harmonie handeln wird, welche das Auge wohltuend berührt, ohne es selbständig werden zu lassen. — Damit fällt aber nicht nur die ganze große Bühnenprotzerei mit ihrem Vielzuviel, sondern auch die Liebhaberei des bildenden Künstlers, das Auge zu beschäftigen und ein fesselndes Bild, ein Schaustück zu geben.

Nun gibt es aber Theaterstücke, die nicht die eigentliche, geschlossene dramatische Kraft besitzen, und die ihre Lücken mit Augenbeschäftigung ausfüllen wollen, Stücke, die also von vornherein auf letztere rechnen. Es ist klar, daß hier die Aufgabe für die Bühne sich verschiebt und der rein dramatische Gesichtspunkt nicht der alleinige ist. Hier ist jedoch immer noch ein Wichtiges zu tun nötig, welches unter allen Umständen zur Aufgabe der Bühnenverbesserung gehört, das ist die Vereinfachung der Mittel, um eine schlagendere Wirkung zu erreichen. Die Erfahrung des bildenden Künstlers vermag hier unendlich viel zu tun. Mit ein paar Bäumen, die richtig gestellt sind, den Eindruck eines ganzen Waldes hervorzurufen, mit einer Straßenecke das Bild einer ganzen Stadt in der Phantasie anzuregen, das sind Aufgaben, die höchst interessant und wichtig für die Bühne sind. Denn es geht dem Zuschauer wie dem Kinde. Gibt man ihm eine Puppe, die zu wirklich und zu ausführlich ist, so hat die Phantasie nichts mehr

zu ergänzen, die Puppe mit ihrer allzu großen Realität verdirbt dem Kinde seine imaginäre Welt und das Kind kann nichts damit anfangen.

Genau so mit der Bühne, die nicht darauf abzielt, die Phantasie in Bewegung zu setzen, sondern die in ganz entgegengesetzter Absicht darauf losgeht, dem Auge eine wirkliche Natur weißzumachen.

Hiermit aber habe ich die zwei wesentlichen Punkte des Problems dargelegt, welche in Frage kommen, wenn man die Bühnenfrage aufwirft. Das Bestreben liegt vor, einen derartigen Versuch zu wagen, und es wäre verdienstlich, wenn er gelänge.

Appendix B: Worringer's review of the Artists' Theater

Wilhelm Worringer, "Das Münchener Künstlertheater," in *Die Neue Rundschau* 19 (July-December 1908), pp. 1709-1711

Die Neuerungen des Künstlertheaters, des letzten Produkts deutscher Kunst-Problematik, zielen in der Hauptsache auf eine Rationalisierung jener irrationellen Elemente, die nun einmal mit dem Theater verbunden sind und die nur den stören, der sich auch in der Welt von Pappe und Schminke nicht zu einem Vorübergehenden *sacrificius intellectus* verstehen will. Die Konsequenz wäre ja allerdings, von diesem Standpunkt aus das Theater überhaupt zu verneinen, aber da man nur den angeblich goldenen Mittleweg zwischen seinem Verstande und seinen Instinkten sucht, begnügt man sich mit einem Kompromiß und reformiert einstweilen nur das Bühnenbild. Da empfinden die Protestanten der Reformbühne es als einen unwürdigen Zustand, daß die gute alte Guckkastenbühne mit ihren Soffitten und Kulissen, ihren Lächerlichkeiten und Widersprüchen zu stark an die Sinnlichkeit des Auges appelliert. Denn diese schöpferische Sinnlichkeit des Auges, die sich über alle irrationellen Elemente und über alle Widersprüche hinwegsetzt und von der Empfindung hingerissen sich unter der Suggestion des Schauspielers und des gesprochenen Wortes aus Pappwänden und Versatzstücken eine Welt schafft, erscheint ihnen über alle Maßen sündhaft und verwerflich. Dafür appellieren sie mit doktrinärem Pathos an die logische Schöpferkraft des Auges. Das ist der springende Punkt des neuen Programmes. Statt sinnlich zu genießen, soll das Auge logisch arbeiten. Darum wird jeder illusionistische Täuschungsversuch krampfhaft vermieden. Nur Andeutungen werden dem Auge gegeben

und ihm die Aufgabe überlassen, diese Andeutungen logisch zu einem Ganzen zu verarbeiten. Als Konzession an die Sinnlichkeit des Auges erscheint es, daß dieses nur angedeutete Bühnenbild gleichzeitig durch wohlberechnete Verteilung von Farben und Linien zu einem künstlerisch Ganzen abgestimmt wird. Aber das ist in der Absicht keine Konzession. Vielmehr liegt dieser Harmonisierung des Bühnenbildes die wohlerwogene Absicht zugrunde, die sinnliche Phantasie des Auges dadurch auszuschalten, daß man den Blick an einen Gesamteindruck fesselt, der der Phantasie keine Anregung gibt und ihre Bewegungsfreiheit unterbindet. Erst durch diese Lähmung der Phantasie wird eine logische Sammlung des Auges ermöglicht. So herrscht also auf der Bühne die feierliche jede Ablenkung vermeidende Nüchternheit protestantischer Kirchen mit ihren ungebrochenen Flächen und nackten Wänden, wenn auch dieser puritanischer Eindruck glücklicherweise einigermaßen temperiert wird durch die süddeutsche Farbenfreudigkeit jener Münchener Künstler, die man mit der dekorativen Ausgestaltung des Bühnenbildes beauftragt hatte. Die Auswahl dieser Künstler widerspricht zwar dem Prinzip, aber man hatte allen Grund sich über diese Inkonsequenz zu freuen.

Das nur logisch arbeitende Auge wird bei der konventionellen Bühne am meisten dadurch verletzt, daß die szenische Ausgestaltung des Bühnenbildes eine Tiefenwirkung erstrebt, mit deren perspektivischer Anlage die an jeder Stelle der Bühne gleichbleibende Größe der Akteure im Widerspruch steht. Dieser perspektivische Tiefentäuschungsversuch wird, das muß zugegeben werden, für den logisch eingestellten Blick immer wieder verraten und zerstört durch den in die vorgespiegelte Bühnentiefe zurücktretenden aber nicht kleiner werdenden Schauspieler. Das ist nun die große Tat der Reliefbühne, daß sie mit diesem unleidlichen Mißstand, der von fünfhundert Zuschauern

wohl nur einem dann und wann mal zu Bewußtsein kommt, gründlich bricht. Die neue Bühne verzichtet auf jede über Andeutungen hinausgehende Tiefenillusion. Denn sie ist nur wenige Meter tief und wird gleich durch eine senkrechte Wand abgeschlossen, deren freskenartige Hintergrundmalerei ohne jede illusionistische Absicht die nötigen Andeutungen für die Raumvorstellungen des Zuschauers gibt. Man sitzt also buchstäblich vor einer Wand, die sich drohend vor einem aufrichtet und den Blick mit seiner der Tiefe bedürftigen Sinnlichkeit unbarmherzig zurückweist. Hinzu kommt, daß alle Seitenkulissen wegfallen und statt ihrer zwei zwar neutral gehaltene aber der architektonischen Haltung des übrigen Theaters doch angepaßte und deshalb diskret modern stilisierte Seitentürme, die durch eine Überbrückung verbunden sind, das Bühnenbild einrahmen. Die beiden niedrigen Türen dieser Türme, die auf die Szene hinausgehen, dienen den Akteuren als Eingang und Abgang, es sei denn, daß sie es vorziehen, sich durch den engen Zwischenraum durchzuquetschen, der zwischen diesen Türmen und der Hinteregrundwand noch übrig bleibt. Wohl gemerkt, diese modern stilisierten Türme bleiben sich in allen Stücken und Szenen gleich. Nachdem man sie zuerst beim Prolog im Himmel angestaunt hat, kehren sie unentwegt in allen Szenen wieder, flankieren die Hexenküche so gut wie die Walpurgisnacht, Fausts Studierstube so gut wie die Frühlingslandschaft beim Osterspaziergang. Immer wieder tauchen sie auf, gleichsam wie zwei mahnend erhobene Zeigefinger, die das an den schönen Trug der alten Bühnenausstattung gewohnte Auge unablässig auf jene theoretischen Darlegungen des Programmbuchs verweisen, die den verdutzten Leser auf vielen Seiten von dem tieferen Sinn dieser Sinnlosigkeit zu überzeugen versuchen und ihm im Nichtglaubensfalle seine Rückständigkeit energisch unter die Nase reiben.

Gewisse irrationelle Elemente des alten Theaters mußte die Reliefbühne leider auch in den Kauf nehmen, vor allem die Schauspieler. Das sind nämlich lebendige Wesen, die eigne Wirkungsgesetze haben und der lebendigen Atmosphäre bedürftig sind. Als Schattenrisse vor eine bemalte Leinwand gestellt, büßen sie alle dynamischen Möglichkeiten ihrer Kunst ein. Nicht nur ihre Stimmen, die überdeutlich ohne jede wohltuende Beschattung, ohne jede Nuancierungsmöglichkeiten ins Publikum zurückgeworfen werden, auch ihre Bewegungen entbehren der eigentlichen atmosphärischen Resonanz. Es ist für ein empfindliches Gefühl so, als ob die Akteure in einem luftleeren Raume gestikulierten. Kurz: auf der Reliefbühne wirkt der Schauspieler mit seiner Körperlichkeit stillos. Er ist für sie zu illusionistisch. Denn wenn einmal die illusionistische Tätigkeit beim Zuschauer geweckt ist, will sie auch weiterarbeiten. Man sollte deshalb konsequent sein und mit Marionetten oder sogar bloßen Schattenrissen arbeiten. Denn so wirkt der Widerspruch zwischen dem Stil des Schauspielers und dem Stil der szenistischen Ausgestaltung unerträglich. Der moderne Schauspieler gibt nun mal seine ganze volle Lebendigkeit, gibt organische Differenziertheit und psychologische Vertiefung. Er kann nicht vor abstrakten Andeutungen spielen, die seinem Spiel nicht antworten. Er will lebendige Atmosphäre um sich. Warum nahm man ihm die Resonanz, warum nahm man ihm die alte Bühne, diesen köstlichen Mikrokosmos von Pappwänden und Versatzstücken, in dem sein Leben erst die eigentliche Plastik gewann? Warum? Der Bühnenprotestant antwortet: *ad majoram rationis gloriam*. Und fährt mit seiner Enttheatralisierung des Theaters fort. Das Leben aber wird an ihm vorüberrauschen, denn es ist stärker als die Doktrinen.

Nachdem man das Künstlertheater gesehen, bittet man der alten Bühne, an der man so herzlich gelästert, vieles ab. Man gewinnt sie von neuem lieb und hängt an ihr mit jener *predilection d'artiste*, mit der man den Katholizismus liebt. Und sagt sich: *sint ut sunt aut non sint*.

Und das vielberedete Problem des Theaters erscheint einem plötzlich lächerlich einfach. Sonderbar: vor der Bühnenbildreform des Künstlertheaters fällt es einem wie Offenbarung ein: stellt gute Schauspieler auf die Bühne und das Problem des Theaters ist gelöst.

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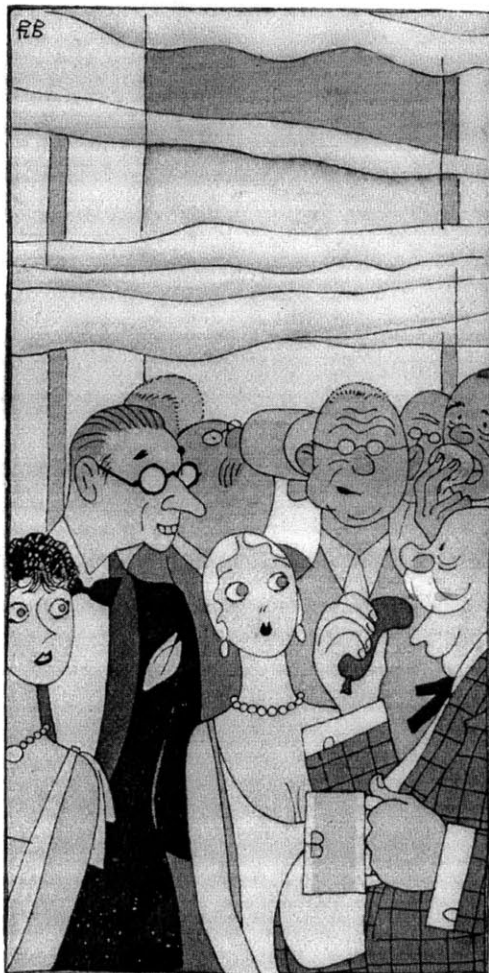
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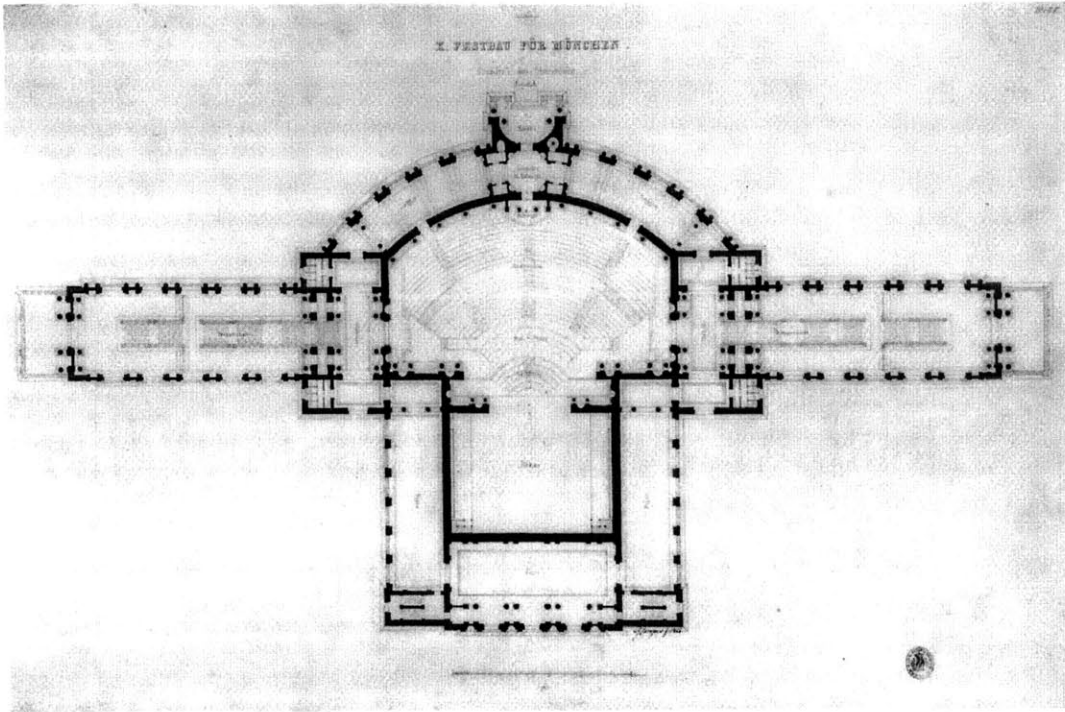
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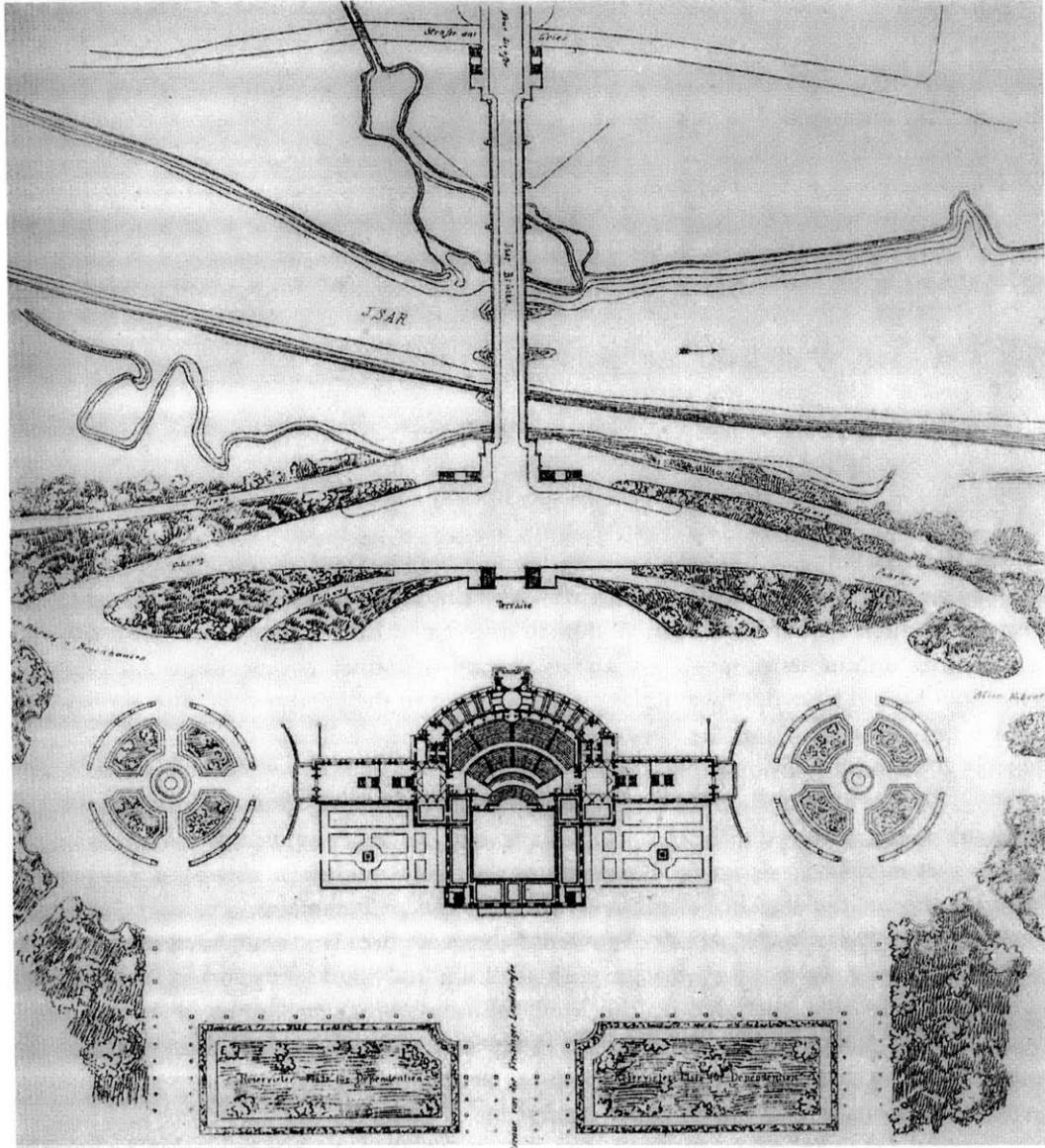


*"The Germans stand in the lobby of the theatre
and eat quite a lot of Bermudian onions and
garlick sausage."*

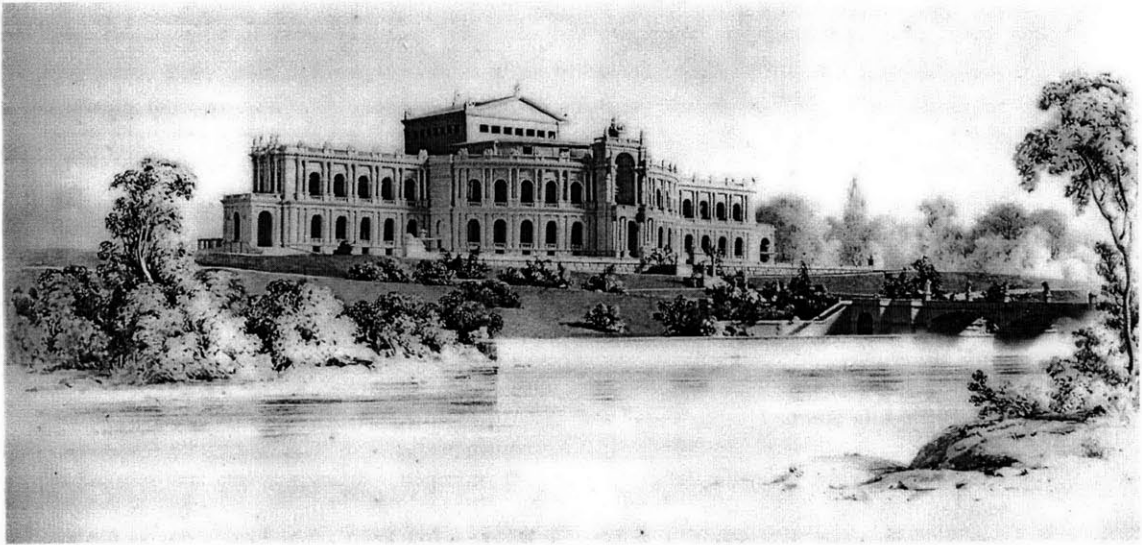
1.1 Ralph Barton, spectators in the lobby
of the Artists' Theater, 1925



