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Susanne Deicher & Iain Boyd Whyte

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Imaginary Practice: Ideology and Form in the Unlived-in House of Peter Behrens on the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt

Susanne Deicher

Translated by Iain Boyd Whyte

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Abstract

This article focuses on Peter Behrens’s first building, the house on the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt (1901), which was never occupied by the Behrens family. It took on a more disinterested role as a showcase of progressive design, and was praised as such by the historian Tilmann Buddensieg. Deicher sets this position against a Marxist reading, which interprets the relation between Behrens and his aristocratic patron as “feudal,” and sees the Behrens work as a new construct of domination rather than as the harbinger of a new and democratic design practice for the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS: aesthetics, design, architecture, Hegel, Nietzsche, Albert Speer, Peter Behrens, Tilmann Buddensieg, Marxist critique, praxis, Darmstadt Artists' Colony

Introduction by *Iain Boyd Whyte* (University of Edinburgh)

This multilayered text emerged from a vigorous debate in 1970s German art history concerning the autonomy of art and its relation to daily life. The catalyst for the text was a confrontation in the pages of Kunstchronik between Tilmann Buddensieg, an advocate of aesthetic particularity, and the two Marxist-orientated authors of a text on Albert Speer's street lamp standards in Berlin, Klaus Herding and Hans-Ernst Mittag. The subject chosen by Deicher with which to frame her arguments in support of Herding and Mittag was not, however, the Speer design, but rather the house on the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt, designed by Peter Behrens in 1901 at the behest of Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse, as part of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony (Figure 1).

Although ostensibly a family residence, the house was never occupied by the Behrens family. Relieved of the burden of functionality, this took on a more disinterested role as a showcase of progressive design, and was praised as such by Buddensieg. Deicher sets this position against a Marxist reading, which interprets the relation between aristocratic patron and progressive designer as "feudal," and sees the work of the artist as merely a further "lie," in the Nietzschean sense, or as a new construct of domination rather than as the harbinger of a progressive and democratic design practice for the twentieth century.

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Susanne Deicher

I

What is the point of rereading? In the war of the art historical footnote soldiers we see revealed the habitual need to delete, virtually at least, the position of everyone else. Rereading, however, is formulated in terms of the practice of the readers of academic texts.¹ As usual the explicit position of the author is not subject to revision, which makes it possible to

Figure 1

General view of Peter Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1901. Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.



pass on academic questions as such. Instead, the particular answers are revised. Rereading is concerned with the demonstration of fractures at those edges of the text at which new insights emerge against expectations. The practice of rereading art historical texts has been formulated by Jacques Derrida in his work on the interpretations of Meyer Schapiro and Martin Heidegger of a painting by Van Gogh. Derrida was pursuing an unfinished debate: "What I mean is, there will have been something like the pairing of a correspondence between Meyer Schapiro and Martin Heidegger. And that if we take the trouble to formalize a little that correspondence would return to the questions I've just laid down."² Let us also take the trouble "to formalize a little" in order to revive a debate that, in the light of the "questions that we now pose," gains a new interest.

But what are the questions that "currently" offer themselves? Before any questions can be formulated, certainties must be dismissed.

There is a certainty about art, which was already framed defensively in the nineteenth-century tradition from which it originates—as if to stave off any doubts preemptively. According to this intellectual tradition, and irrespective of the actual complications of its production, art is constantly enlightening as it is entirely certain that every true work of art has the imminent power “to reveal the truth in the form of the material artistic creation.” This position, which extended right down to the last representatives of the Frankfurt School, was formulated by Hegel, who also assured us in his “Lectures on Aesthetics” that “Other ends, like instruction, purification, bettering, financial gain, struggling for fame and honor, have nothing to do with the work of art as such, and do not determine its nature.”³ Whatever intentions artists might be pursuing in their creativity, these never damage the true meaning of their works.

This conceptual separation of the artistic product from the consciousness of the art worker was only possible in this form in the society grounded on the division of labor, which wrested from individuals the results of their work and left them apparently without any influence on the objective process of society. Before defining the “purpose” of art as the establishment of truth, Hegel reflected, and not without grounds derived from contemporary history, on the “work of art as a product of human activity” and insisted on “man’s rational need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognized again his own self.”⁴ Yet in the nineteenth century and already in Hegel’s time, artists attacked this tendency toward objectification and worked against the differentiation of labor. Instead, they formulated a defensive position that nurtured the illusion of a spiritualized “new unity,”⁵ which survived as a concept well into the twentieth century as one of the standard arguments of a theory of art that diverged ever further from philosophical rationality. It does not automatically follow, however, that these endeavors resulted in success. But the fact that the artists did indeed succeed in establishing their own legitimating codes outside the societal mainstream, which were accessible only to those who “know” what art is, allowed doubts to arise about the monolithic character of a society grounded on the division of labor. Artistic subcultures are good examples of the tendency endorsed by modern sociology toward the fragmentation of the monolithic structures of a society that had once been closely tied to economic processes into autonomous “life-realms” [*Lebenswelten*]. These realms are increasingly successful in withdrawing themselves from the grasp of direct political power and achieve autonomy, at least in the sphere of culture.⁶ The products of labor—and also those of art—often no longer qualify for valorization in the abstract circulation of “the market,” which depends on “the division of labor,” and are often only made for those who belong to a particular realm of life. The question already asked by classical sociology and by Max Weber, of the extent to which the subjects can

