



How the World Became a Stage: Presence, Theatricality, and the Question of Modernity

William Egginton

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Argues that the experience of modernity is fundamentally spatial rather than subjective.

What is special, distinct, modern about modernity? In *How the World Became a Stage*, William Egginton argues that the experience of modernity is fundamentally spatial rather than subjective and proposes replacing the vocabulary of subjectivity with the concepts of presence and theatricality. Following a Heideggerian injunction to search for the roots of epochal change not in philosophies so much as in basic skills and practices, he describes the spatiality of modernity on the basis of a close historical analysis of the practices of spectacle from the late Middle Ages to the early modern period, paying particular attention to stage practices in France and Spain. He recounts how the space in which the world is disclosed changed from the full, magically charged space of presence to the empty, fungible, and theatrical space of the stage.

William Egginton is Assistant Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York and the translator of Lisa Block de Behar's *Borges: The Passion of an Endless Quotation*, also published by SUNY Press.

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