2.2 Gottfried Semper, Munich Festspielhaus Plan (1864-67)



2.3 Gottfried Semper, site plan for Munich Festspielhaus (1864-67)



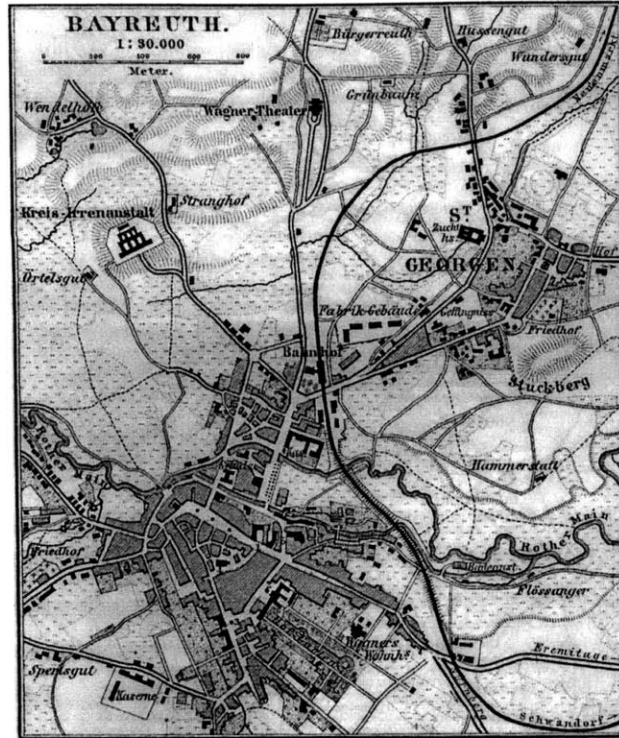
2.4 Gottfried Semper, drawing of Munich Festspielhaus model (1864-67)



2.5 Otto Brückwald, Bayreuth Festspielhaus (1876)



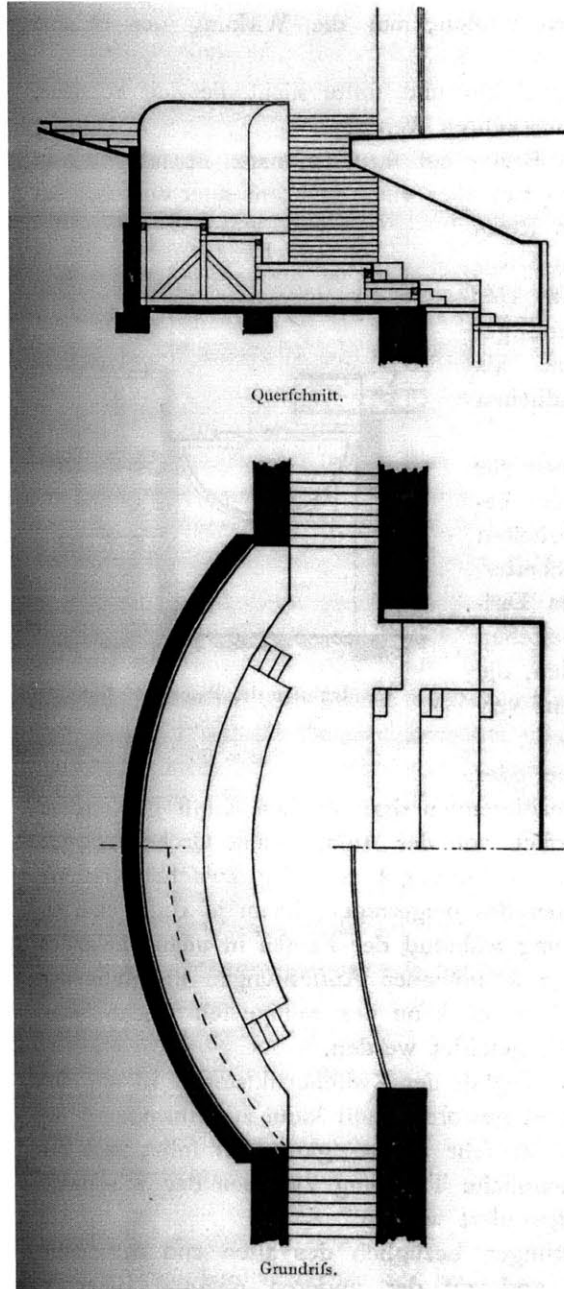
2.6 Contemporary engraving of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus



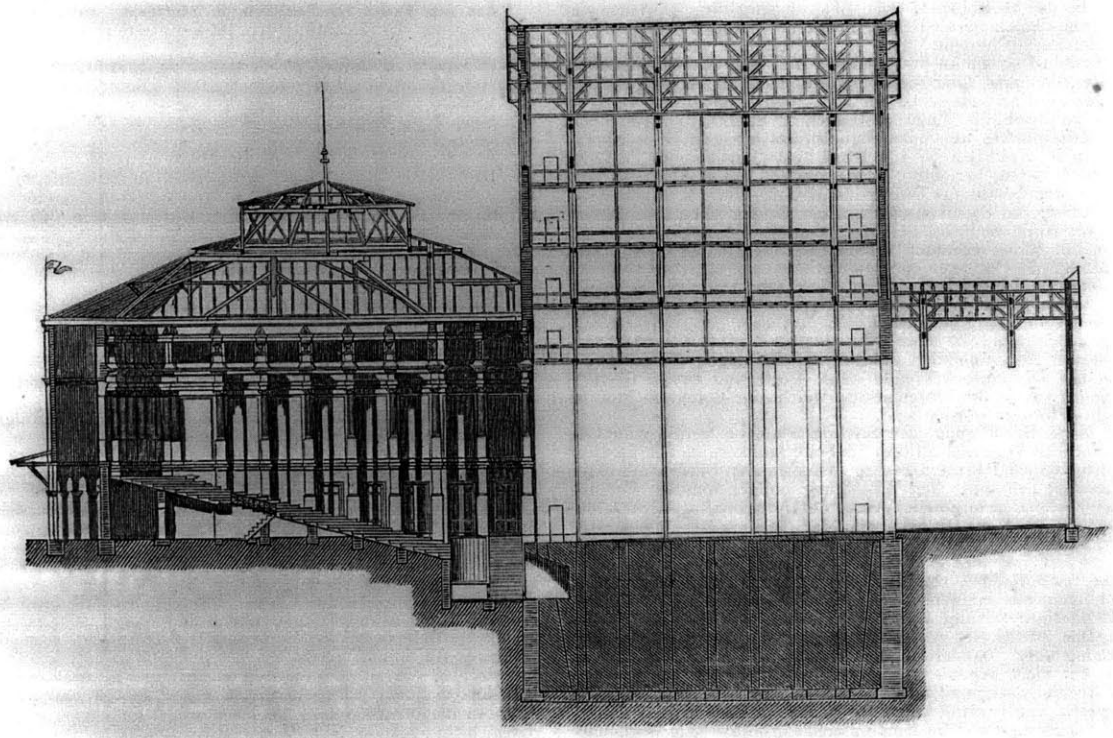
2.7 Baedeker map of Bayreuth (1891)



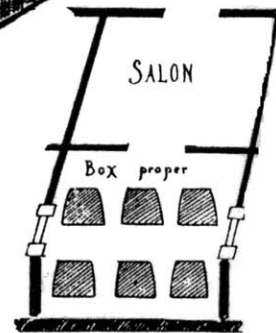
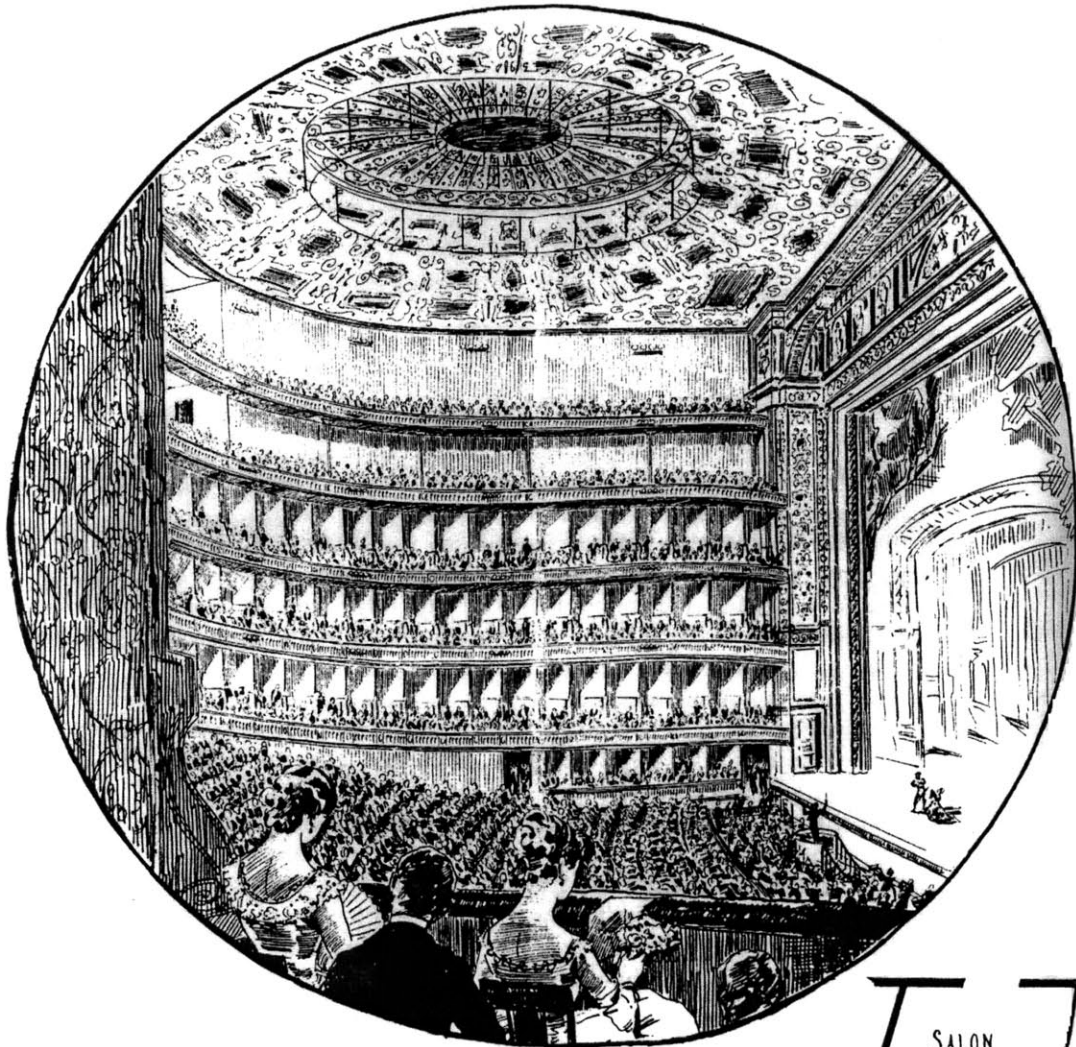
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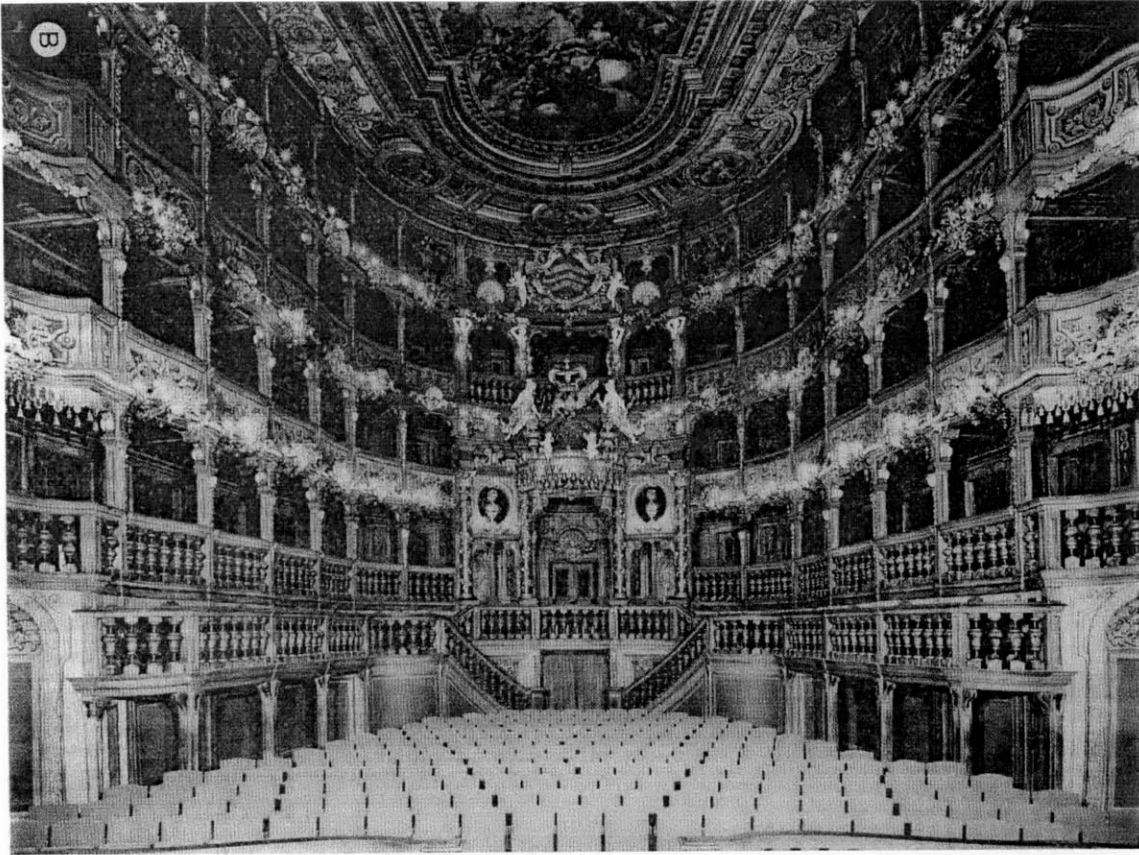
2. 9 Bayreuth orchestra section and plan



2.10 Bayreuth Festspielhaus section



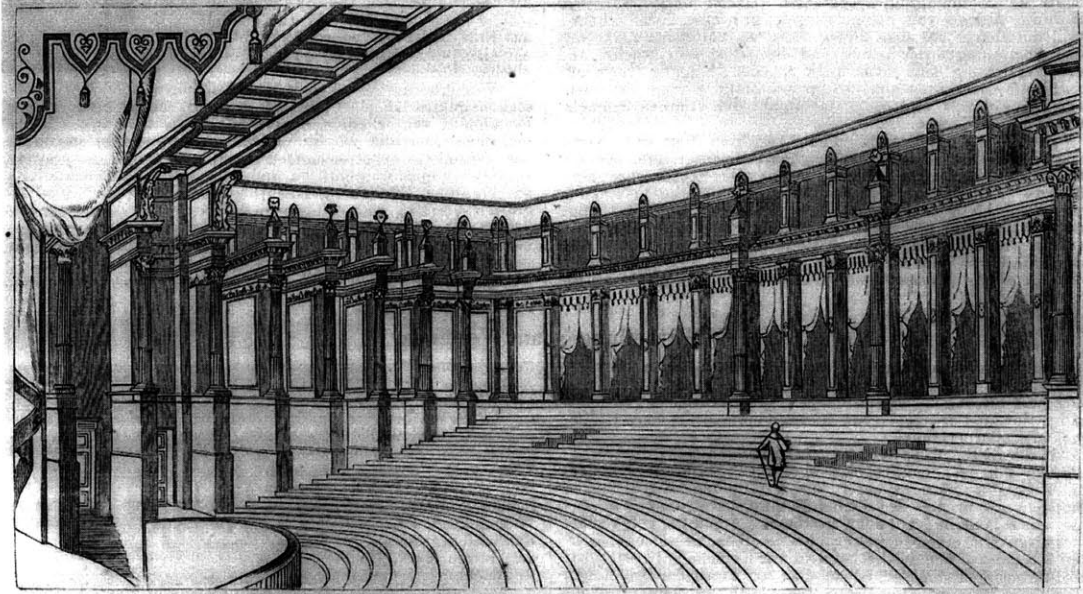
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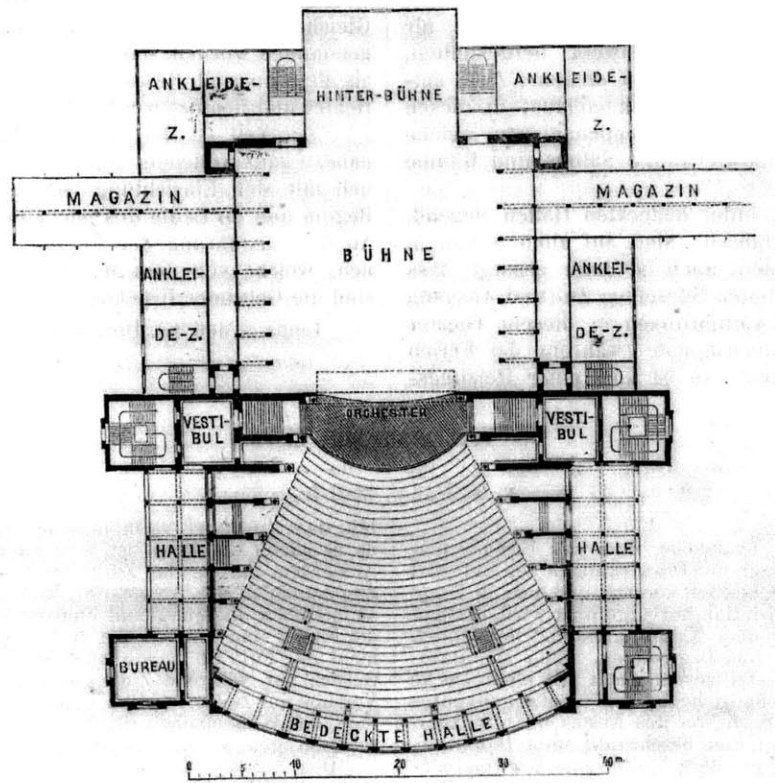
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2.13 Bayreuth Festspielhaus auditorium