escape the separation of their working lives from the realm of their intentions by erecting autonomous structures, poses itself once again. It is no longer certain, if, indeed, it was ever certain, that works of art have a disinterested status that is independent of the intentions of their producers, and in which the analytical spirit supposedly presents the totality of the society of a particular era. In consequence, the question of the relevance of the political strategies of the artist reasserts itself. The question of a political evaluation of the work of twentieth-century artists and designers in the context of their contemporary society is open once more.

II

In the context of his lifelong research on Peter Behrens, Tilman Buddensieg's essay "Das Wohnhaus als Kultbau: zum Darmstädter Haus von Behrens" [The House as Cult Building: On the Behrens House in Darmstadt]⁷ was considered as a final conclusion, a placation, even, of a question that seems to pose itself ever anew in response to the material. Behrens had supported the opening of the exhibition "Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst" at the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt with four publications of his own,⁸ supported by those of intellectuals like Karl Scheffler and Kurt Breysig, with whom he was in close contact. These texts gave modern design a precise political character. The goal was the reconstruction of absolute, almost medieval power relations in the middle of modern society. Buddensieg undertook an interpretation of the historical significance of the texts from 1900 to 1902 that accompanied the Darmstadt exhibition, of which the Behrens house was a part. According to Buddensieg, ideologically grounded contemporary text should be clearly differentiated from the objective reality of architecture. He identified a "Darmstadt contradiction between a celebration of Behrens himself as court artist and the intuition of the new possibilities of the house of the future,"⁹ which confirms that the consciousness of the artist, immersed in the "Nietzscheanism" typical of the period, and that of his critics in 1900/1902, had not yet comprehended the objective potential for development in his modern design. It is the art historian who, in painstaking philological analysis of the text—a difficult and, initially, apparently futile task—clears the way for the revelation that Buddensieg ventures at the conclusion of his own text. Tearing away the masks of the "contemporary historical past," he interprets the modern formal language as a discourse of transcendental elements, as a "premonition" of the future.¹⁰ This future is the industrial society, whose positive and progressive forces, according to Buddensieg, swept away the "bombastic" ideologies that suffused artistic productivity around 1900. In this sense he positively evaluated Behrens's "shattering of traditional

domestic architecture” as a first sign of the social revolutions of the twentieth century.

In 1975, together with Klaus Herding, Hans-Ernst Mittag [the dedicatee of the Festschrift in which this text first appeared] published *Kunst und Alltag im NS-System. Albert Speers Berliner Straßenlaternen* [Art and the Everyday in the National Socialist System. Albert Speer’s Berlin Street Lamps],¹¹ which was critiqued by Buddensieg in a review that appeared in 1976.¹² In a text marked by its immoderate and unobjective outbursts and manifestly irrational anger, Buddensieg rejected, among other things, the attempt of the two authors to understand Speer’s lamp standards as “authentic works of art” in the Theodor W. Adorno sense, as works that “offer a way in which to analyze the capitalist system in a particular phase.”¹³ For precisely the aesthetic brittleness of Speer’s design, which goes beyond mere functionality as the bearer of additional aesthetic value, makes it possible to recognize in the objects the dispassionately observed characteristics of the National Socialist system. Mittag and Herding also proposed an aesthetic objectivity that transcended the discourse. Wherein lay the conflict with Buddensieg? For Mittag and Herding the transcendental power of the object opened up another realm of historical analysis. On this basis, the weak foundations could be recognized, and not the radiant future of the industrial society conjured up by Buddensieg. The artwork for Mittag and Herding had no meaning for the future or prophetic powers. In collapsing on aesthetic grounds, the artwork reveals instead the true fragility of the political system. This, of course, brings to the art historian a function as an interpreter of broader historical processes, but not—as on the Buddensieg model—as an advocate for the positive qualities of modern art. Instead, the historian interprets the ruins of aesthetic abuse as a sign of the breakdown of the idea of progress.

