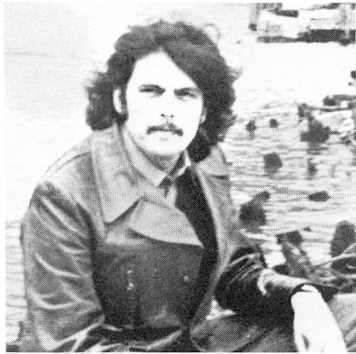


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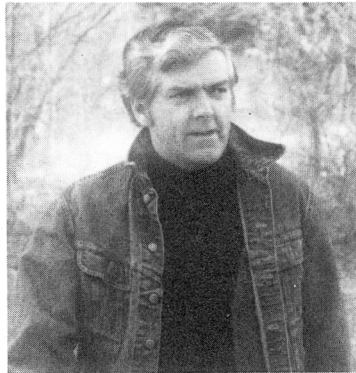
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A Phenomenological Approach to the *Theatrum Mundi*

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Abstract. The theater-dream metaphor raises fundamental ontological and epistemological questions and treats them in much the same way as phenomenological thought does. Both the metaphor and Edmund Husserl’s theory “reduce” the ontological problem to a play of experience—to activity and process—leaving the final question of what is “real” unresolved. Such activity necessarily involves Heideggerian “dimensions” that are not only open, mobile, temporal, “in play” but also structural, patterning. Examples ranging from Renaissance to modern drama, from the Russian to the American stage, show how dimensions are revealed both as the familiar structures of our thinking (stratifications, circles within circles, temporal delineations, subject-object categories, etc.) and as the structuring principles by which “real” and “imagined” worlds establish relationships. Thus we can move among such implicit structures to consider multiple stage-world relations—the interplay of subjects and objects of experience and concomitant audience-art-artist implications. (HDP)

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