2.14 Bayreuth Festspielhaus perspective drawing



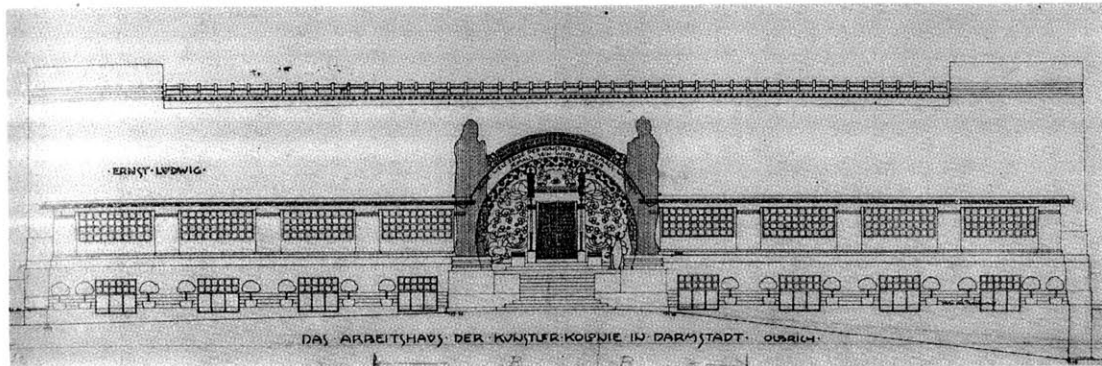
2.15 Bayreuth Festspielhaus plan



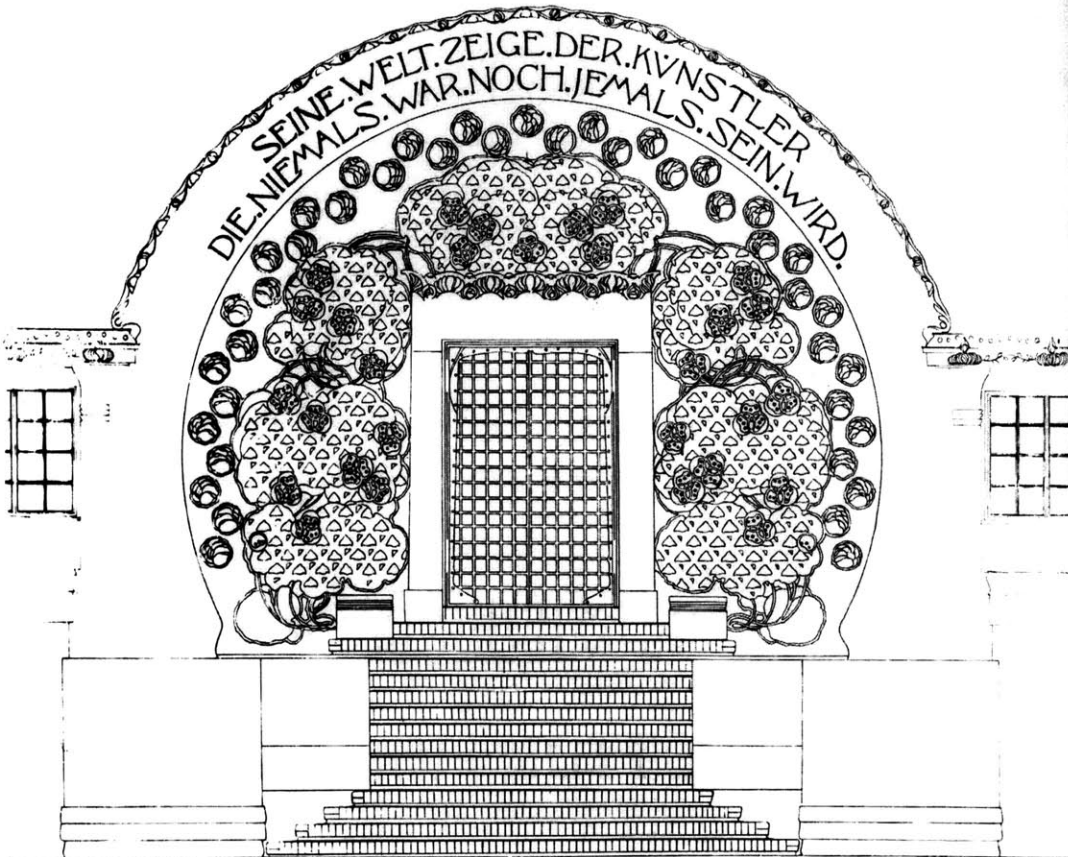
DAS ZEICHEN

DES Morgens aber noch dieser Nacht sprang Zarathustra von seinem Lager auf, gürtete sich die Lenden und kam heraus aus seiner Höhle, glühend und stark, wie eine Morgenröthe, die aus dunklen Bergen kommt. „Du großes Gestirn, sprach er, wie er einstmals gesprochen hatte, du tiefes Glücks-Auge, was wäre all dein Glück, wenn du nicht die hättest, welchen du leuchtest!“ Und wenn sie in ihren Kammern blieben, während du schon wach bist und kommst und ehesten und aussteilst: wie würde darob deine stolze Scham zornen! Wohl! sie schlafen noch, diese höheren Menschen, während ich wach bin: das sind nicht meine rechten Gefährten! Nicht auf sie warte ich hier in meinen Bergen. Zu meinen Werke will ich, zu meinem Tage: aber sie verstehen nicht, was die Zeichen meines Morgens sind, mein Schritt – ist für sie kein Weckruf. Sie schlafen noch in eurer Höhle, ihr Traum trinkt noch an meinen trunkenen Liedern. Des Ohr doch, das nach mir horcht, – das geborchenste Ohr steht in ihren Gliedern.“ – Dies hatte Zarathustra zu seinem Herzen gesprochen, als die Sonne aufstieg: da blühte er freudig in die Höhe, denn er hörte über sich den scharfen Ruf seines Adlers. „Wohlan! rief er hinaus, so gestillt und gebührt es mir. Meine Thiere sind wach, denn ich bin wach.“ Mein Adler ist wach und erst gleich mir die Sonne. Mit Adlers-Klaue greift er nach dem neuen Lichte. Ihr seid meine rechten Thiere; ich liebe euch.“ Aber noch fehlen mir meine rechten Menschen! – ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA: da aber geschah es, daß er sich plötzlich wie von unzähligen Vögeln umschwirrt und umfarrert hörte, – das Gleichwie so vieler Flügel aber und das Gedräng um sein Haupt war so groß, daß er die Augen schloß. Und wahrlich, einer Wolke gleich fiel es über ihn her, einer Wolke von Pfeilen gleich, welche sich über einen neuen Feind ausschütet. Aber siehe, hier war es eine Wolke der Liebe, und über einen neuen Freund. „Was geschieht mir?“ dachte Zarathustra in seinem erlauchten Herzen und ließ sich langsam auf dem großen Steine nieder, der neben dem Ausgange seiner Höhle lag. Aber, indem er mit den Händen um sich und über sich und unter sich griff und den strüchlichen Vögeln wehrte, siehe, da geschah ihm etwas noch Schöneres: er griff nämlich dabei unvermerkt in ein dichtes wärmes Haar-Gesottel hinein, zugleich aber erschall vor ihm ein Gebüll – ein sanftes langes Löwen-Brüllen. „Das Zeichen kommt“, sprach Zarathustra, und sein Herz verwandelte sich. Und in Wahrheit, als es hellte vor ihm wurde, da lag ihm ein gelbes mächtiges Gethier zu Füßen und schmiegte das Haupt an seine Knie und wollte nicht von ihm lassen vor Liebe, und that einem Hunde gleich, welcher seinen alten Herrn wiederfindet. Die Tauben aber waren mit ihrer Liebe nicht minder eifrig als der Löwe; und jedes Mal, wenn eine Taube über die Nase des Löwen hauchte, schüttelte der Löwe das Haupt und wunderte sich und lachte dazu. Zu dem Allen sprach Zarathustra nur Ein Wort: „meine Kinder sind nahe, meine Kinder“, – dann wurde er ganz stumm. Sein Herz aber war gelöst, und aus seinen Augen tropften Thränen herab und fielen auf seine Hände. Und er achtete keines Dings mehr und saß da, unbeweglich und ohne daß er sich noch gegen die Thiere wehrte. Da flogen die Tauben ab und zu und setzten sich ihm auf die Schulter und lieblos sein weißes Haar und wurden nicht müde mit Zärtlichkeit und Probloeken. Der starke Löwe aber leckte immer die Thränen, welche auf die Hände Zarathustra's herabfielen und brüllte und brummte schüchtern dazu. Also trieben es diese Thiere. – Dies Alles dauerte eine lange Zeit, oder eine kurze Zeit: deren, recht gesprochen, giebt es für dergleichen Dinge auf Erden keine Zeit. – Inzwischen aber waren die höheren Menschen in der Höhle Zarathustra's wachgeworden und ordneten sich mit einander zu

3.1 Henry van de Velde, *Zarathustra* (1908)



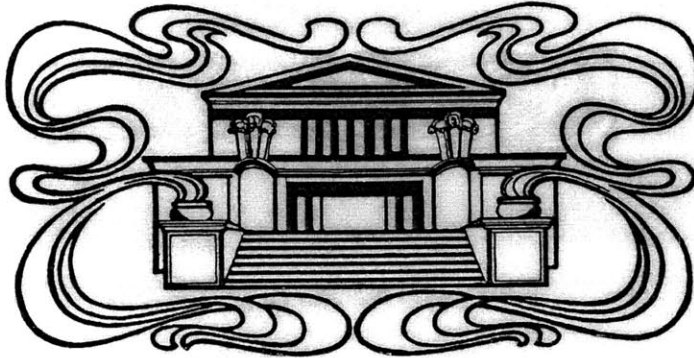
3.2 Joseph Maria Olbrich, Ernst Ludwig House, 1901



3.3 Olbrich, Ernst Ludwig House, elevation detail



3.4 Opening Ceremony, Darmstadt Artists' Colony, 1901



„DAS ZEICHEN“.

Feitliche Dichtung von Georg Fuchs.

CHOR

Es ist ein fremder Ruf erklingen.
Verließe uns der ernste Ton
Des bitteren Barrens Croft und Lohn,
Um den wir heißen Blicks gerungen:
Daß wir in trunkenem Umhängen
Des Lebens Fülle neu empfangen,
Danach die Seele dürstend ichreit:
Wann kommt die Kunde? Wann kommt die Zeit?

DER MANN

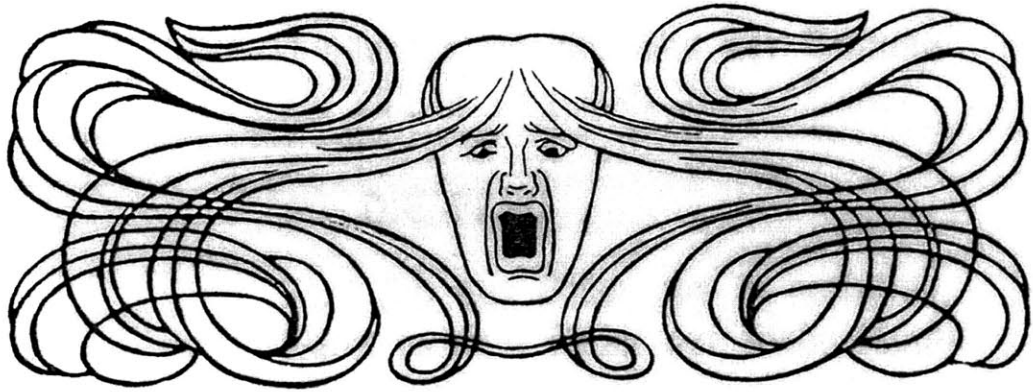
O könnten wir die Glut der Träume
Im kühlen Tag doch klar erhalten.

DIE FRAU

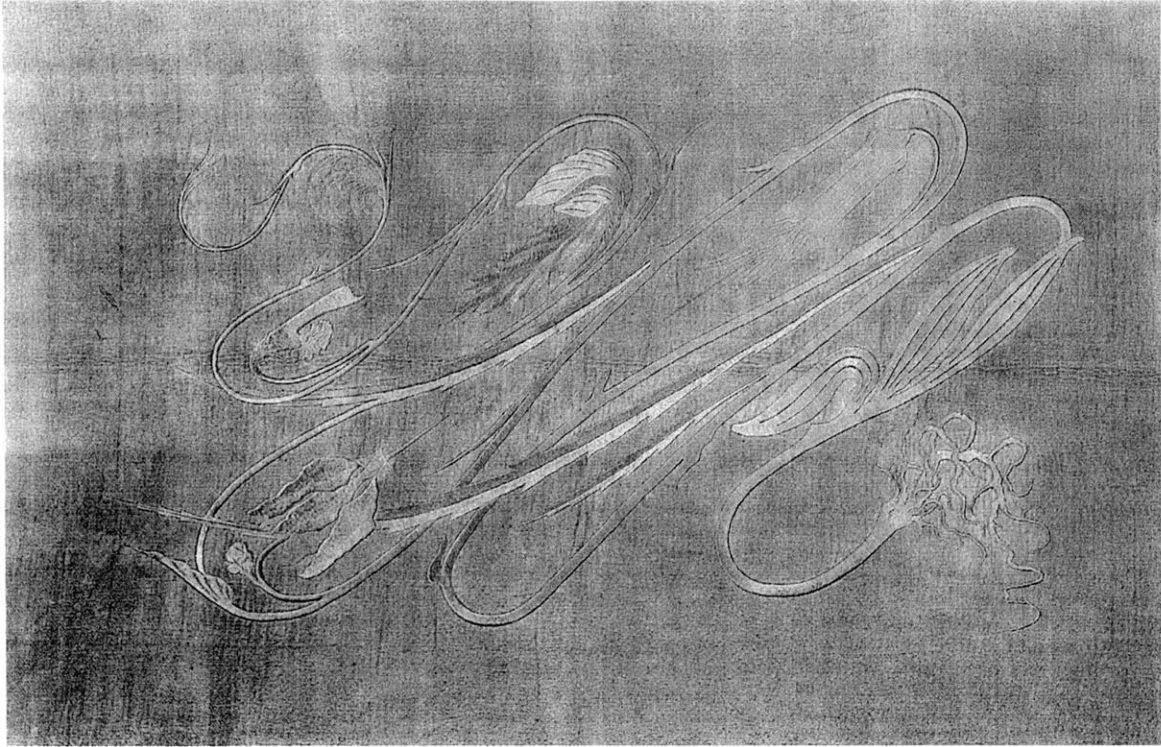
Wird sich das Glück uns je entfalten,
Wenn es dem Fiehn der Liebe säume?

DER MANN

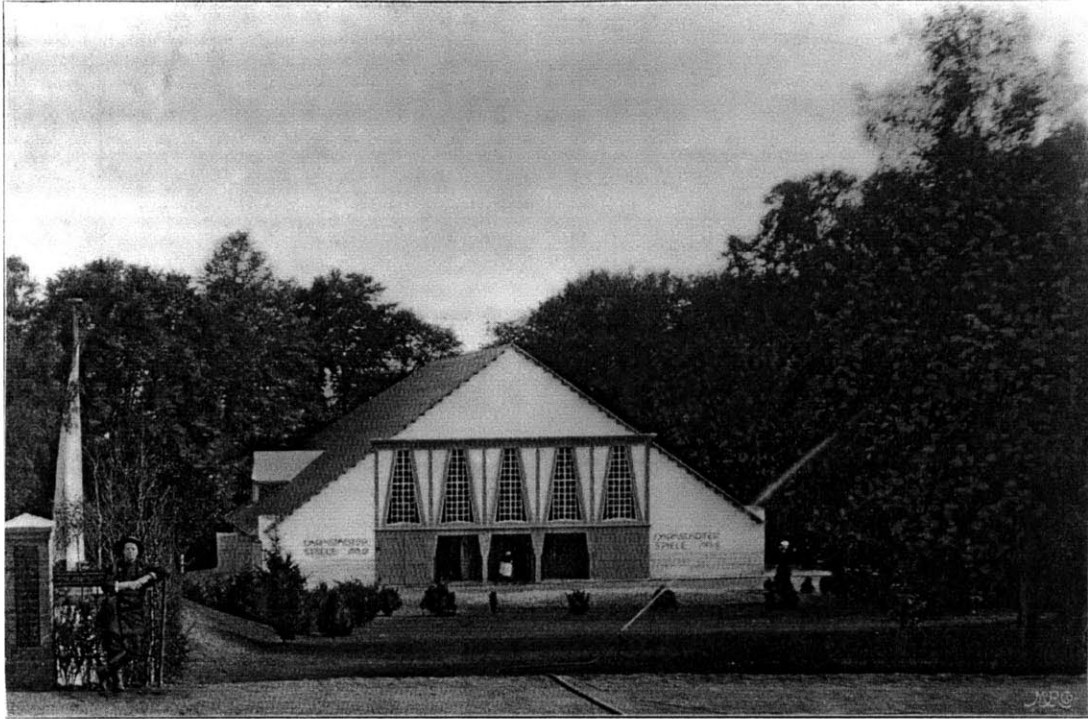
Kann es der Arm uns nicht gewinnen,
Erkauft sich's nicht mit teurem Blut?



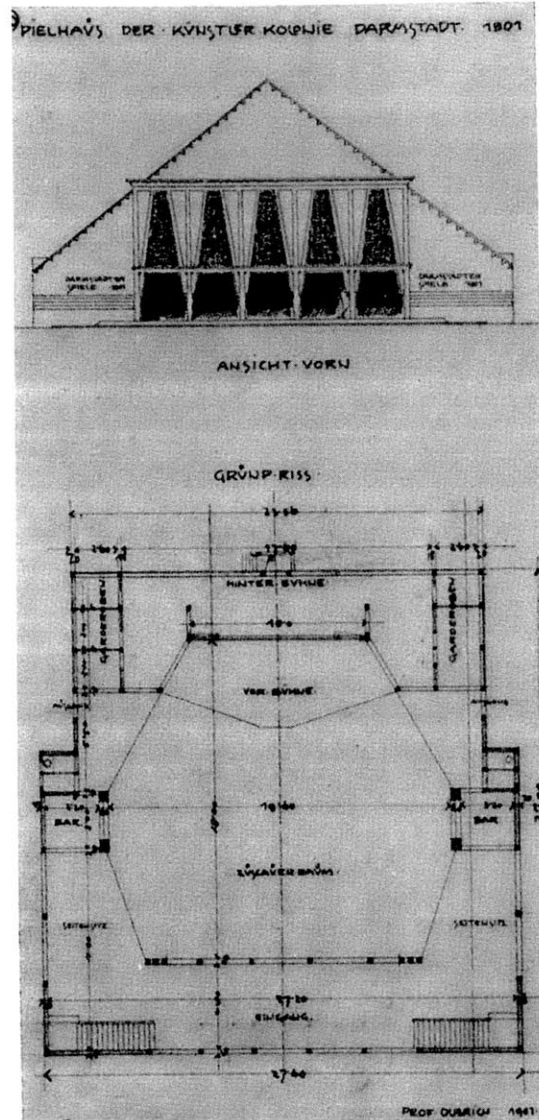
3.6 Second Behrens vignette



3.7 Hermann Obrist, whiplash line embroidery (1896)



3.8 Olbrich, Darmstadt Playhouse (1901)



3.9 Olbrich, Darmstadt Playhouse elevation and plan (1901)



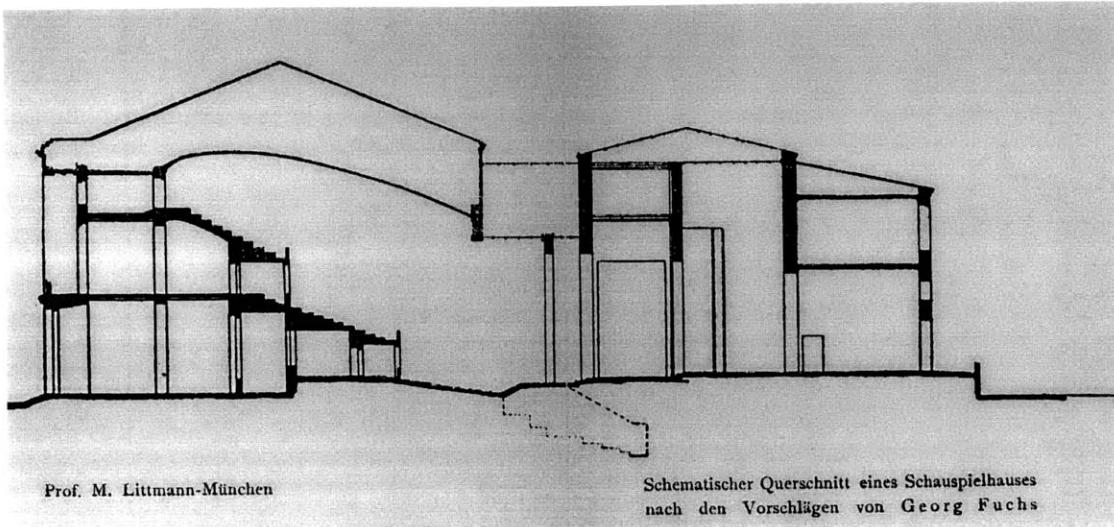
3.10 Olbrich, Darmstadt postcard shop (1901)



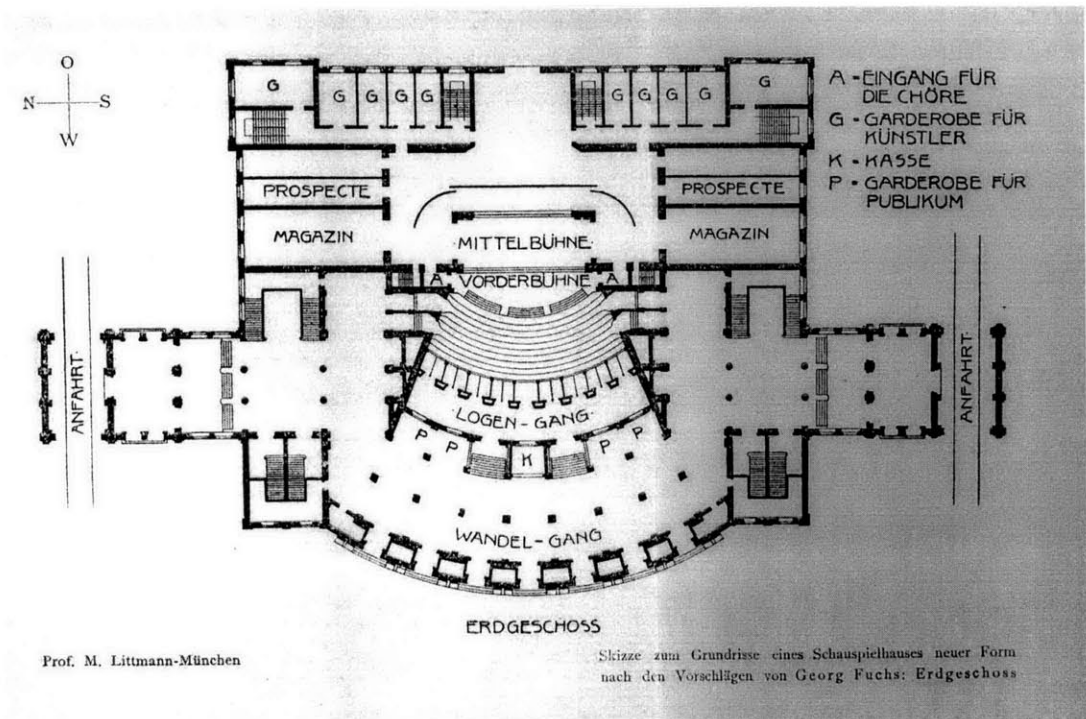
3.11 Gluckert House II and Ernst Ludwig House, Darmstadt (1901)



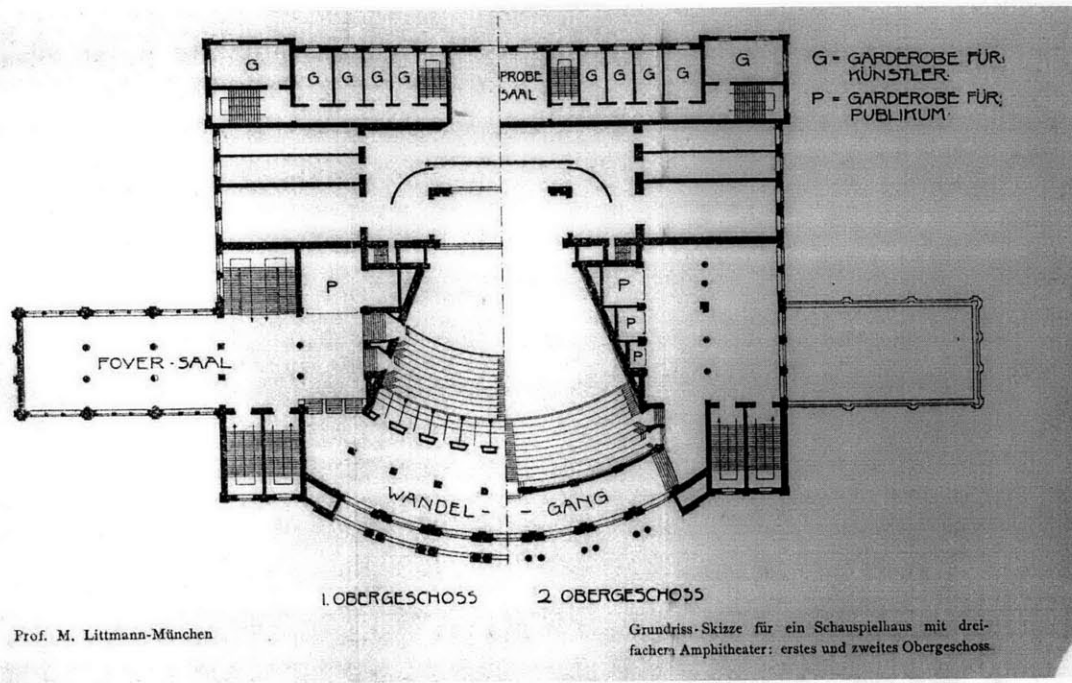
3.12 Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, title page (1900)