The battle that split not only German art history in the 1970s into two politically distinct camps is often described as a controversy over method. In reality, however, it was a political dispute, with no real methodological differences in any strictly conceptual sense. Buddensieg and Mittag/Herding shared the same understanding of scholarly work as something grounded in the philosophy of history. Both parties invariably read the work of art as the expression of its historical era. In their unpublished response to Buddensieg’s critique, Mittag and Herding described the further work needed to establish with scholarly accuracy “the question of structural analogies between form and extra-artistic reality” as an important future goal.¹⁴ The opposing parties were divided in their respective evaluations of the political evaluation of the work of modern artists and designers within their society, and in particular on the question of who might be considered an “artist” and what might constitute “art.” Was Albert Speer an artist? Can the results of his work be accorded that historical objectivity, that reality, which Hegel had specified as the expressive achievement of the work of art independent of the author’s intentions?

Let us formalize a little! The pre-discursive qualities of Buddensieg's 1976 review, those outbursts of anger, seem to expose a problem that prevents the formation of a clear argument. For on what conceptual basis should it be possible to distinguish between "artist" and "non-artist"? Buddensieg appealed to the idea of quality. In doing so, however, he must surely have suspected that simply excluding the work of Speer from the Pantheon of good art in no way solved the theoretical problems posed by Speer's designs. For if it is true that the lamp standards on the so-called East-West Axis, the subject of the Mittag/Herding book, are not art and, therefore, "only" give expression to the intentions of the National Socialist ideologues, then Speer and other twentieth-century allegedly nonartists are accorded an unexpected privilege. Should they alone succeed in transcending the barriers between intention and tangible work, which in a society based on the division of labor generates the objectivity of things—aloof from the subject—which is the highest expression of the work of art? That can never be conceded. Such a thesis would not only have unexpectedly hindered Buddensieg's insistence on the privileged character of progressive design, but would also have emphasized the paradox of the Hegelian notion of art. For an objectivity or even a reality that permits not only exceptions, but systematic contradictions and their claim to validity as areas completely withdrawn from the discussion, is no longer real. The debate broke down, one can assume, at exactly this critical point: more exactly it was initially suspended. The reply by Mittag and Herding to Buddensieg's review, in which they also went into detail about their definition of art, was not published in *Kunstchronik*, the journal that had carried the original review.¹⁵

III

The theoretical challenge of the irritating existence of twentieth-century artists (or were they nonartists?), who saw themselves as simultaneously or even primarily as ideologues working in the service of a regime, nevertheless persists. Why, at the beginning of his essay on "The House as Cult Building," does Buddensieg cite critical contemporary voices that question Behrens's historical stature and his performance as an artist; voices that have recognized his empty posing and express doubts about his basic artistic talent? When Buddensieg talks of the "less than outstanding" early works of Behrens,¹⁶ is he not pointing precisely at that equivocal border between art and nonart, which although it can only be qualitatively determined, at the theoretical level exactly represents the problem. Was Behrens some sort of border-crosser between art and nonart, some sort of werewolf, who escaped the Hegelian rules of historical existence?

But this was not Buddensieg's thesis. What he was aiming at in 1980 was the reaffirmed consolidation of the distinction between the content of the consciousness of the producing subject and the objectivity or disinterestedness of its production. Buddensieg was thus advocating in his article the idea of a kind of forensic section of history. This procedure was intended to enable the uninterrupted contemplation of the formal content; and Buddensieg exemplified this with his analysis of designs by Behrens that tended toward abstraction. The role of ideology in artistic production—and thus of nonart—should be cleanly separated from those parts that are true art [*wahre Kunst*]. In holding this view, Buddensieg was confronting the entirely unsympathetic historical figure that was Behrens, clearly sympathizing with Maximilian Harden's "Deliberations Against Your Art Criticism," directed at Behrens, and his suspicion of "nonartistic" tendencies at Behrens's system of categories.¹⁷ The separation of ideology and artwork can already be found in Hegel, who detected in the art production of his own time a "sundering of meaning and form," a divergence between formal characteristics and the accompanying ideological text. For Hegel, this phenomenon meant an ideologizing of art, which, in contrast to the works of Greek antiquity, could no longer manifest the meaning of the works within their sensuous form, but now constructed propositions about them that could not be found in the works themselves. This, however, was not to say that such ideological inventions, which went beyond the formal appearance of the work, were without significance. This simply showed, for Hegel, that the artworks were now assimilated into and were actively participating in the legitimation strategies of society, just as such works had played an active role in establishing Christianity. In affirming this Christianity, Hegel described the spiritual dimension of the work as "a higher purport, which the artwork could no longer contain in itself." In principle, this Hegelian thesis cannot be applied to Buddensieg's problem, or only when one is willing to accept the appearance of further serious theoretical difficulties. For Hegel could only think of embedding the art object as an objectification of *truth* in the continuum of a non-descriptive discourse when he also accepted the ideological discourse as a representative instance of reality. Christianity for him was *truth* itself, existing in a still higher form than in the artwork. What, however, if the discourse itself is a non-truth? What if it is, in a way unthinkable to Hegel, "simply" ideology, which misrepresents the works of art? The notion of the work's truth and objectivity would have to collapse. For Hegel has no category for completely false discourse, nor could he comprehend a positively abstract, empty, and pure form. Furthermore, the supposition of an artistic quality understood in these terms is entirely incompatible with the philosophical categories that Buddensieg nevertheless appears to have regarded as still at his disposal. The categorical foundation threatens to disappear from under the certainties that have become routine.