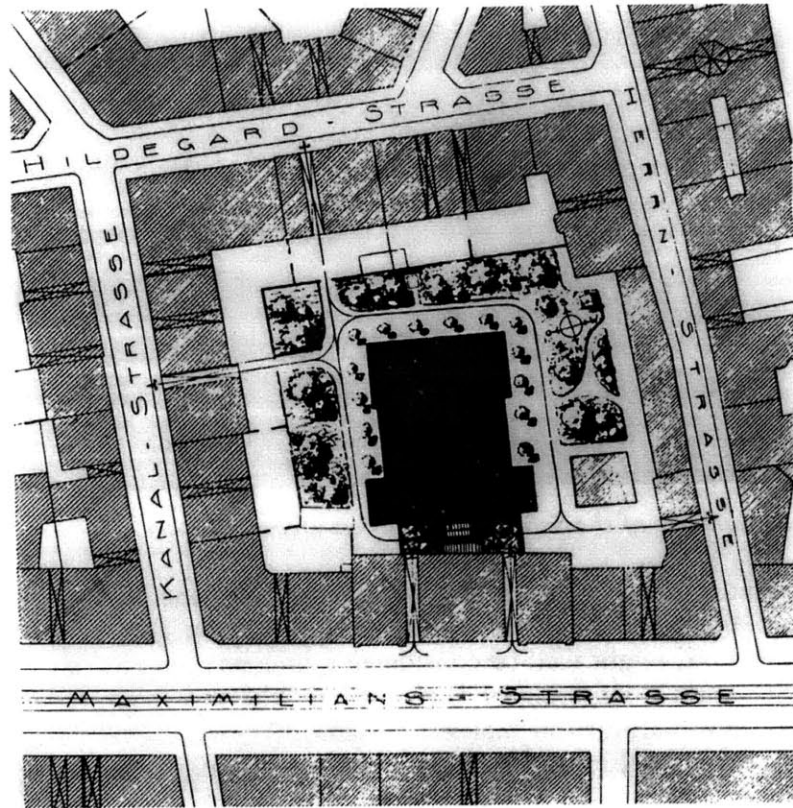
3.13 Max Littmann, theater section following the design of Georg Fuchs



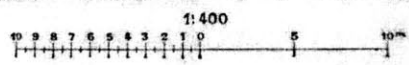
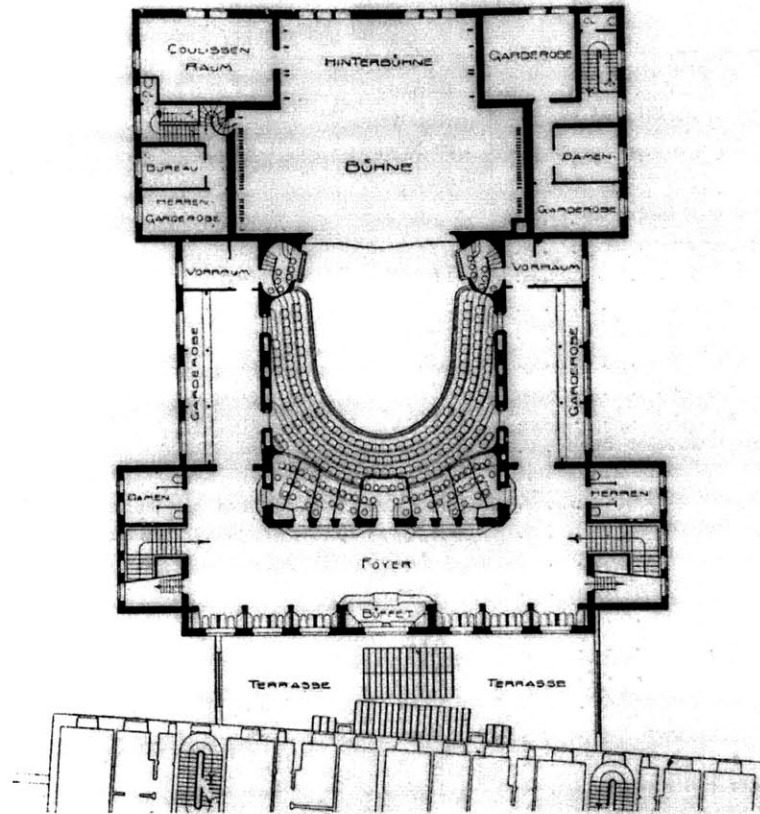
3.14 Max Littmann, ground plan for a theater following the design of Georg Fuchs



3.15 Max Littmann, second- and third-floor plan for a theater, following the designs of Georg Fuchs



3.16 Max Littmann, Schauspielhaus footprint



Grundriss des Erdgeschosses.

Münchener Schauspielhaus zu München ²²¹).

Arch.: Heilmann & Littmann und Riemerschmid.

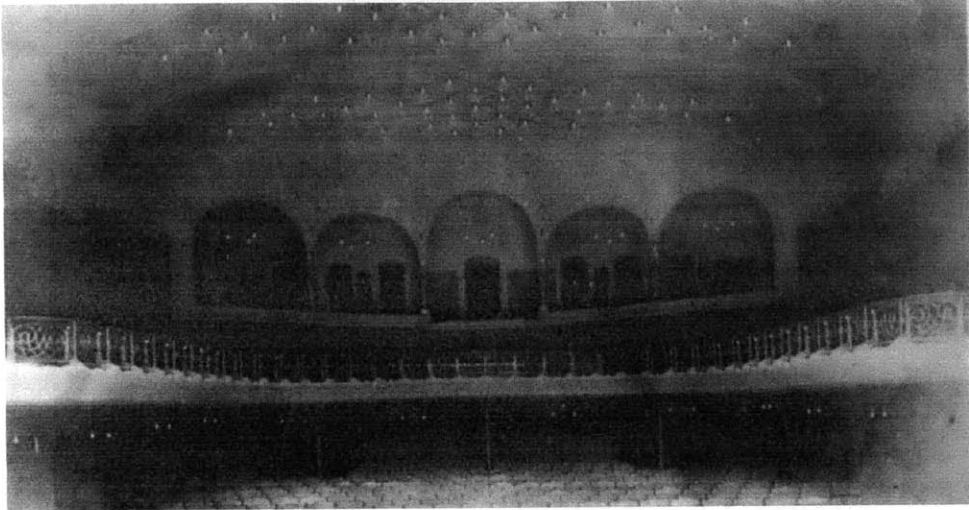
3.17 Max Littmann, Schauspielhaus plan



3.18 Richard Riemerschmid, Schauspielhaus lobby



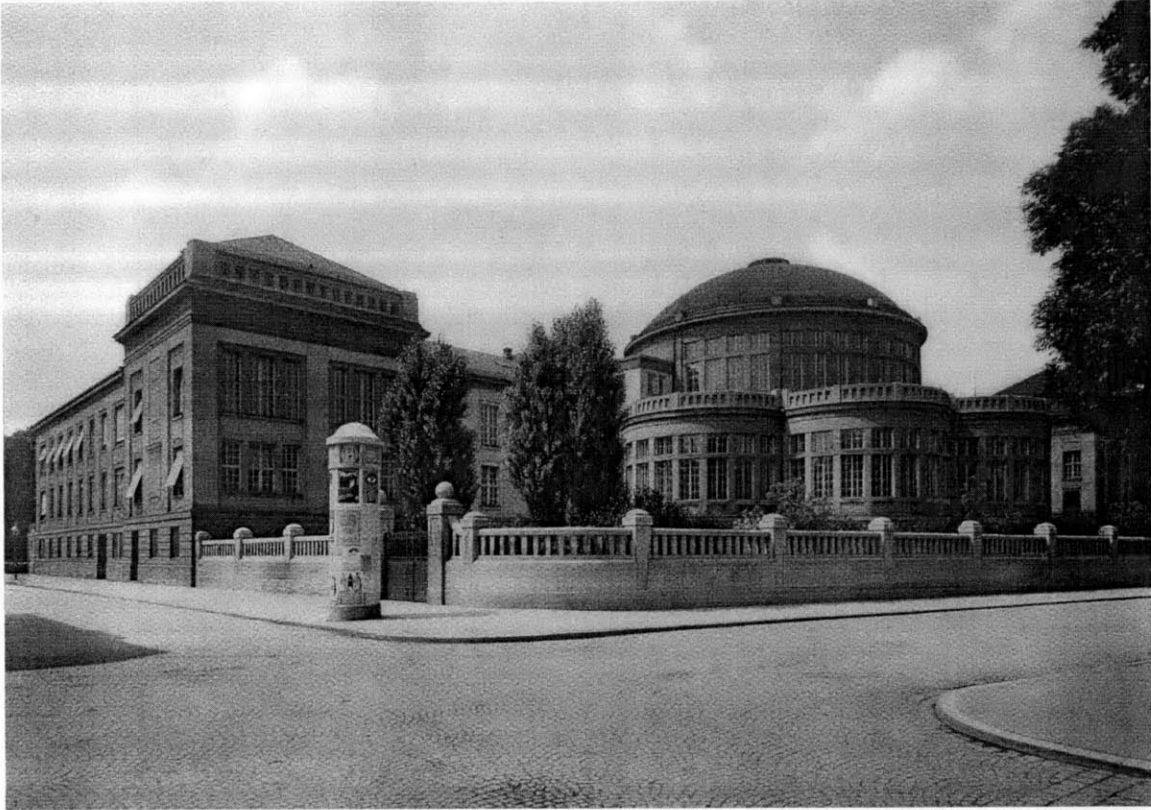
3.19 Richard Riemerschmid, Schauspielhaus column



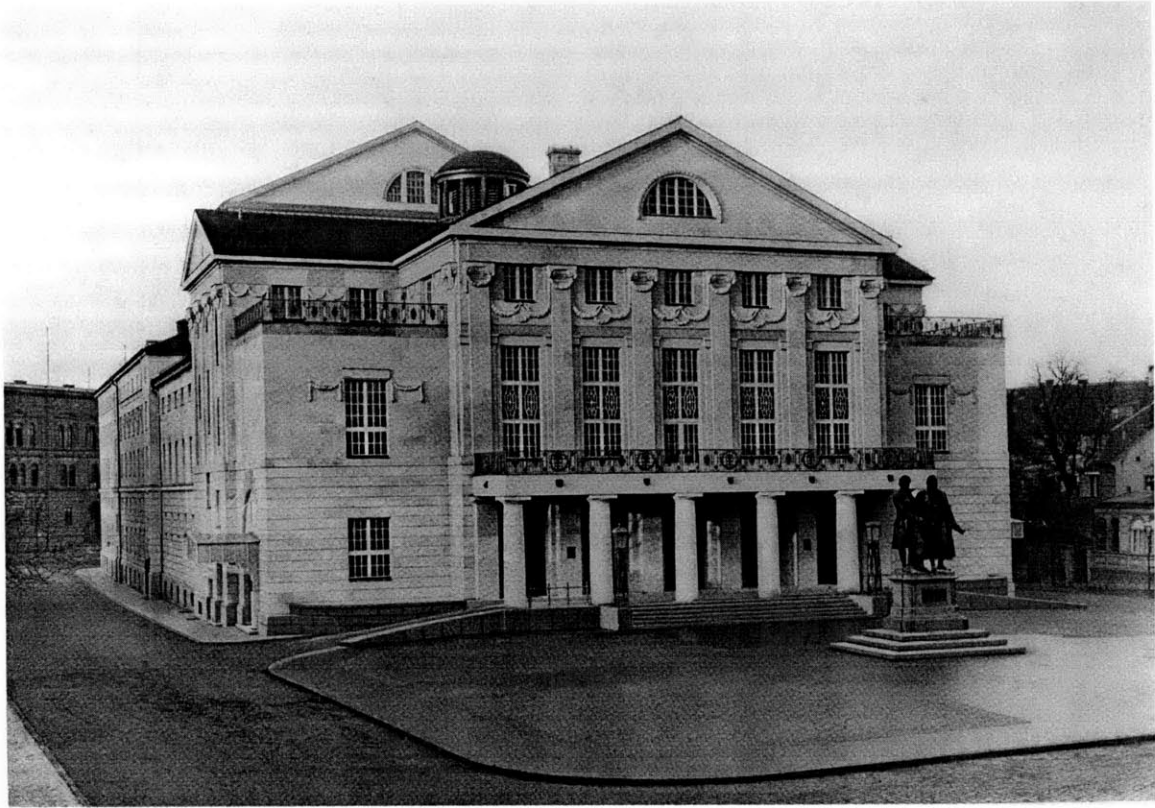
3.20 Max Littmann, Schauspielhaus auditorium



3.21 Max Littmann, Munchener Neueste Nachrichten (1904-05)



3.22 Max Littmann, Anatomy Building (1905-08)



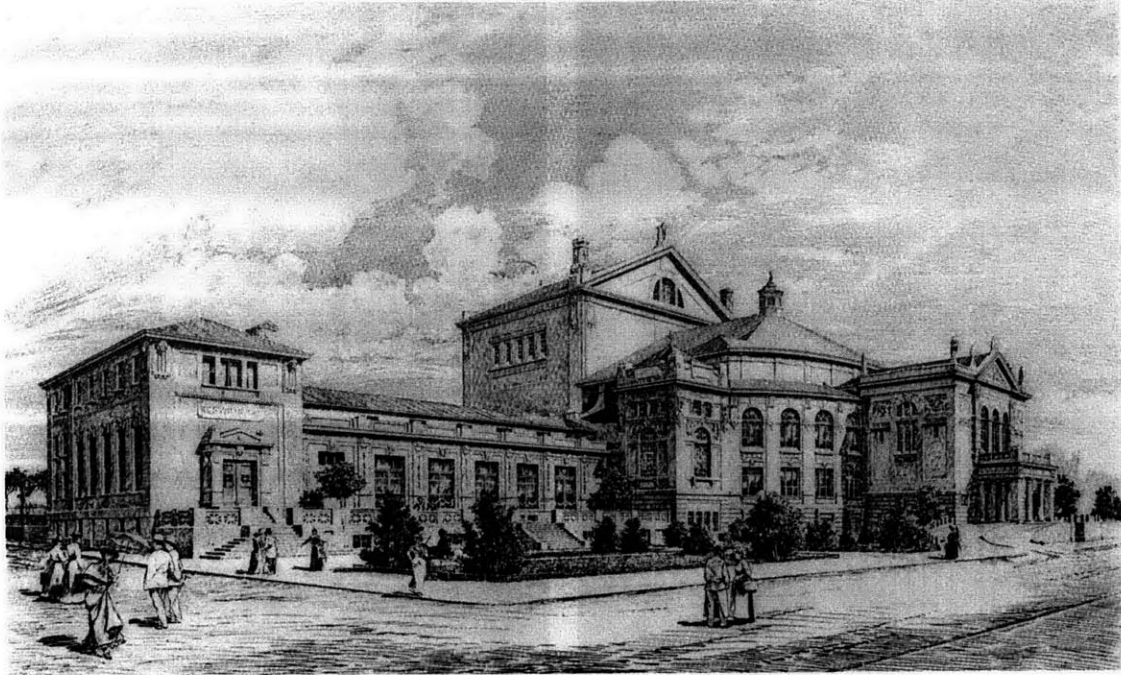
3.23 Max Littmann, Weimar Hoftheater (1906-08)



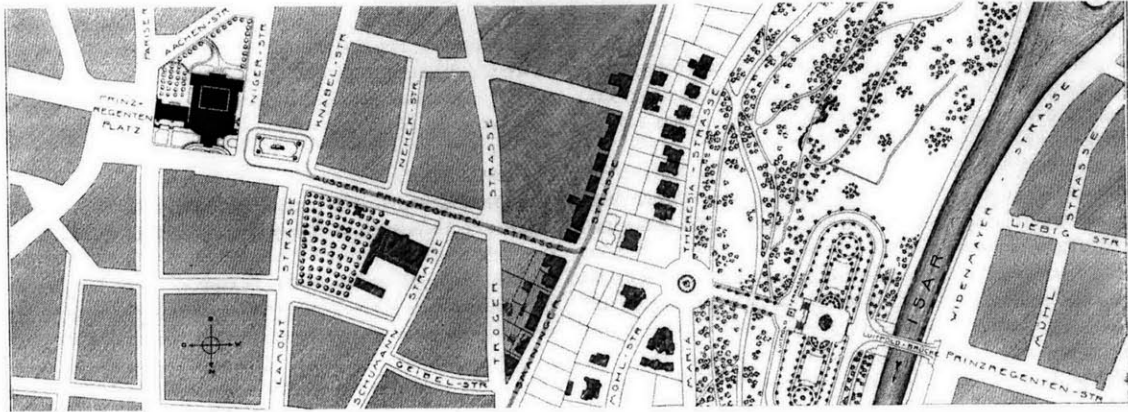
3.24 Max Littmann, Schillertheater, Berlin (1906)



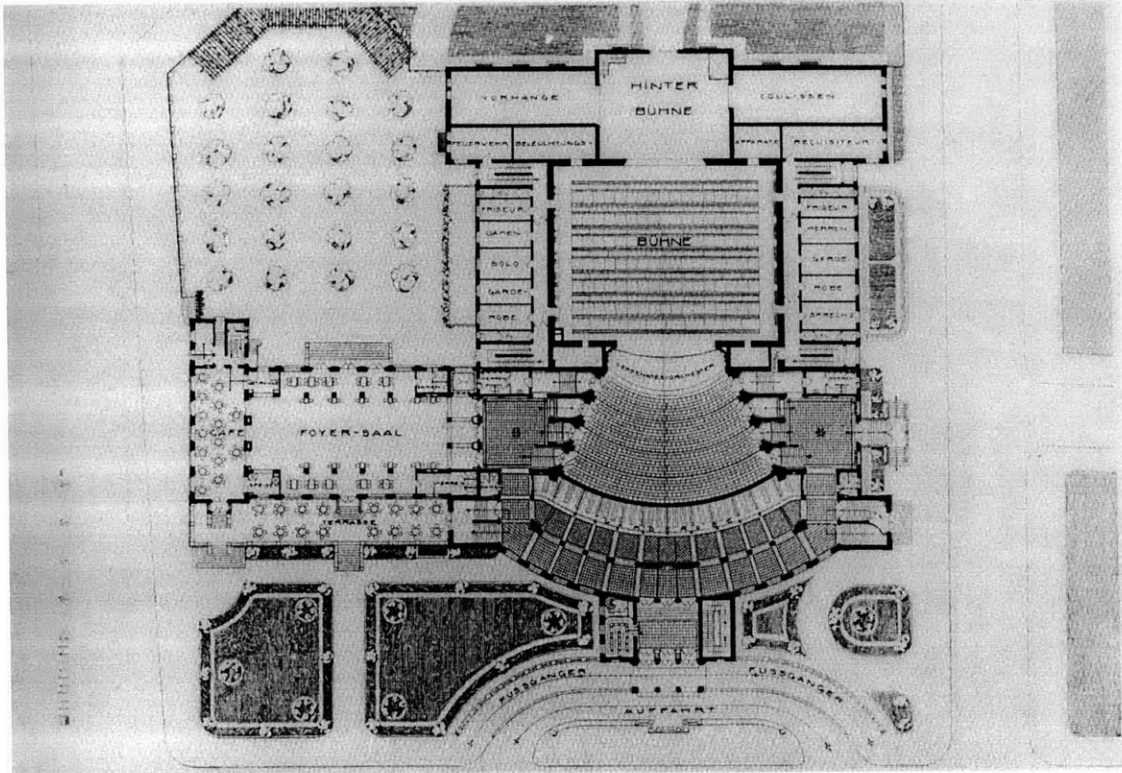
3.25 Max Littmann, Prinzregententheater, Munich



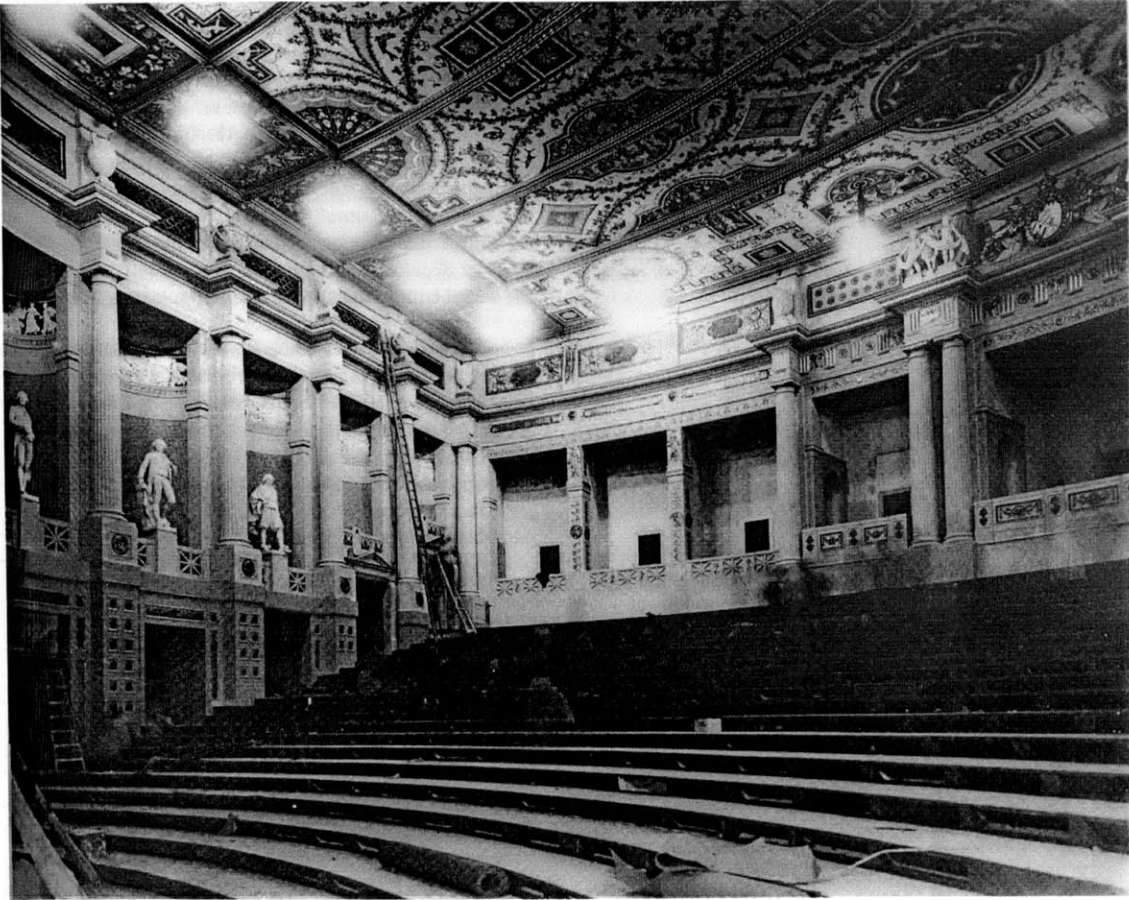
3.26 Max Littmann, Prinzregententheater perspectival drawing (1901)



3.27 Littmann, Prinzregententheater site plan (1900/01)



3.28 Max Littmann, Prinzregententheater plan (1901)



3.29 Prinzregententheater auditorium under construction



3.30 Max Littmann, Prinzregententheater auditorium



4.1 *Ausstellung München* 1908, entrance to Hall I



4.2 *Ausstellung München* 1908, Hall III



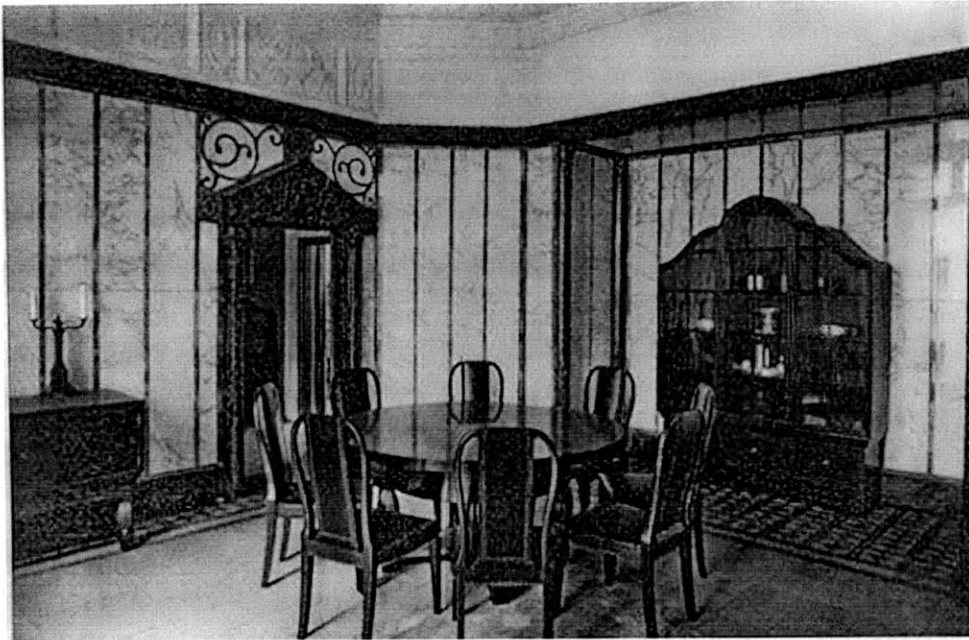
4.3 Wilhelm Bertsch, *Ausstellung München 1908*, Hall I



4.4 Emanuel von Seidl, restaurant building



4.5 Richard Riemerschmid, corner of a woman's room (1908)



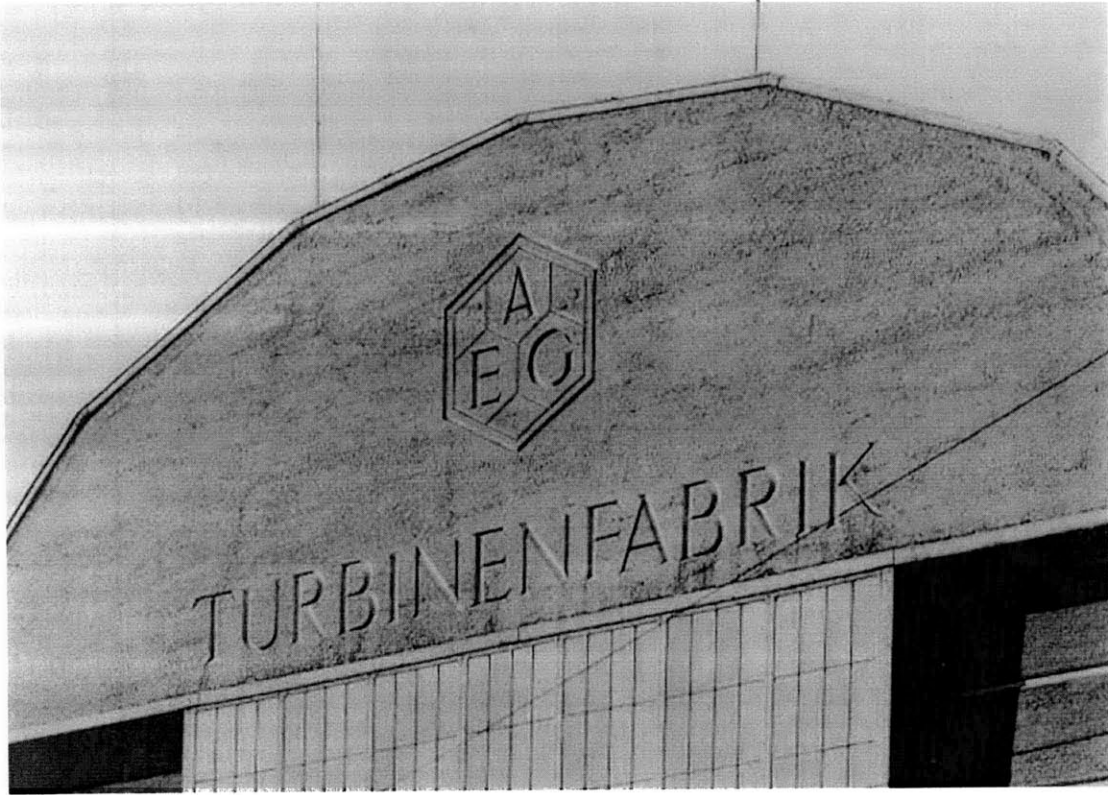
4.6 Bruno Paul, small dining room (1908)



4.7 Peter Behrens, AEG trademark (1908)



4.8 Peter Behrens, AEG trademark (1908)



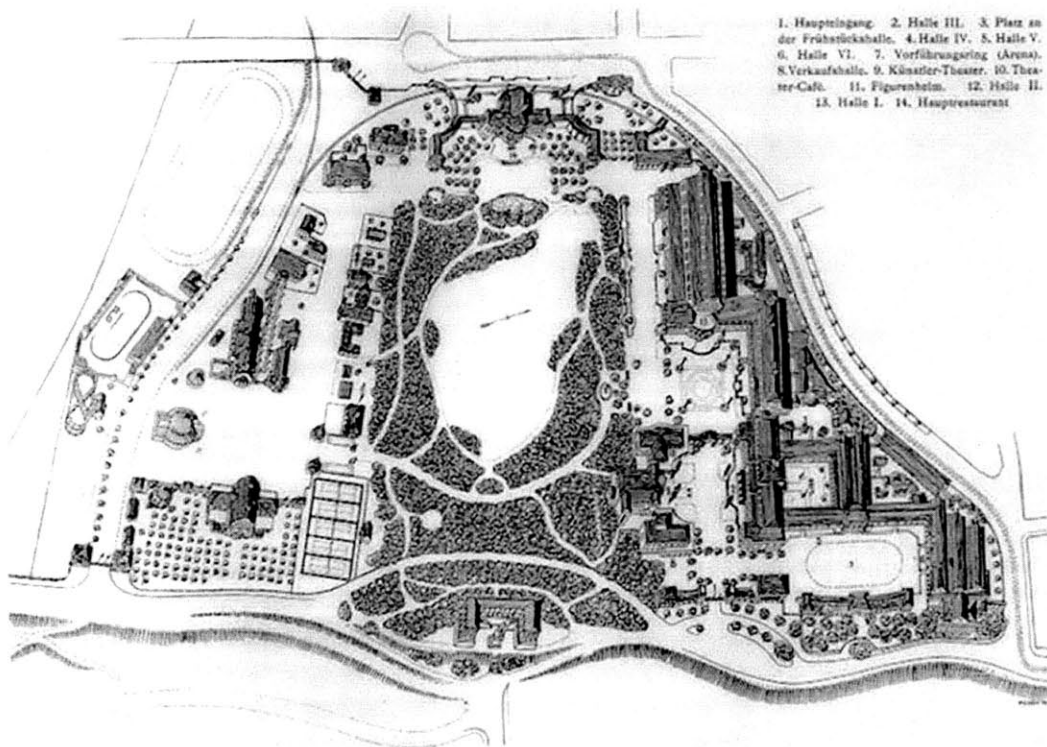
4.9 Peter Behrens, Turbine factory, Berlin, façade detail (1909)



4.10 Main portal, *Ausstellung München* 1908



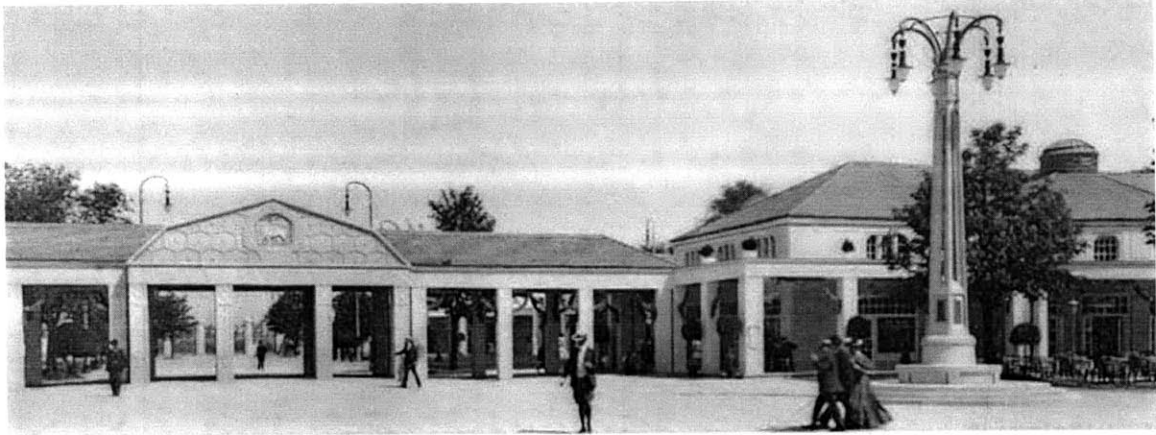
4.11 Interior of the main portal, *Ausstellung München* 1908



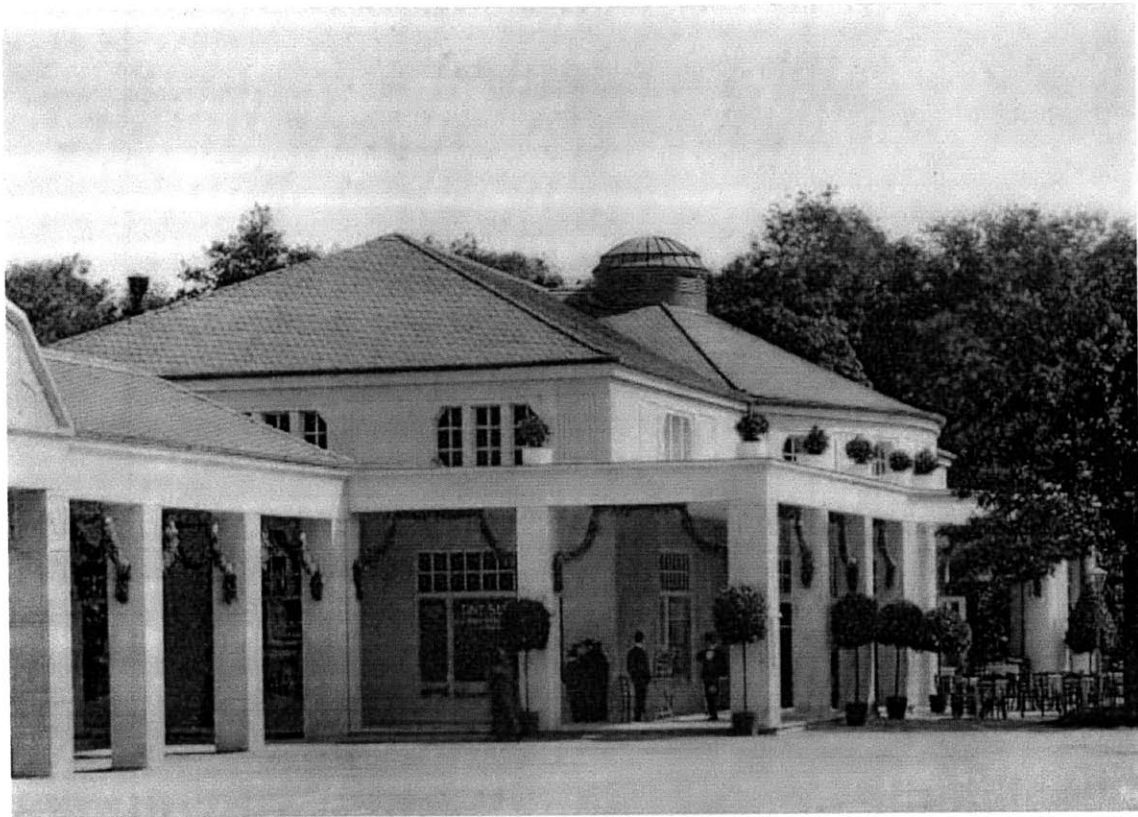
4.12 *Ausstellung München* 1908, site plan



4.13 Wilhelm Bertsch, *Ausstellung München* 1908, Hall III



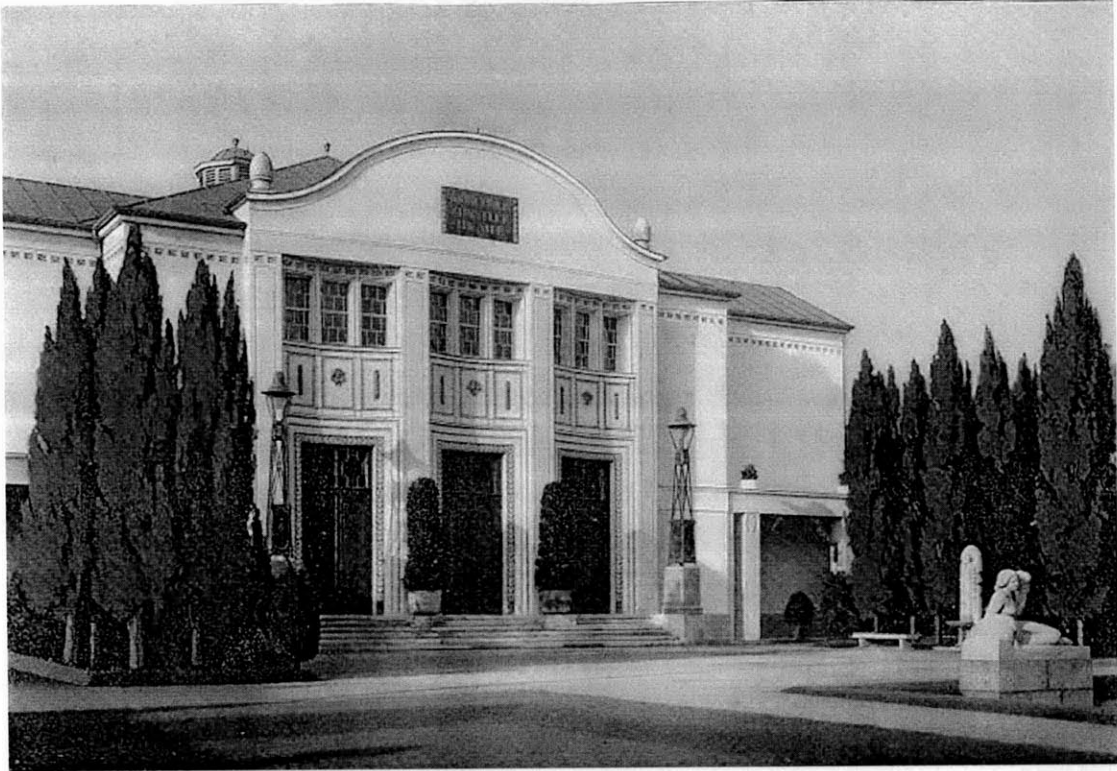
4.14 Wilhelm Bertsch, link to Theater Café



4.15 Paul Pfann, Theater Café



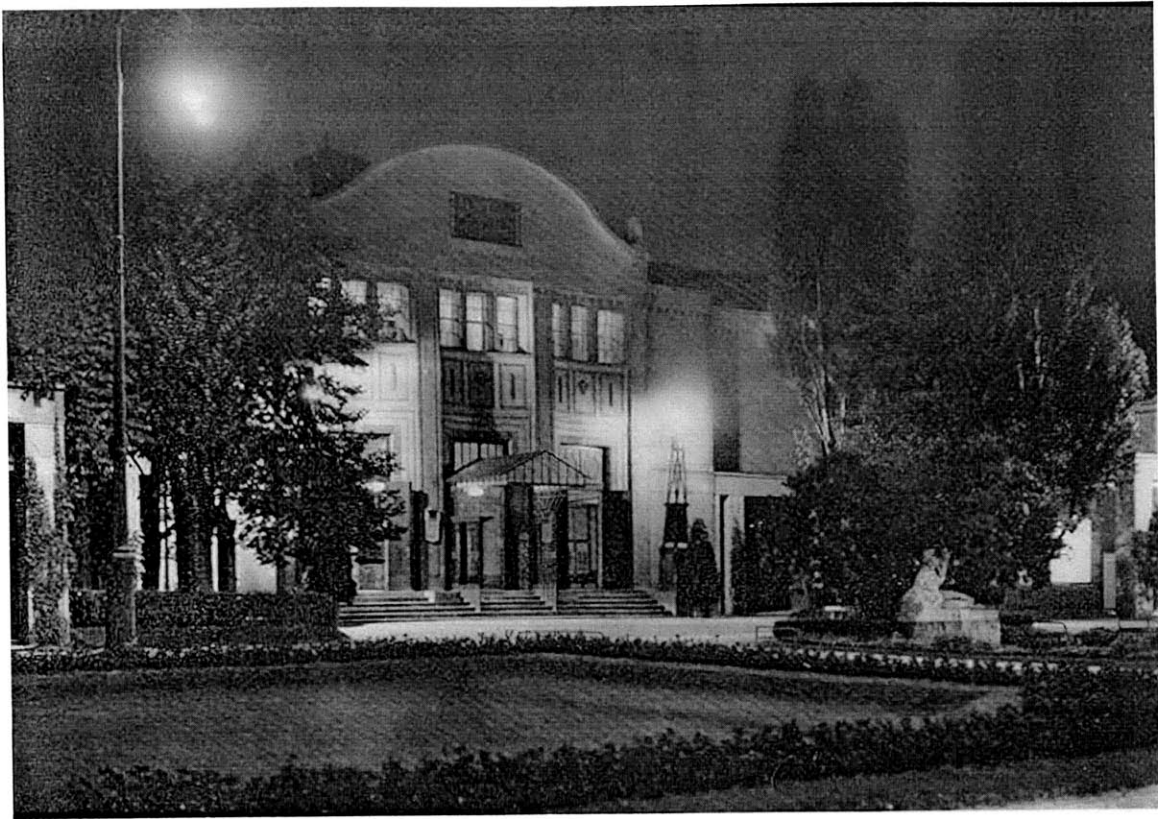
4.16 Paul Pfann, Theater Café, main façade