But before that can happen, salvation arrives. A concept of praxis. “Already in his Darmstadt writings and hidden under the linguistic clichés of a ‘court art,’ Behrens formulated the concept of a ‘useable art,’ which allowed him, alone among the Darmstadt Seven, to survive the disappointment of the Darmstadt period.”¹⁸ Buddensieg offers no proof for the artistic “death” of the remaining six artists. And such proof would be hard to supply. One need only remember that soon after his Darmstadt experience, Olbrich designed the Tietz department store in Düsseldorf, and with it a building that set the standard for the following decade.¹⁹ It is more a case of Buddensieg’s own discourse “surviving,” in that he addresses the practical outcomes, of which he writes, “They may have clashed with the changing lifestyle of future generations, but proved themselves to be useful.”²⁰ Buddensieg does not write on art theory, and design is divorced by the art historian from the ideological residue. He extols the usefulness and the beauty of the Behrens designs, which “survive [that word once again!] and avoid the death sentence of the junk shop.” Instead, they are expelled into a continuum of good, modern design that is purportedly linked to practice but is ultimately a museum. Appeals to an imaginary praxis appear in the text in order to capture theoretical problems. And do we not already find in Hegel “praxis” of this sort? But for him something that was completely false was unthinkable; instead he admitted faulty praxis: “What confronts consciousness here are single circumstances which indeed bear on one another and make up a totality of relations, but only under purely relative categories and innumerable conditions, and, dominated by these, satisfaction may as easily be momentary as permanent . . . What man sees in this situation, ensnared as he is in finitude on every side, is the region of a higher, more substantial truth, in which all oppositions and contradictions in the finite can find their final resolution, and freedom its full satisfaction.”²¹ Art defends exactly this reality, by creating its works. In this sense the state or everyday life in its entirety might be seen as an artwork, which can be perfected insofar as they generate *true* praxis. Hegel in no way thought of the practical management of daily existence in the context of utilitarian objects or product design—as far as we know they played no part for him. What he was focusing on was the management of life in its entirety, even the “modification of the form” of man.²² And how could this be conceived? This is not shown. Praxis in the form of artwork appears only insofar as it is framed as theory.

IV

In a text by Behrens on his house on the Mathildenhöhe, there is mention of the “delight in its use.”²³ Buddensieg repeatedly quotes this passage, which is the prerequisite for his rescue attempt on Behrens’s

designs, and allegedly the proof of its “autonomy from history,”²⁴ under the sign of a practical and humane sensuality. But it is never said in Behrens’s text that this “delight” is a general human condition—for in reality it is an aspect of the exercise of political power. Behrens speaks of pleasure in the terms of the Grand Duke: “To enjoy art in the sense that all life turns into beauty and that beauty gives/creates all lives ... Today, a higher authority is the master of this royal art. In every artistic work that is created in this way, however small, is a divine thought.”²⁵ As an image of this most joyful consumption Buddensieg invokes the most courtly images of a feudal past: “Our pulses quicken and urge us to spontaneous action as the brilliant festivities of earlier, more jovial generations rise in front of us, and not in a melancholy way, but in the intimate joy of reacquaintance.” In the vision of consumption Behrens reveals “the great order of a pellucid spirit,” supported by authority. The text continues: “Once again beauty will become for us the embodiment of the highest authority, in whose service a new cult will arise. It is to this cult that we are erecting a house.”²⁶ The financier of the Darmstadt project, the Grand Duke of Hessen and bei Rhein, is presented as the imaginary leader of this cult, to whom Peter Behrens dedicated a text of his own on the occasion of its inauguration. In this text, this aristocrat is greeted as the leading spirit of the Darmstadt exhibition with the call “Hail, great initiator, held in the luster of the sun!” In best Wilhelmian subservient prose, which seems more appropriate to the groveling excesses of the hero in Heinrich Mann’s novel *Der Untertan* [lit., the subordinate; English translation as *The Loyal Subject*] than to the texts of the architectural avant-garde of modernism, Behrens writes of his patron: “Today there lives once again a great nobleman who identifies with his era, and it is HE who nurtured these thoughts in royal hope and desire and delivered them to us. Thus our days are beautified in thanks and in love, and that which was formerly called work, becomes a benedictory joy, uniting soul and spirit into ardent action, from which emerges the testimony of a great age.”²⁷

Ernst Ludwig was one of the former German aristocracy who were in effect deprived of power after the foundation of the German Reich in 1871, and in consequence sought to distinguish themselves in other areas. Not least for this reason did the Grand Duke of Hessen found the Artists’ Colony at Darmstadt. But what is the meaning of this alliance between a disempowered prince and an avant-garde artist, who is looking for an accommodating location for his art, but does not yet have an adequate list of commissions and is, therefore—just like the prince—powerless within his own realm of art?

Buddensieg characterizes Behrens as a “court artist,”²⁸ and quoted detailed evidence that in the texts dedicated to Behrens’s house there was constant reference to a “cult,” which the house served as a “cult building.” It was a purely literary cult, however, and ultimately nothing more than empty talk, woven around the house by contemporaries,

which in reality was a precursor of a formally advanced and politically neutral modernism. But are not all texts always “chitchat”? Not only the art historian, but also the contemporaries already knew that the eulogistic description of an aristocratic power, arranged around the work as an ideological context, did not correspond to sociological reality. What contemporaries understood by the claims made by the text is clear. Lies. Without specifying the art historical grounds for his position, Buddensieg proceeds from the assumption that Nietzsche had a great significance for Behrens. And as is well known, Nietzsche philosophically privileged the lie in his theory of the role of ideology in modern society, explicitly aimed against Hegel. By referring to the potential use of his own house on the Mathildenhöhe in a text dedicated to the Grand Duke, Behrens incorporated it in what Nietzsche would have called a regulative fiction: this vicarious usage [by the Duke] was already regarded as established, when seen from the perspective of feudal dominion. Whoever now attempts, however, to separate the real use of the Behrens house from this regulative fiction will unexpectedly fail. For it is impossible to establish how the house was actually made use of, complete with its furnishings, which appear so suited to the task, and its practical household equipment (Figure 2). For Behrens never occupied his house on the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt. In an account by Gustav Pauli, dated 1903 and published by Kurt Asche in 1992, we read:

Behrens invited me for a meal, which appeared to throw his poor wife, whose washing day this was, into embarrassed confusion ... The magnificent house, which had cost him around 150,000 Reichsmarks—more perhaps than his total assets—stands abandoned on the Mathildenhöhe and waits for a purchaser. “I don’t want to live there with a petroleum lamp,” he said very serenely, “that would have no style,” and remains in his apartment in the Wilhelmstrasse. But why then had he set up



Figure 2

Peter Behrens, set of glasses with red base. Kurt Breysig, “Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben” in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.

the house in such a well-devised way for his personal needs? It was to be “something artistically perfect,” and then, of course, he did not want to lag behind Olbrich.²⁹

The registers in the Darmstadt City Archive confirm this report, as Peter Behrens is listed throughout his Darmstadt period as resident in the Wilhelmstrasse. From January 1, 1899 until July 1, 1901 he lived at Wilhelmstrasse 6 in the house of Dr Fuchs; from July 2, 1902 until March 21, 1903 at Wilhelmstrasse 2 with Frau Eppenetter. This means that when the house on the Mathildenhöhe was ready for the use of the Behrens family at the end of the 1901 exhibition, Behrens did not move in, but simply moved again in Wilhelmstrasse.³⁰ This fact, however, is not mentioned at all in most of the contemporary documents. Although it would have taken little critical energy to record the contradiction noted by Pauli between the nonartistic but functional everyday life of the Behrens family in the Wilhelmstrasse and the nonfunctioning of life in the showcase artistic house, in which, evidently, there was not even electricity, it must be concluded that none of the other contemporary critics showed any interest in this realization. They simply accepted the existence of the public life of the artist, which they could write about in articles in which mythic form was given to this life in the aesthetically perfected spaces of the house set high on the Mathildenhöhe. Real life—unbefitting for public consumption—was carried on down below in the Wilhelmstrasse. It was not entirely private, however, as Pauli—who after all was an art critic—was allowed in. This imperfect division between genuine and fictive life was part of a game, a regulative fiction, in which Behrens was not the only participant. The media also went along with it, and in particular the art journals *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, *Die Kunst*, and *Die Rheinlande*, which published photographs of Behrens’s wife at the piano in the music room (Figure 3), or his daughter waiting on the steps to go out with her parents (Figure 4). Visitors to the Darmstadt exhibition, who found the house uninhabited, could assume that the family had only left their home temporarily. It is striking that Behrens himself never appears in these photographs, but rather those female members of the family who were unknown to the public—and this too for strategic reasons. Alfred Lichtwark’s well-known account of the exhibition records the visitors’ enthusiasm not so much for the design of the household fittings and appliances, but primarily for the illusion that they were being received as guests, or assumed themselves the role of occupiers in this game, which was made possible by the artificially staged absence of the lady of the house (Figure 5): “This dining room was constantly mobbed, and the young girls and women could only be dragged away by their not yet so captivated male companions after repeated attempts and I several times saw how the women turned back once again from the stairs, in order to enjoy in another quick glance the sight of the laid table with its delicately patterned damask cloth,