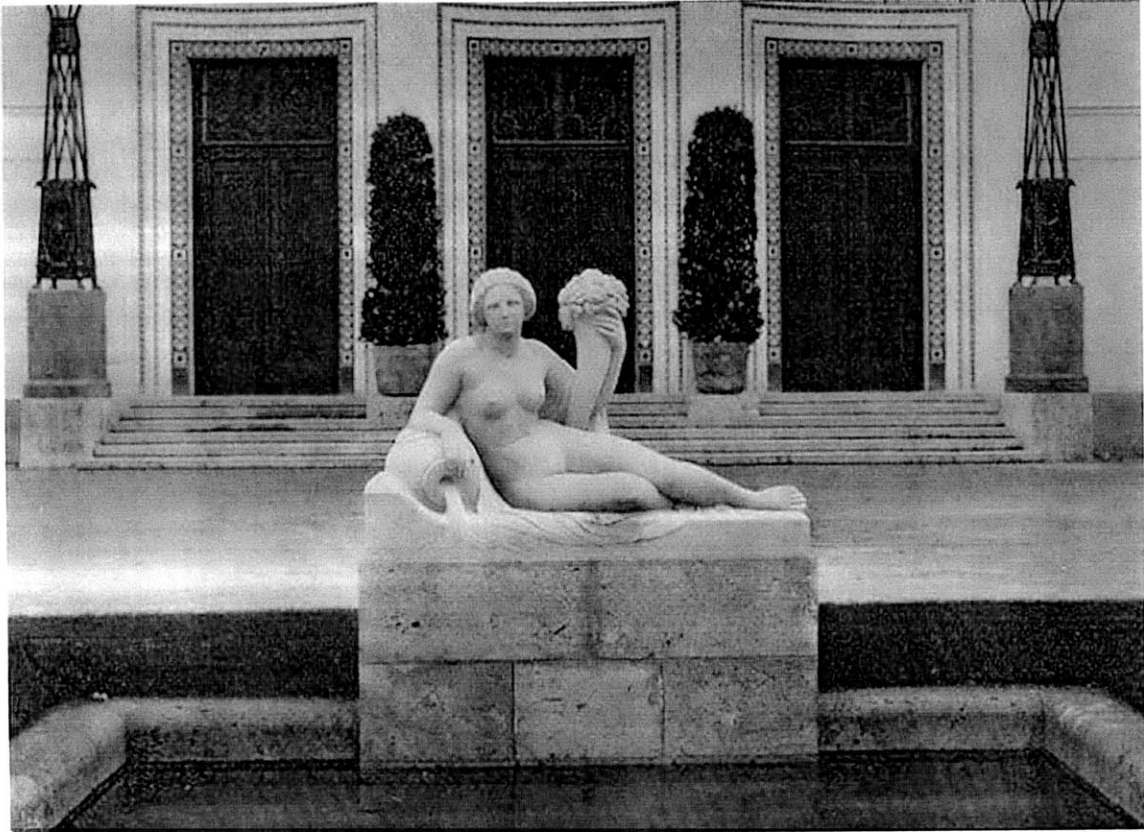
4.17 Max Littmann, Artists' Theater, promotional photograph (1908)



4.18 Max Littmann, Artists' Theater façade



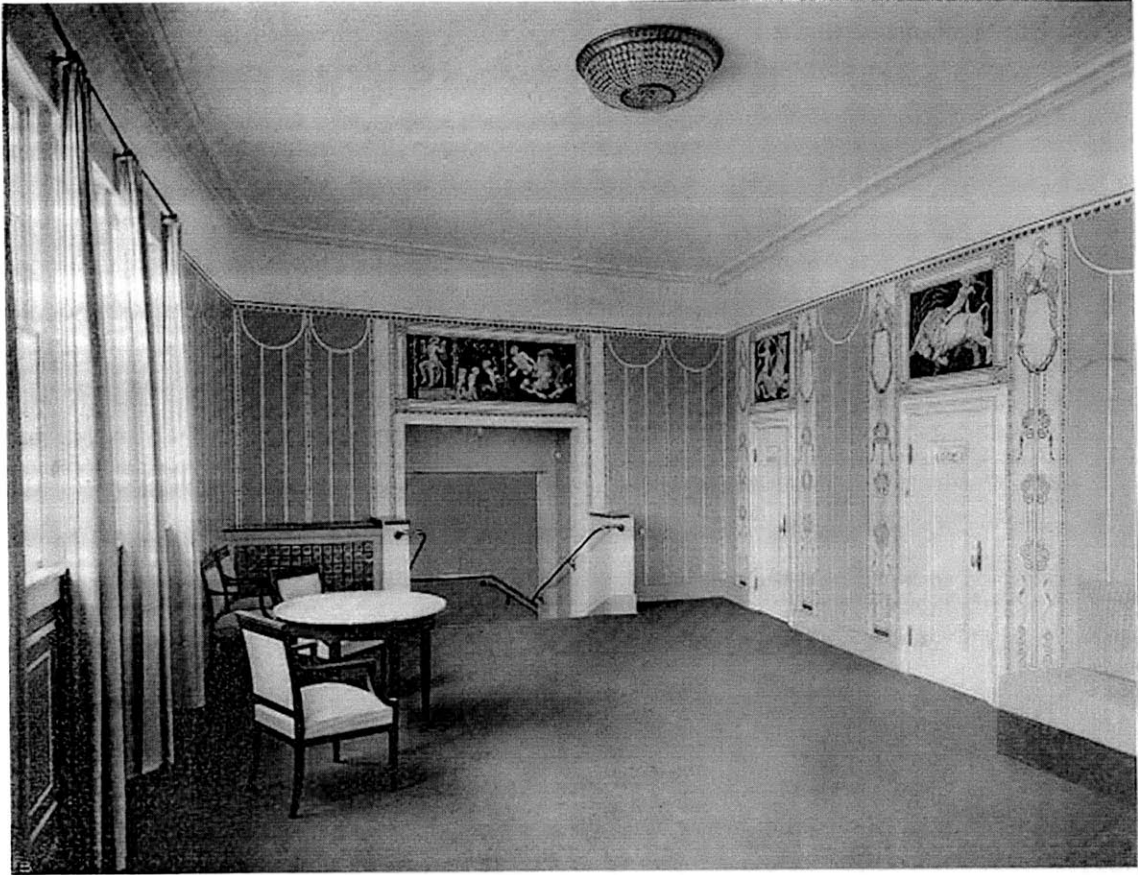
4.19 Max Littmann, Artists' Theater façade at night



4.20 Heinrich Düll & Georg Pezold, "Nymph of the Spring"

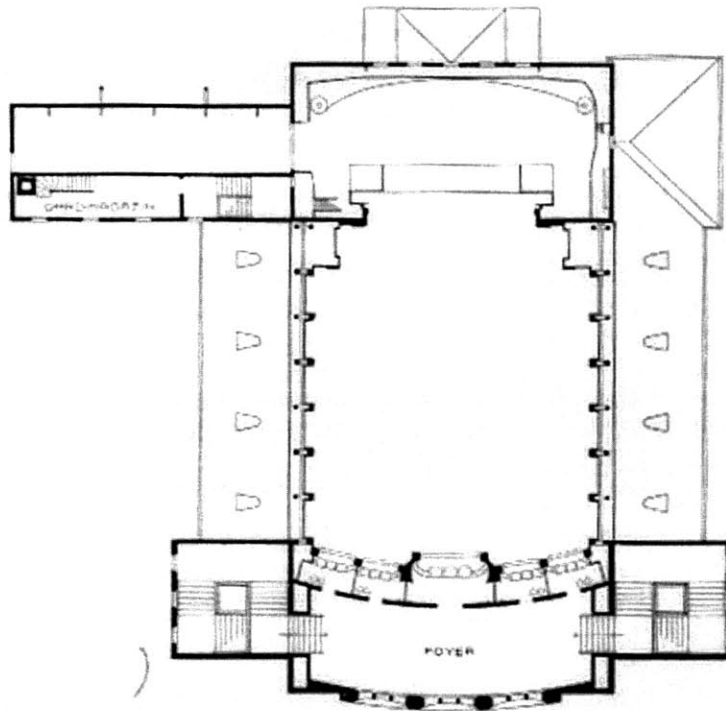


4.21 Artists' Theater entry lobby

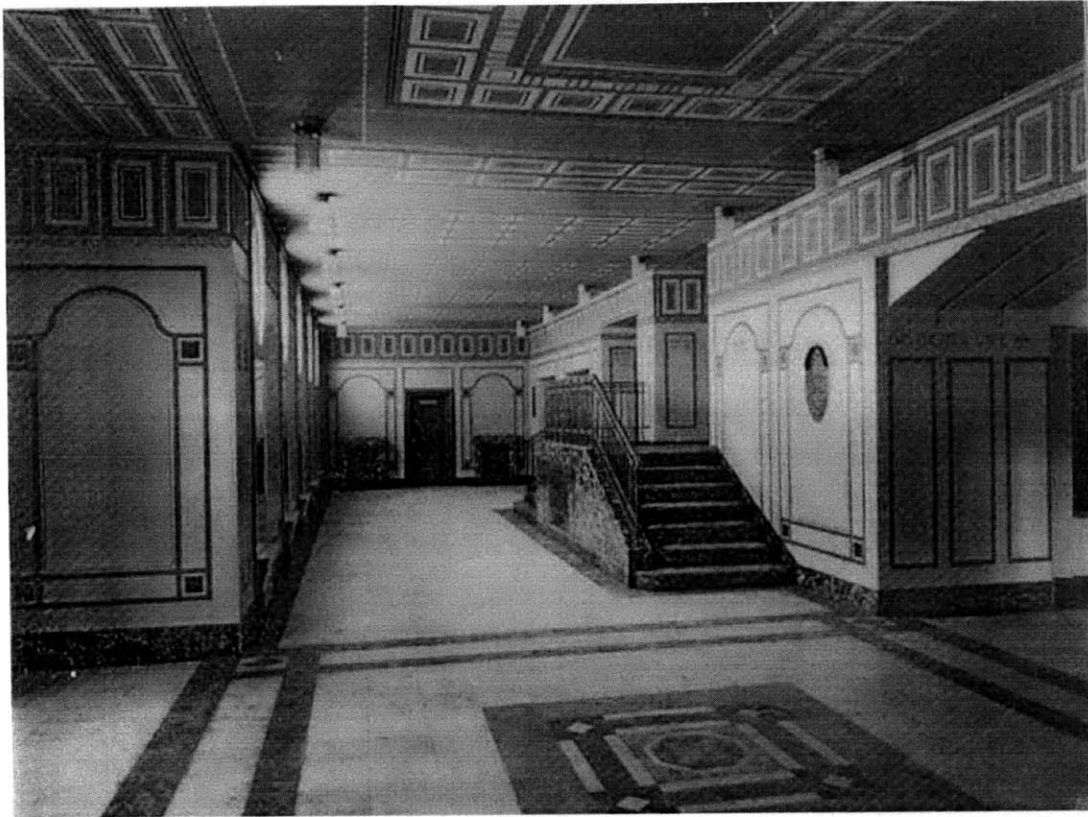


4.22 Artists' Theater upstairs foyer

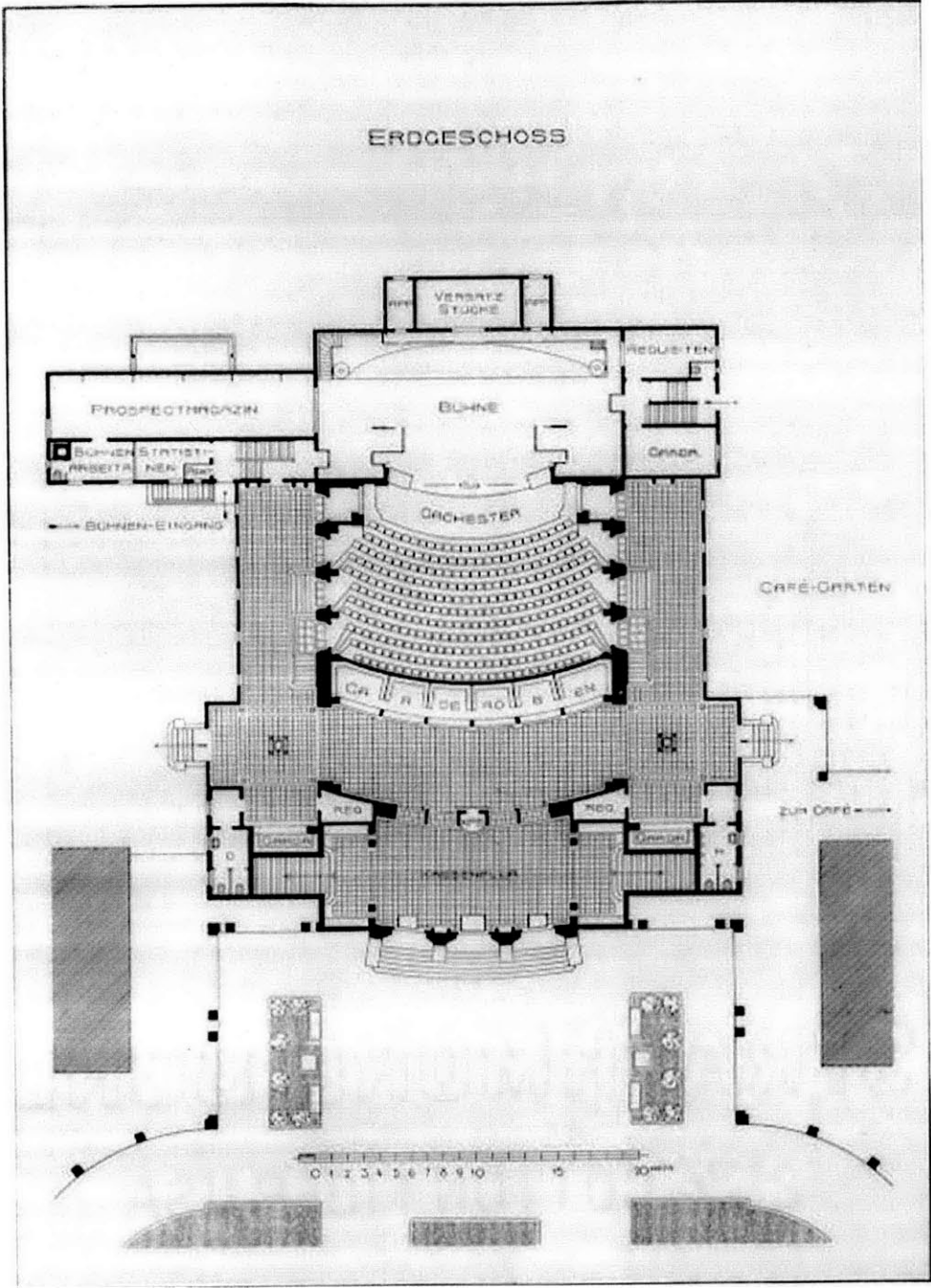
I.OBERGESCHOSS



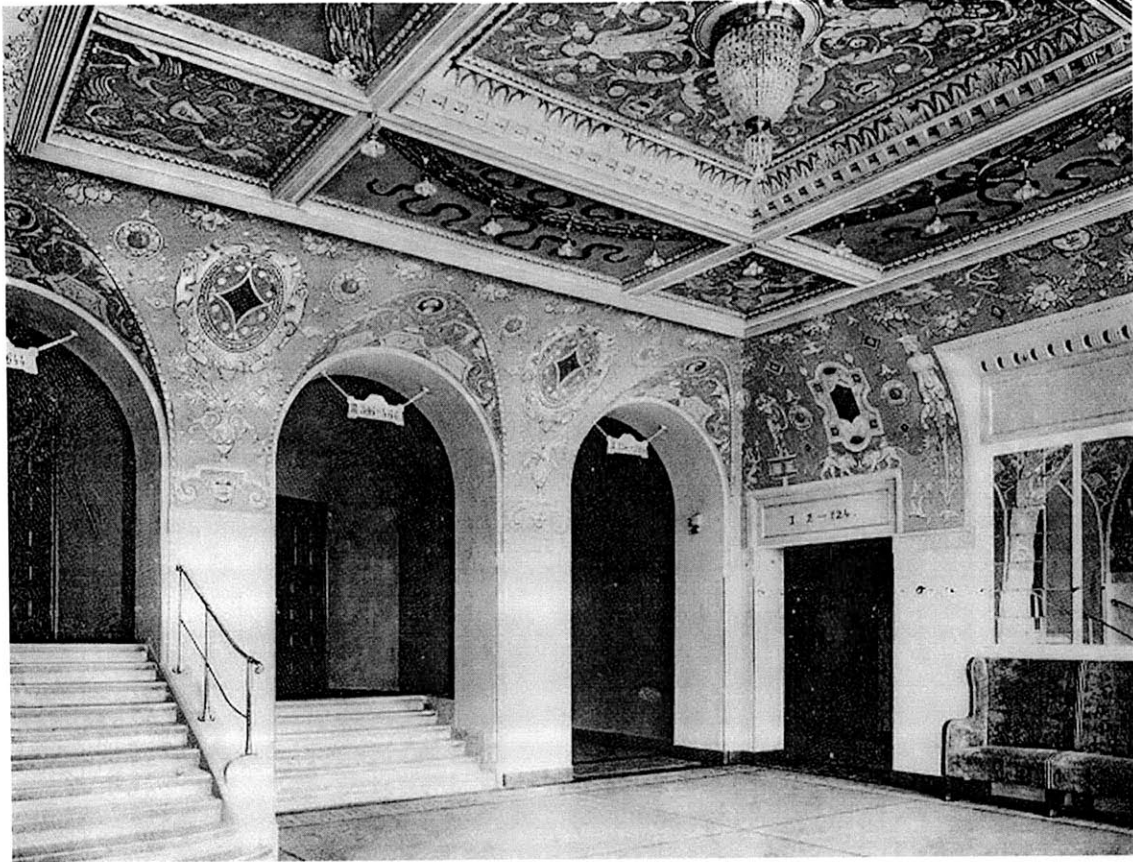
4.23 Artists' Theater, plan of upper storey



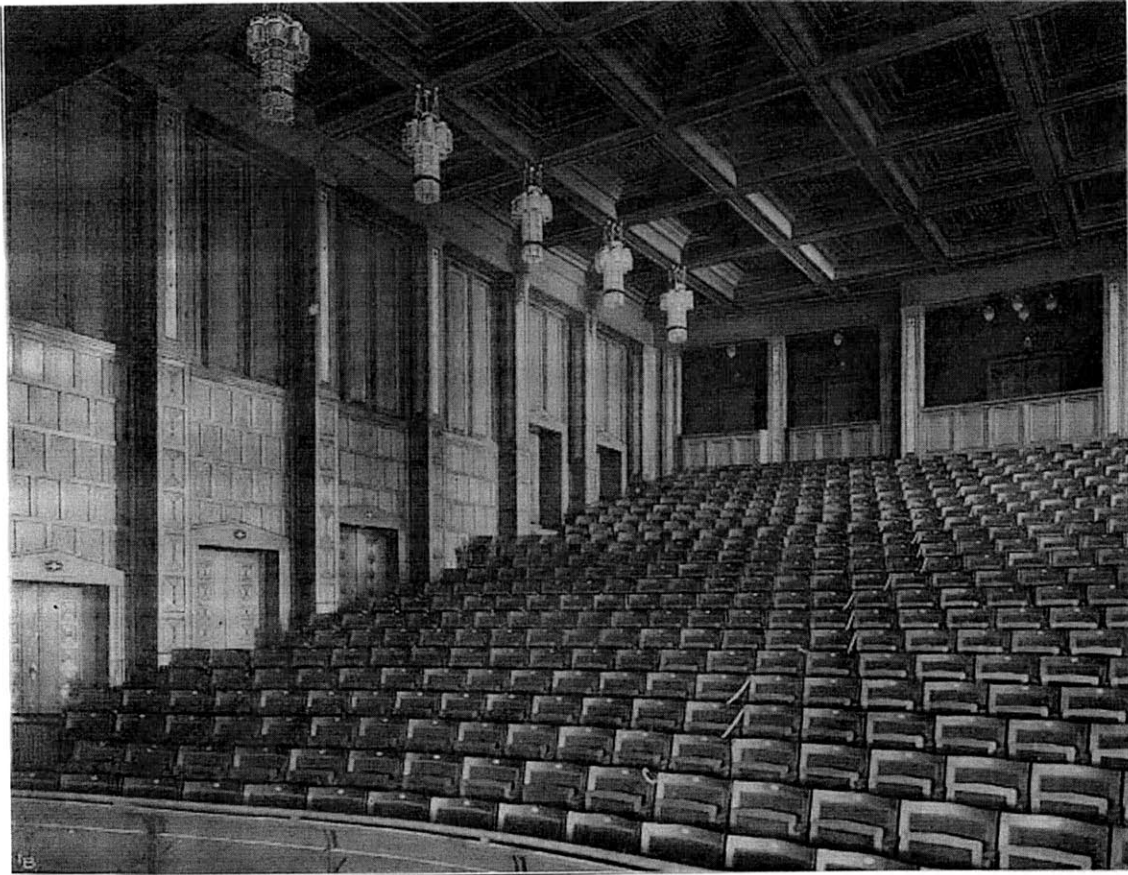
4.24 Artists' Theater, side hall



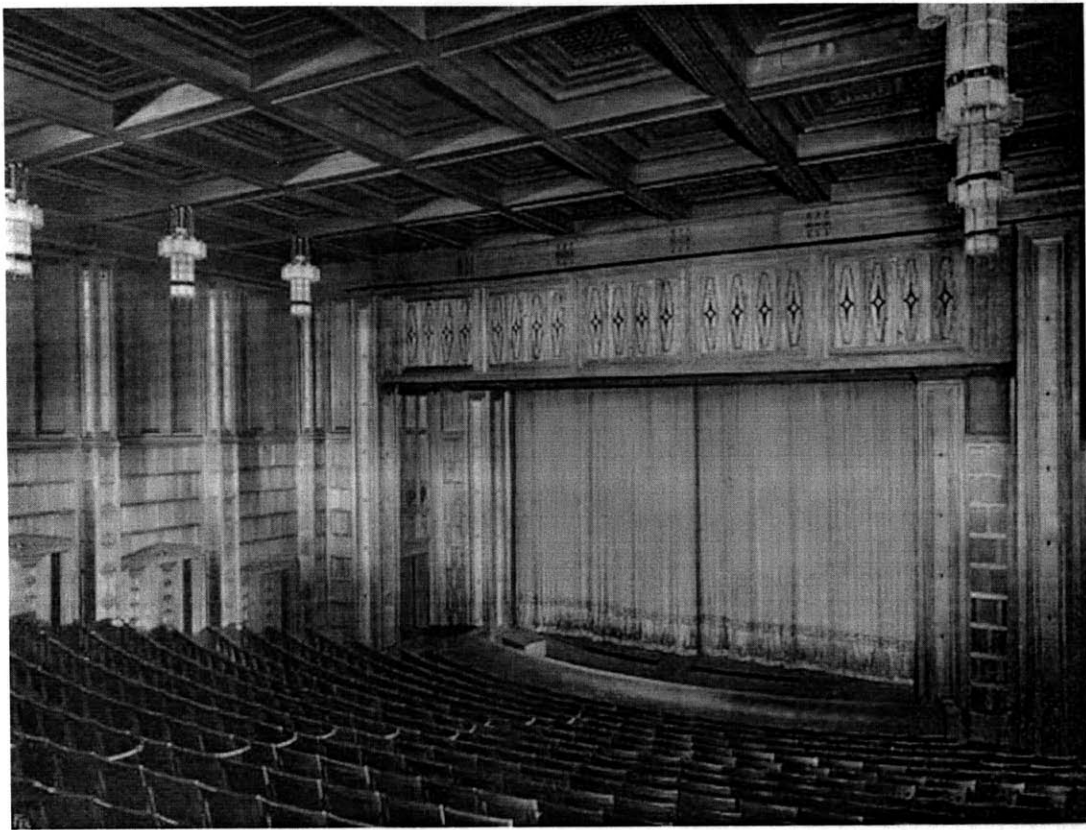
4.25 Artists' Theater, ground floor plan