Figure 3

Music room in Peter Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1901. Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.

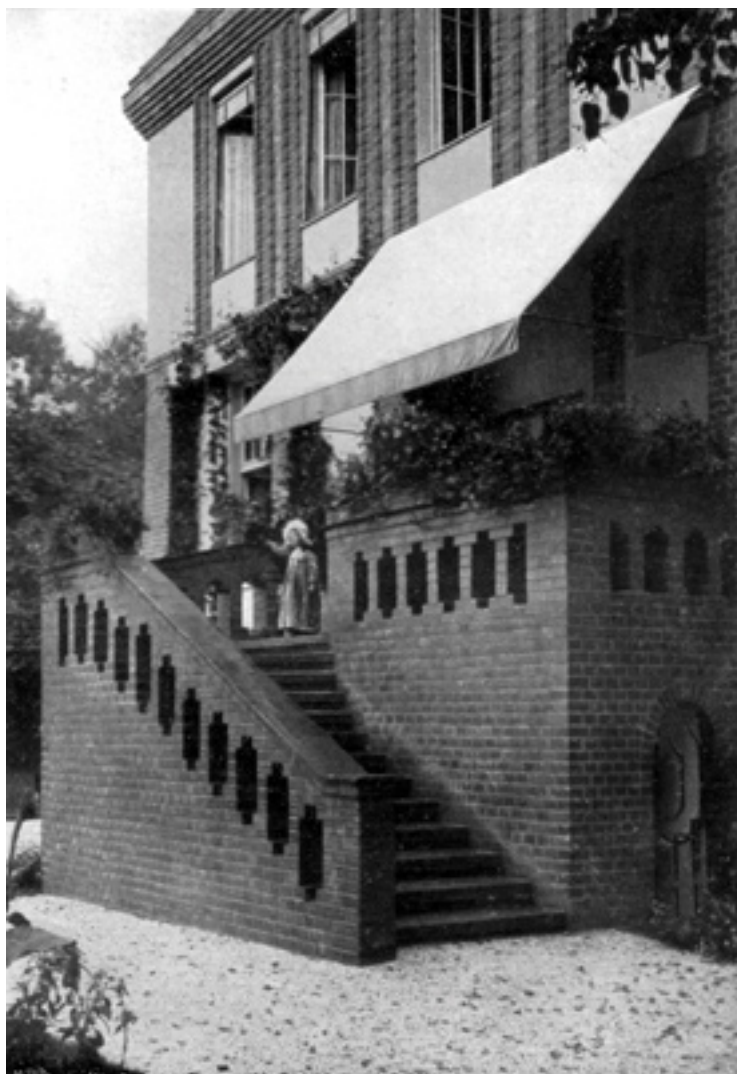


novel-shaped glasses, and delightful flower decorations. They would have loved to have sat themselves down on the comfortable chairs that appeared to be waiting around for the guests.”³¹ Here once again, it is the women who support the regulative fiction, and appear to affirm to the artist (for whom wife and daughter fulfill this role) and to the male museum visitor that the fictive employment of modern forms is reality.

The “delight in use” attested to by Behrens is embodied by the female personnel. From a psychological perspective one might add the observation here that the delight that Behrens depicts in connection with his house, is, and not by chance, an oral delight. The painting *Maternal Kiss* in the attic study of the house is presented next to the portrait of the Grand Duke (Figure 6), whose imaginary presence seems to inhibit

Figure 4

Veranda on the south side of Peter Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1901. Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.



the house from being used. Orality, allotted by Freud to the realm of fore-pleasure [*Vorlust*], directs its attention to the view of the table at which one might eat and to the prospect of a feast. But it will never proceed to the actual consummation of the longed-for object of use.