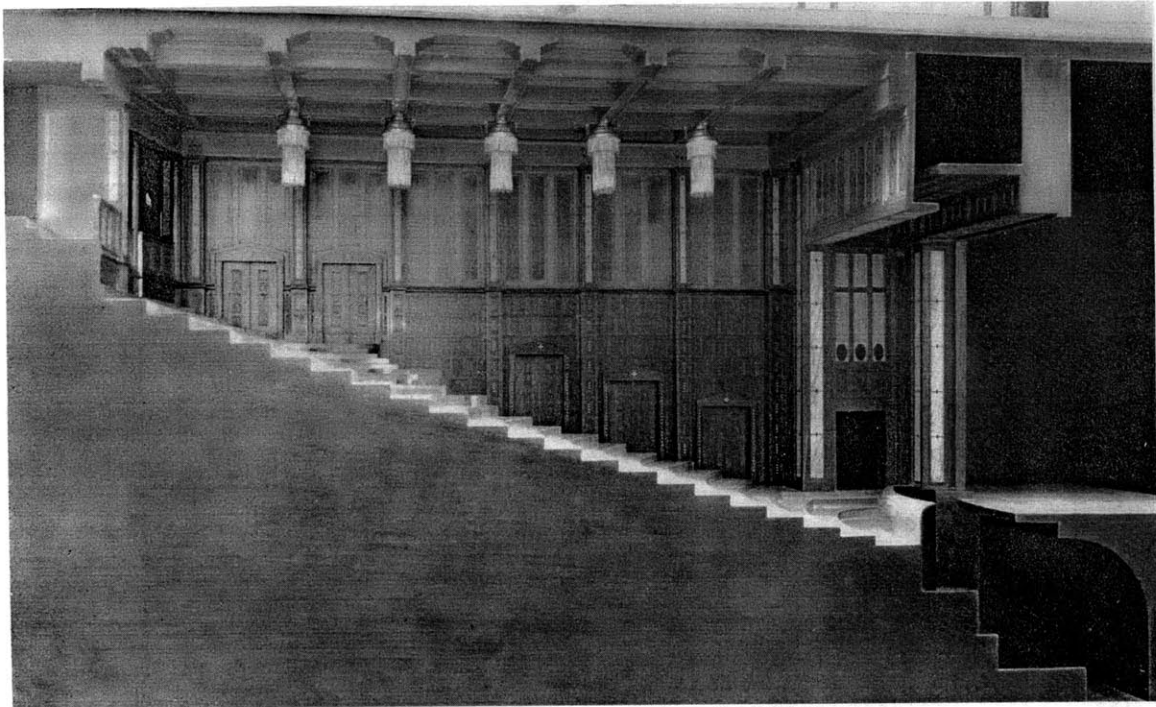
4.26 Max Littmann, Prinzregententheater side hall



4.27 Artists' Theater auditorium

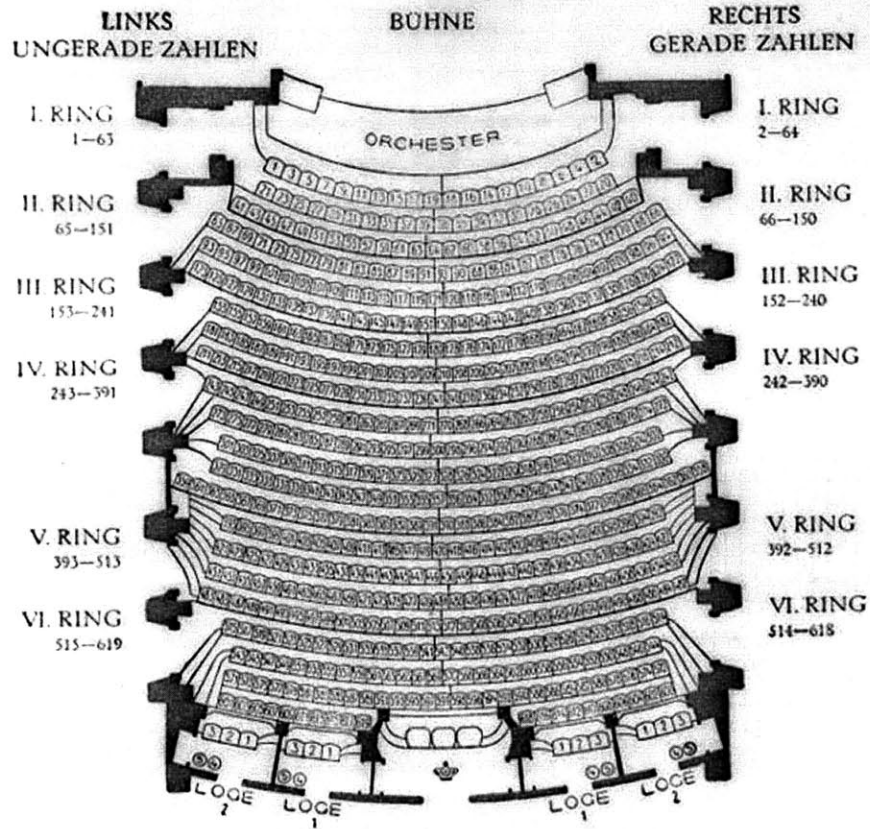


4.28 Artists' Theater, view of stage



4.29 Artists' Theater auditorium, wood model (1907-08)

Sitz-Plan des Künstler-Theaters:



Preise der Plätze:

VI. Ring	Mk. 2.50	III. Ring	Mk. 5.50
V. Ring	" 3.50	II. Ring	" 6.50
IV. Ring	" 4.50	I. Ring	" 7.50

1. Reihe und Logenplätze 10 Mk.

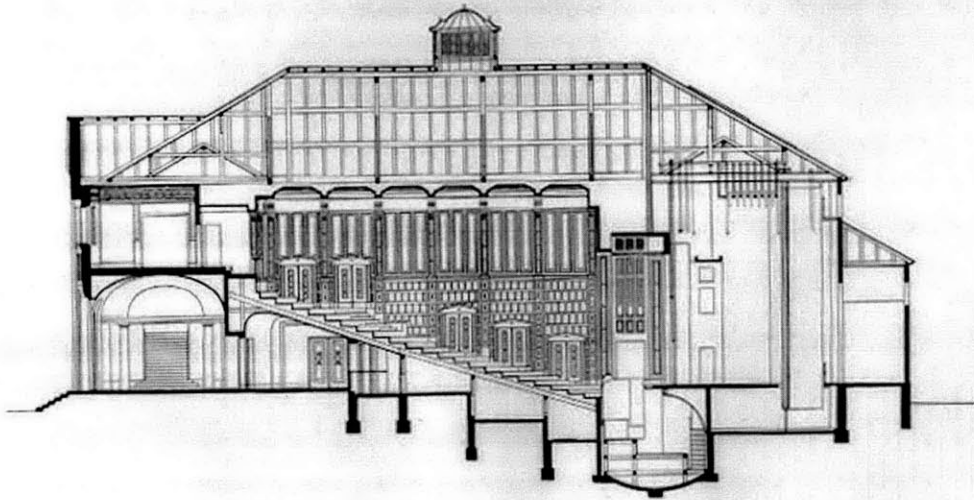
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LÄNGENSCHNITT

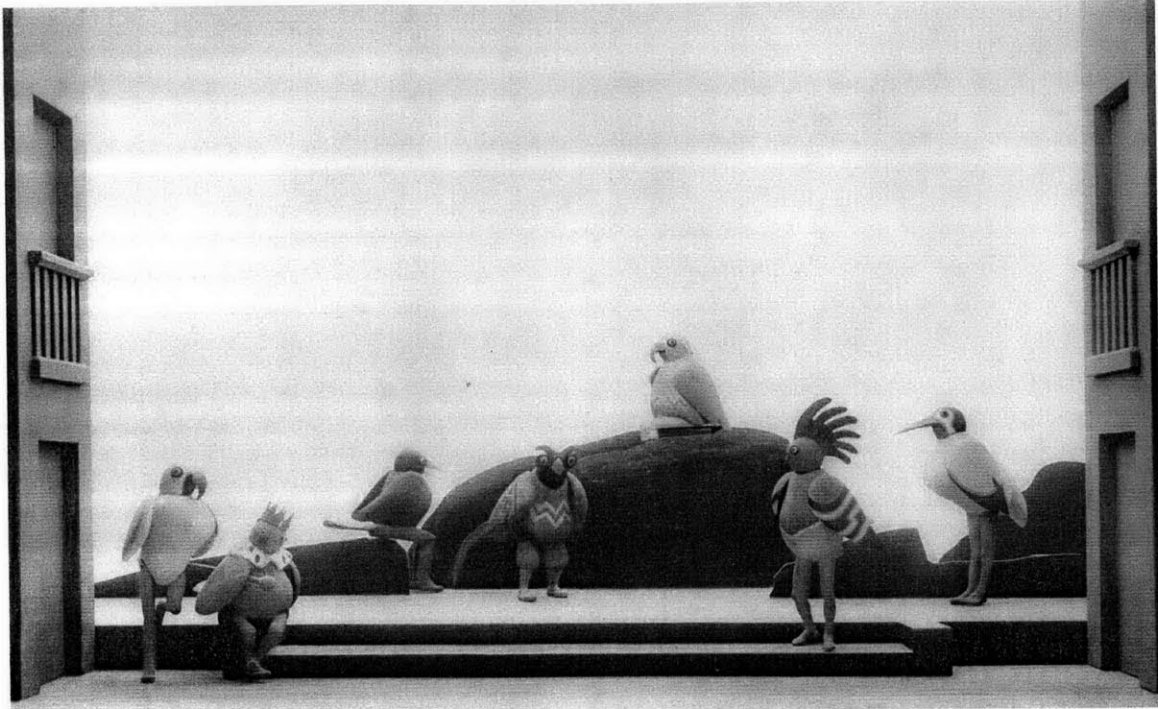


0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20 METR

4.31 Artists' Theater, section



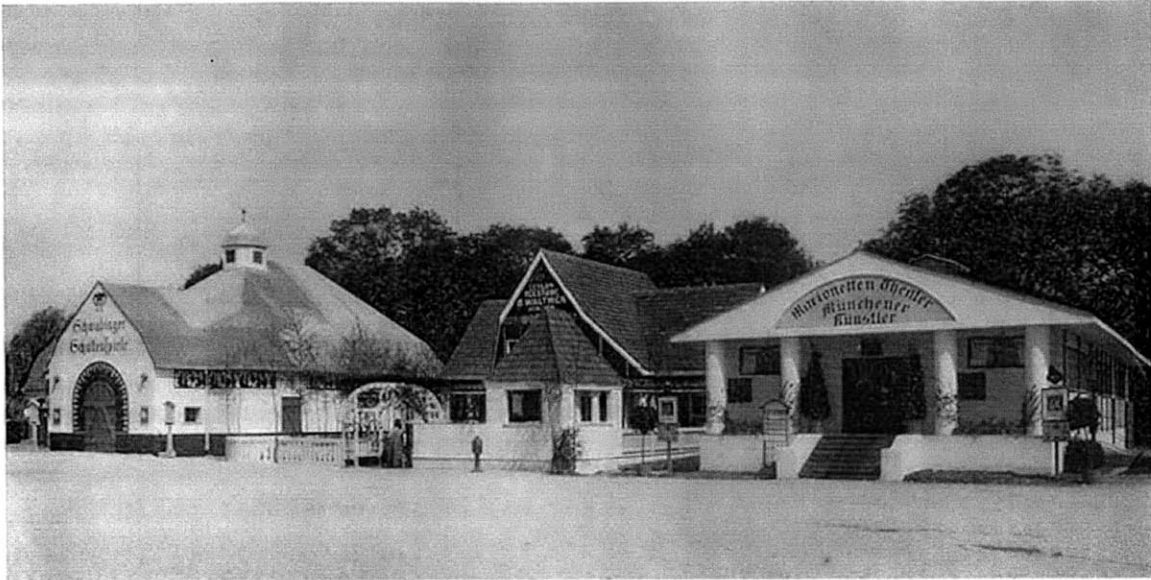
4.32 *Twelfth Night*, Artists' Theater (1908)



4.33 *The Birds*, Artists' Theater (1908)



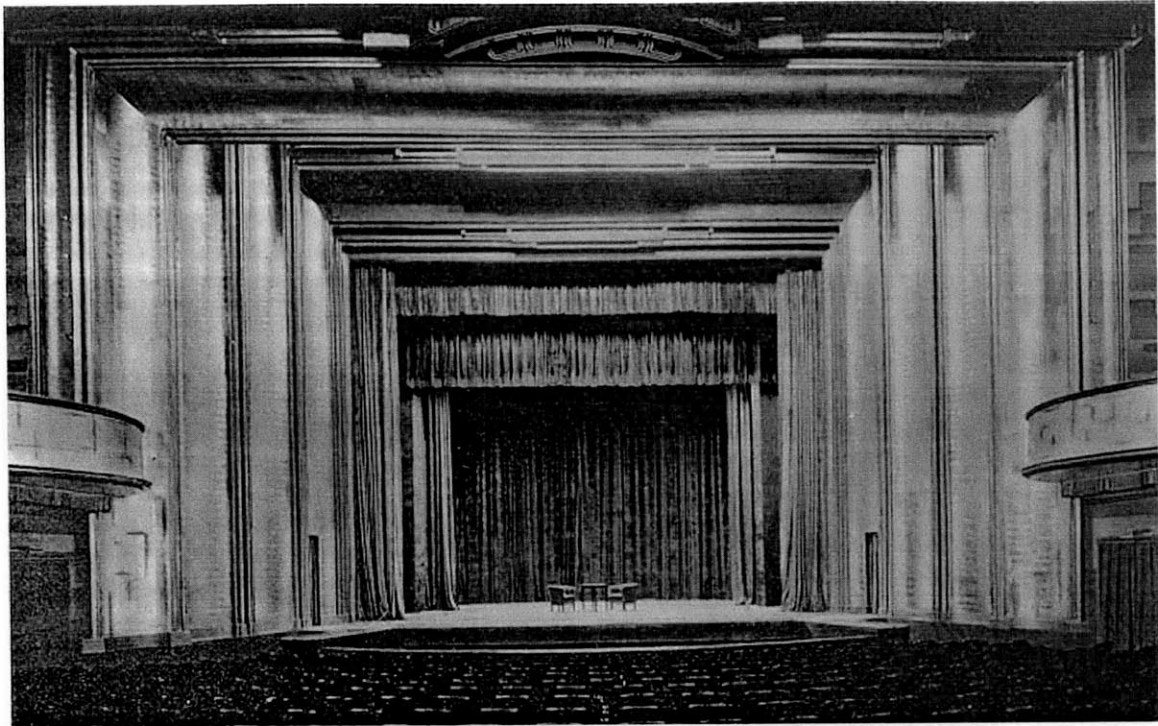
4.34 *Hamlet*, Artists' Theater (1909 or 1910)



4.35 Fritz Klee & Peter Danzer, Marionette theater (1908)



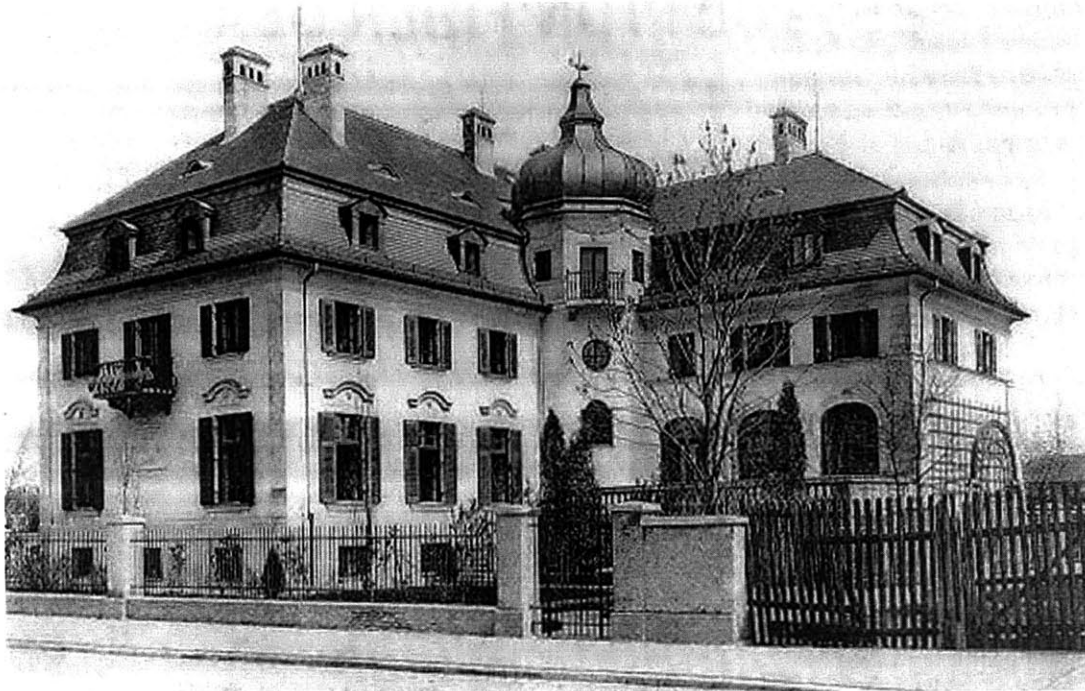
4.36 Orlando Kurz, Kinematograph (1908)



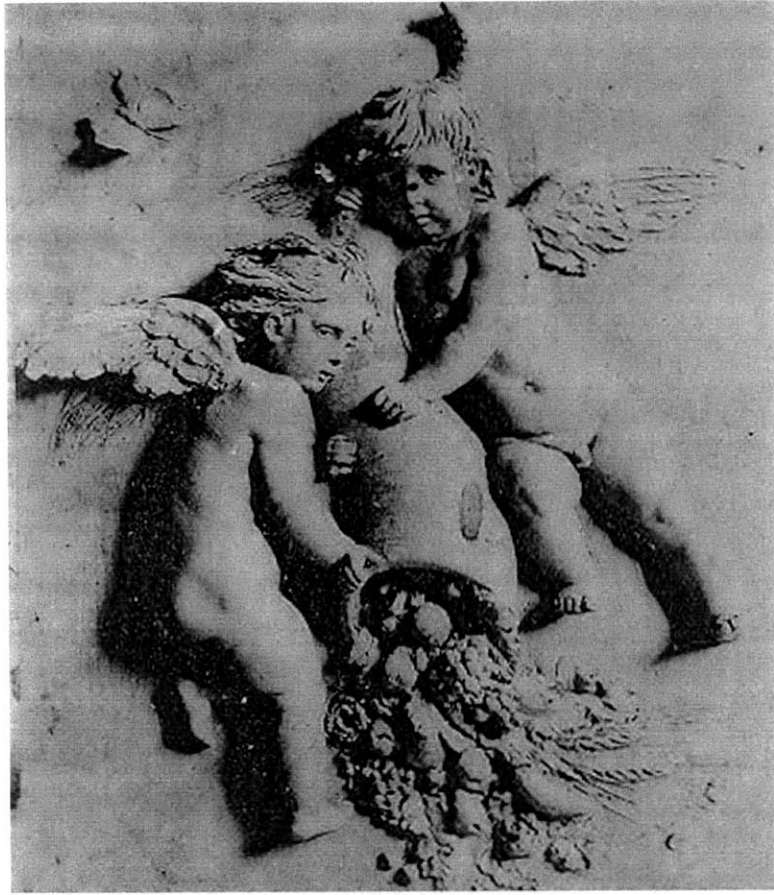
4.37 Friedrich Lipp, Capitol Cinema, Breslau (1920s)