V

Behrens himself was probably entirely aware of the staged character of his existence on the Mathildenhöhe, for three of his publications on the



Figure 5

Dining room, Peter Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1901. Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.

Darmstadt exhibition were concerned with the prospects for a renewed theater and with art, which were to be both the themes and the content of an architecture-related "cult" of "life" and of "beauty." While the Behrens theater-reform, so called, has been well researched by Gisela Möller³² and Elizabeth Motz,³³ these efforts on Behrens's part have not yet, strangely enough, been systematically linked to the house on the Mathildenhöhe. This is surprising, above all because in what is probably the most important of these texts, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* (Festivals of Life and Art, 1901), Behrens himself drew a connection between design practice and theatricality. He proposes the creation of a culture of communal "celebration" that would take place in a specially designed building, which was clearly a theater: "a sacred place for art in its totality."³⁴ Behrens argues the need for such a culture of celebration on the grounds that: "We have reached a point in our practical lives that

Figure 6

Studio, Peter Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1901. Kurt Breysig, "Das Haus Peter Behrens. Mit einem Versuch über Kunst und Leben" in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 5th year, No. 4, January 1902.



was never there before and that cannot be lost, and this sense makes us feel happy.”³⁵ The issue is the practical deployment of the work invested in the new style: Behrens describes the dawning culture of a new age as that of the “proficient man.”³⁶ The work of the culturally creative spirit for practical life should be embedded within a symbolic framework; thus the culture of festivals, thus the construction of a special building. The actual need for such symbolic superelevation of practical work and design was not substantiated in any more detail, although the same text insists: “We do not want to detach ourselves from our art.”³⁷ Evidently the modern design practice should be linked to the old concept of art, which, in Behrens’s view, is to be safeguarded by the establishment of a specific institution. Otherwise, the claim to art could be submerged under the prosaic civilization of a purely practical and modern existence.

The imaginary praxis on the Mathildenhöhe was intended to participate in the institutionally supported conservation of a particular concept of art. Although in terms of the content, Behrens linked practical design work and the idea of a new cult and of a new celebration, at no point in the writings with which he accompanied the opening ceremonies at Darmstadt did he identify his own house as a “cult building.” Buddensieg’s title, “The House as Cult Building” falls short, therefore, and fails to capture the true complexity of the functional purposes of the period. Only one of the texts published for the exhibition deals with real architecture: the introduction to the *Katalog des Hauses Behrens* [Catalog of the Behrens House], aimed at visitors. Here the plan and elevation solution is traced back to “an informal system of aligned and adjacent spaces, derived from the functional brief”³⁸—an analysis that has not subsequently been confirmed by architectural historians. [Julius] Posener, for example, noted the reversal of the functionalist imperative: “The rooms are forced to conform to the composition of the facade.”³⁹ In his little building monograph, Christian Norberg-Schulz declared the spatial articulation to be simply conventional and not particularly interesting; it was not in accord with the aesthetically progressive design principles of the facades. The fictional unity of the rooms does not appear in the interiors, but is suggested only through aesthetic devices by means of the “systematic” decoration, which is based on variations on a single motif. The building is not composed around functional considerations, but acts instead as the significant bearer of a “message.” The dining room, for example, testifies to a particular design volition: “It possesses an intentionally appropriate atmosphere, which results from a conscious control of all the formal devices. It is thus implicit that the act of consuming meals is an activity that participates in a complex system of (possible) qualitative relations, and that its ‘signified’ [i.e. meaning] is the system itself.”⁴⁰ In Behrens’s text, the functionality of the house is confirmed only in an illusory manner, probably because he knew that: “Nowadays there is a lot to be gained by saying that a house should be built from the inside out.”⁴¹ The design principles that Behrens actually followed in working up the design remain outside the realm of text, and can only be reconstructed from the form of the house itself.

Buddensieg has already pointed out the difference between the two types of texts that Behrens wrote on the building, which are like “day” and “night.” By this he meant that “the Catalog of the Behrens House” reveals that the true consciousness of the architect, who had never “lost his head” amid all the beauty cult of *Jugendstil* and had already thought about “practical, elegant, clearly delineated, and above all inexpensive products” for the “market.”⁴² Very evidently, however, the consciousness of the architect is to be found in neither of the texts. Both variations, functional and declamatory, were simply cut to suit the audience. Neither addressed the *reality* of architecture.