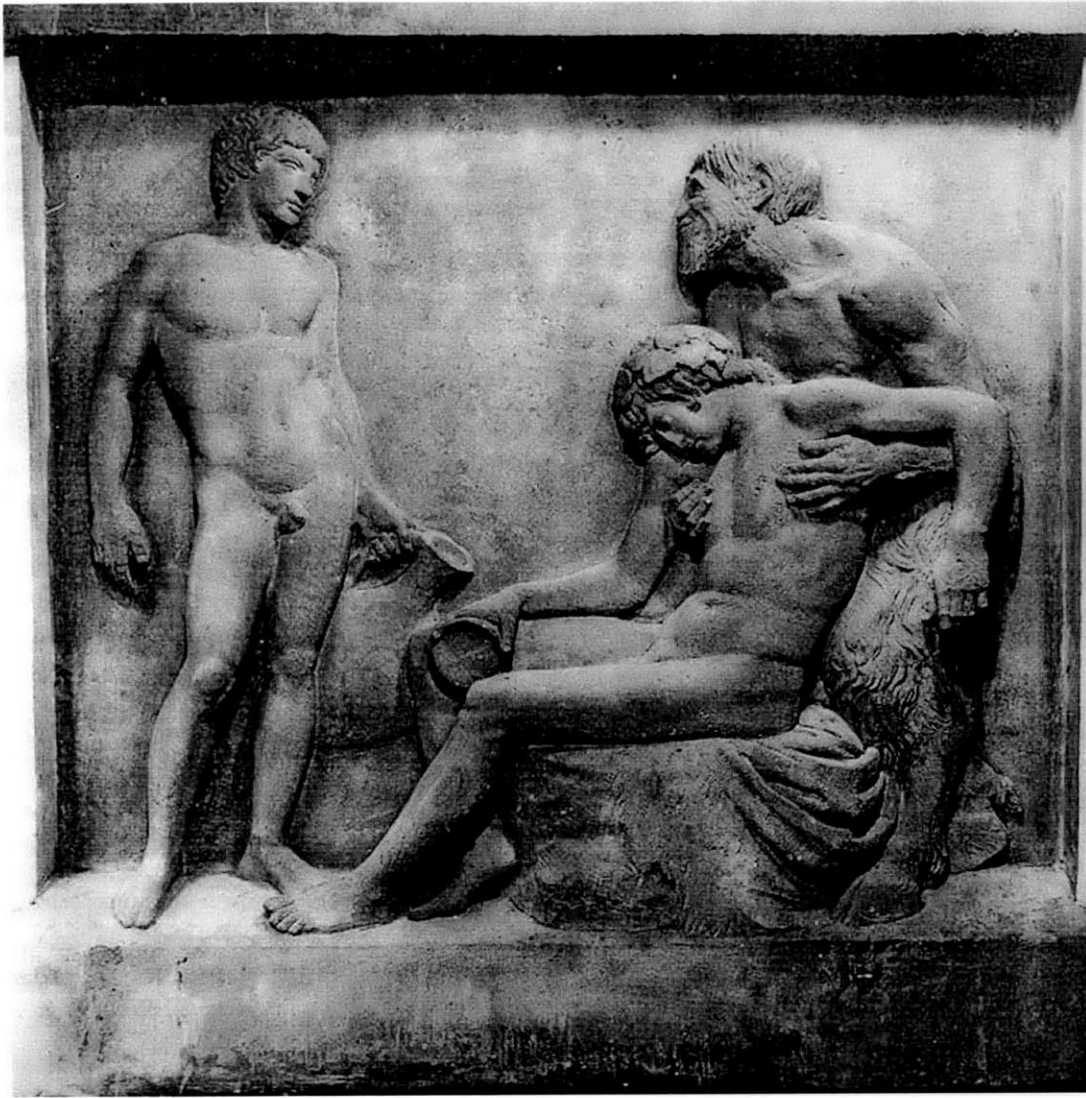
5.1 Adolf von Hildebrand, Wittelsbach Fountain (1890-95)



5.2 Hildebrand House, Munich (1895-98)



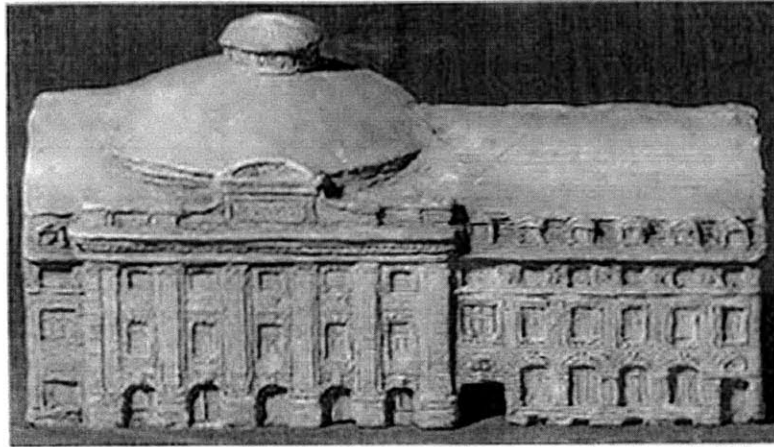
5.3 Hildebrand, relief sculpture for sister's engagement (1870)



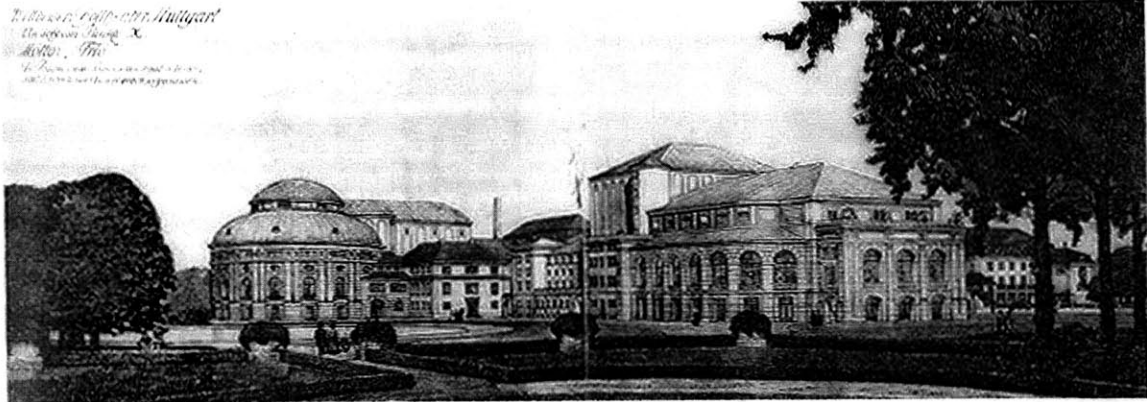
5.4 Hildebrand, relief sculpture of Dionysus (1890)



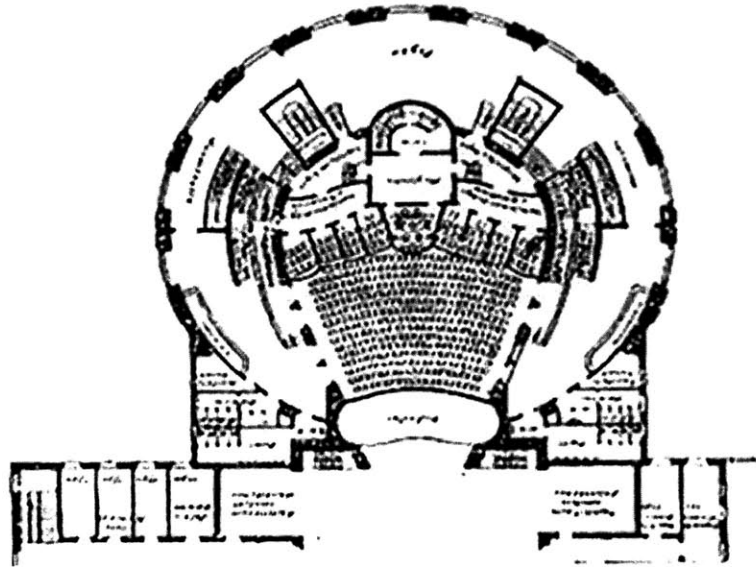
5.5 Hildebrand, relief sculpture for Conrad Fiedler's grave (1895)



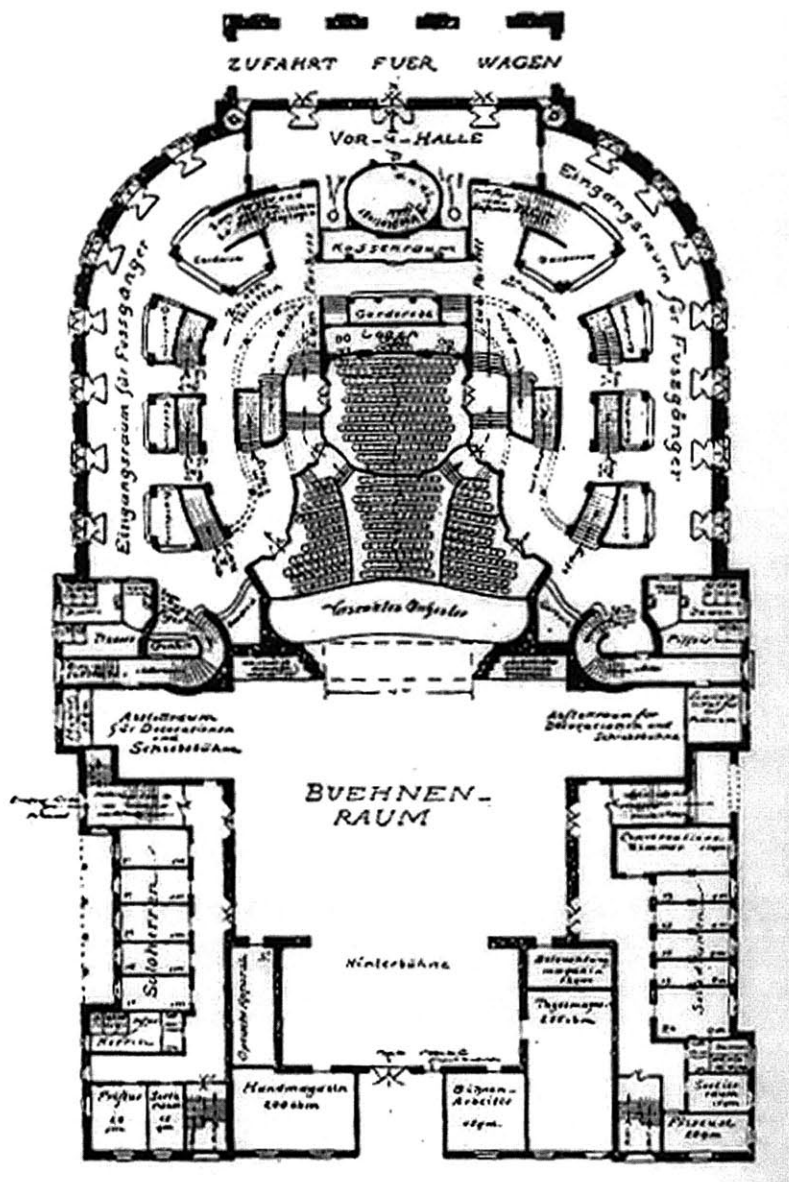
5.6 Hildebrand, Munich theater, plaster model (1907-08)



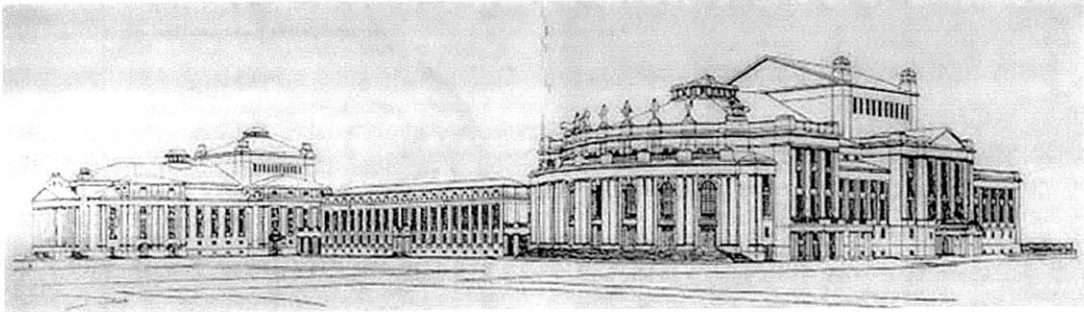
5.7 Hildebrand, design for Stuttgart Hoftheater (1908)



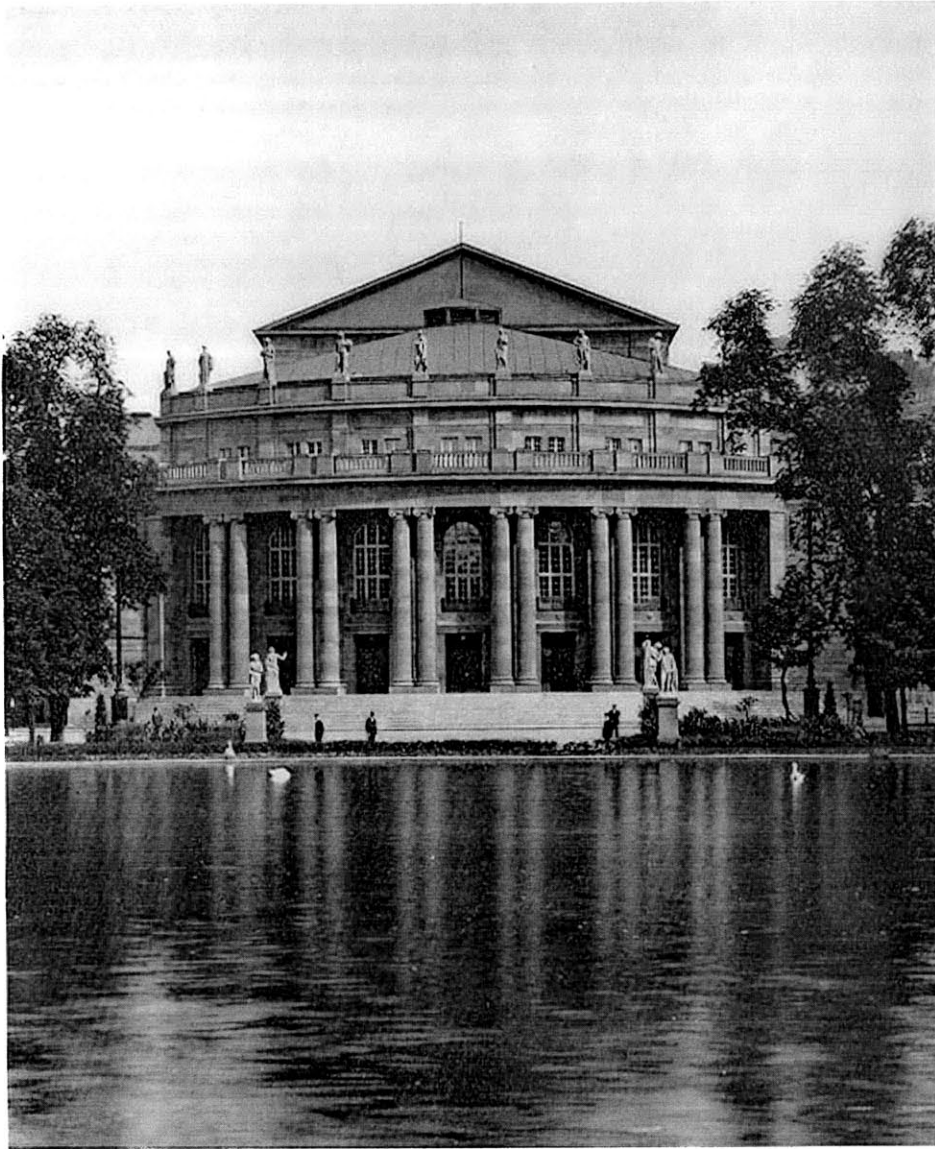
5.8 Hildebrand, Stuttgart small theater, ground plan (1908)



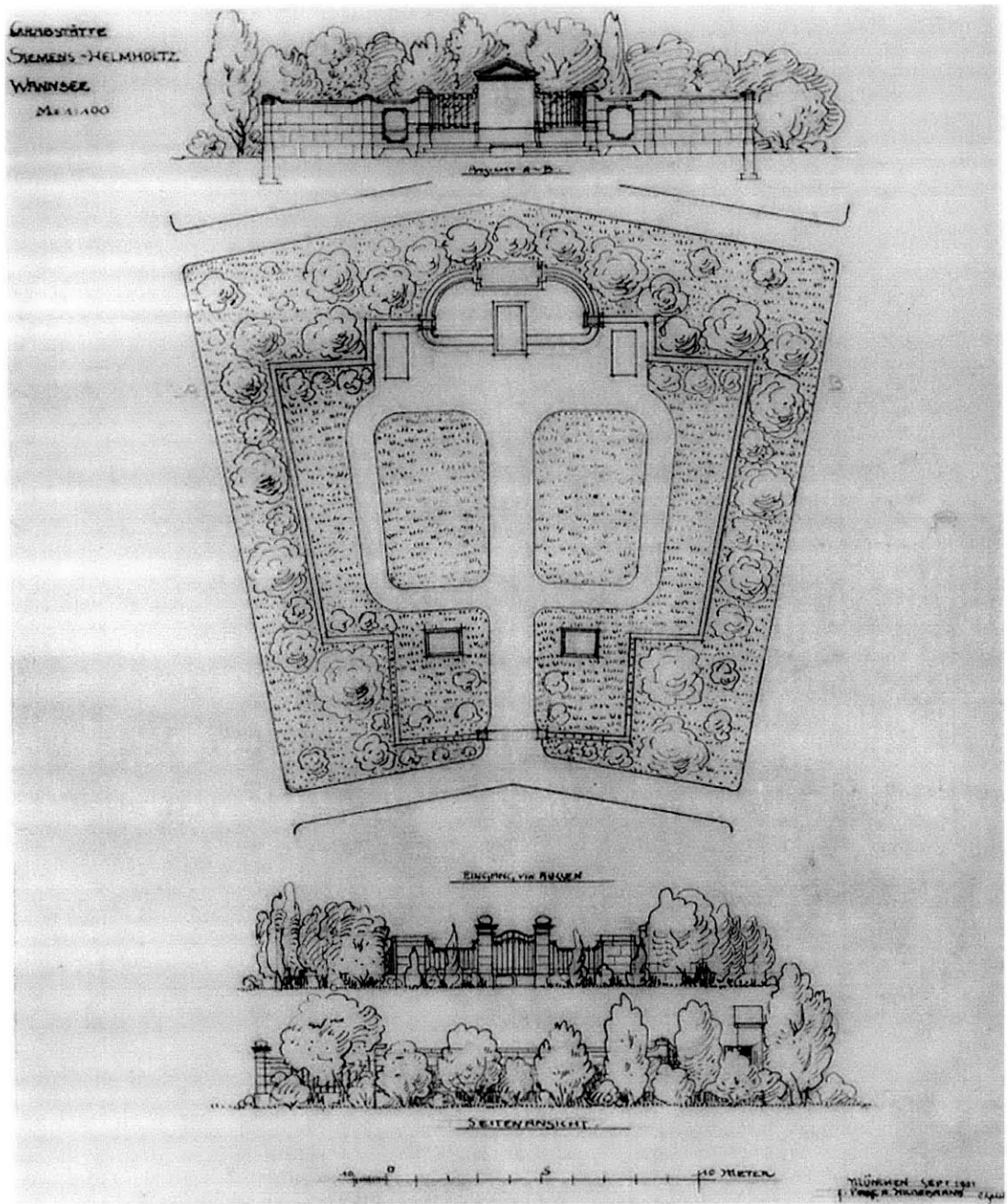
5.9 Hildebrandt, Stuttgart large theatre, ground plan (1908)



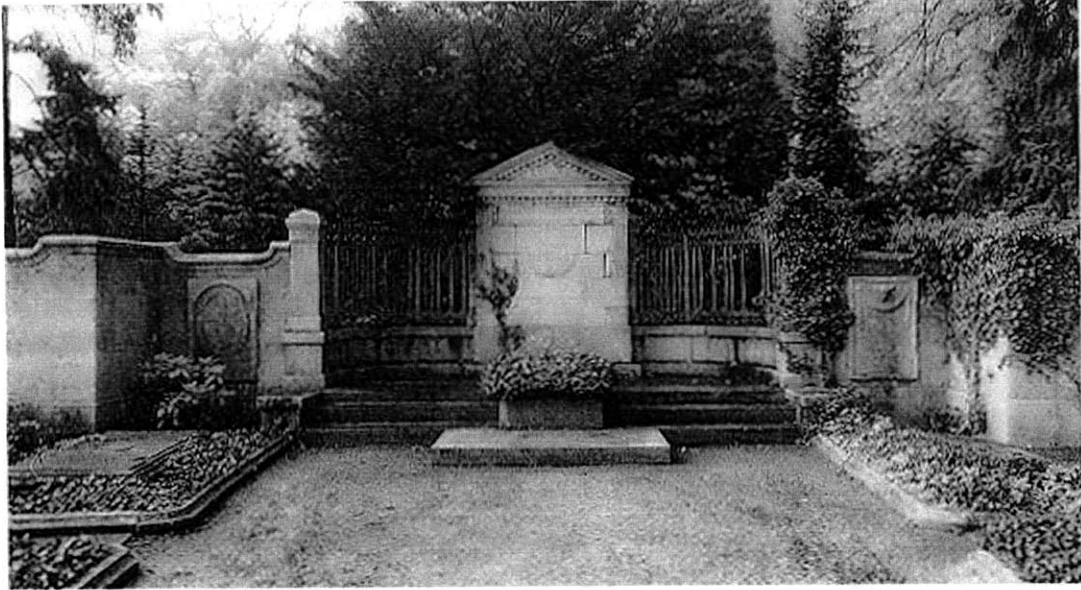
5.10 Max Littmann, Stuttgart Hoftheater (1908)



5.11 Max Littmann, Stuttgart Hoftheater (1908-1912)



5.12 Hildebrand, grave site for Helmholtz family, sketch (1897)



5.13 Hildebrand, grave site for Helmholtz family (1897)



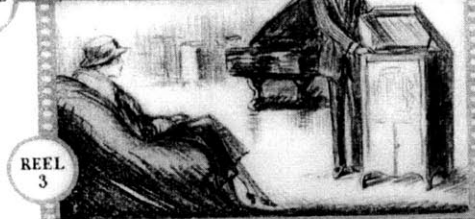
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6.1 *Printers' Ink Monthly*, 1920s