The building monograph by Norberg-Schulz has shown that the architecture of the house in Darmstadt also contained an ideological component. It appeared to form a system of abstract architectural elements supported by decorative leitmotifs. While this system can be read initially as self-referential, it serves at the same time an illustrative function, depicting a second, parallel-ordered “system” of architecture or of ideology. Norberg-Schulz, who was an expert in Baroque architecture, understood this self-referential, double structure as a possible reference to “a ‘world’ of other phenomena,” and presumed “that the work of art serves to make this world known.”⁴³

The imaginary doubling of the structure, which possibly refers only to itself and which, instead of reconciling the building in the image of its function, places it in a highly disconcerting situational context, psychologically comparable to Lacan’s mirror stage, now appears to fit exactly with the impression of the most intense inner conflict between modernity and retrospective aestheticism, the disjunction between program and form, and with the media existence of its creator, who was nowhere completely at home. A new reading of the Behrens texts related to the Darmstadt building shows that they are invariably grounded on a double structure, which is ambiguous—in the pretence of joining meaning with emotionalism—and which at the same time may be read in its circularity simply as an empty referential structure.

A cognate mirror structure is the basic motive of the text. For life and art, as asserted in diverse variations, should not be misunderstood as the descriptions of different spheres of existence. For in reality, life is art and art is life. In Behrens’s words: “We are dedicated to and prepared for the great art of our worldview! And now the game of life unfolds: we ourselves play it, the beautiful drama of our most serious joy.”⁴⁴ Might one not understand this as a direct commentary on the “game” enacted by Behrens with the fiction of his presence on the Mathildenhöhe? In his *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* [Festivals of Life and Art], from which this quotation is taken, there is talk of two buildings, two carefully shaped spheres of life: “Having designed everything down below in our usual surroundings with reference to our daily life, to the logic of our thoughts, and to our awareness of function, up here we are suffused with the impression of a higher purpose, a purpose only translated into the realm of sensory perception, our spiritual needs, the satisfaction of our transcendental longings.”⁴⁵

What is he referring to here? Buddensieg identified this second building for the “higher” purposes specifically with a “theater building” and not with Behrens’s house, whereas the first building aimed at “our sensibility toward function” was, according to Buddensieg, Behrens’s house on the Mathildenhöhe.⁴⁶ The second building, however, the one for the higher purpose, is described as “radiant” [*Farbenleuchtend*], with long

white banners wafting from their masts. This is precisely the way in which the house on the Mathildenhöhe presented itself: the functional house might just as well be the apartment on the Wilhelmstrasse that was kept far away from the eyes of the public, while the Mathildenhöhe house became the site of public staging, a “theater.”

At the same time, in explanation of the poetic image of the two buildings, we must bear in mind that the house on the Mathildenhöhe was constantly making reference to the residence of the Duke, who had given Behrens the commission to construct a “shrine to art” [*Stätte zur Kunst*]. This is in no sense a positive relationship. In an Oedipal nightmare, a “cave” opens up on the theater stage “as high as a great hall in a castle. A depressing sense of our weakness creeps upon us.”⁴⁷ The Grand Duke of Hesse is presented as the father of this endless, imaginary schism, which shaped Behrens’s poetic production and turned it into a litany, which actually drove out the constantly cited “delight in use.” The base formed by the low life in the Wilhelmstrasse is transcended by the superstructure on the Mathildenhöhe. This in turn, as the site of an imaginary yet nevertheless bourgeois existence, is humbled by the superstructure of the Duke’s castle. The cult that Buddensieg wishes to localize in the house on the Mathildenhöhe relates to the Duke, who in his political powerlessness is a nightmare vision of the feeble social status of the artist, who is (still?) unable to give form to our daily life. Behrens tells us that the “cult” which is dedicated to Ernst Ludwig applies at the same time to “beauty,” to “art,” and to “spirit”—and thus to the creation of the artist himself. The Duke is locked into the circular structure of reference whose creator is Behrens himself.

The usefulness of the base/superstructure for the doubled and mirrored structure of the Behrens work finds its limit in this ambivalence. For it never becomes clear which is the base and which the ideological superstructure; both seem instead to follow each other in a symbolic game, each transmuting into the other. The reason for this is clear: at no point in this symbolic game is it possible to locate the real praxis and real power. Behrens as designer does not have praxis at his disposal: he must construct it first. The Duke has no access to real power. Behrens attempted to acquire the symbolic power of the Duke and to fix it in the permanence of cult that circulated around the idea of beauty, which was set above praxis itself. Both Motz⁴⁸ and Buddensieg⁴⁹ have fleetingly made reference to Martin Warnke’s concept of the “court artist” in order to describe the cult of the Duke nurtured by Behrens, but neither was capable of establishing a connection between the working situation of a court artist, which in Warnke’s case referred to a sociological reality, and Behrens’s role as artist. In sociological terms, Warnke had traced the “godlike” ennobling of art in the aesthetics of the Renaissance back to the position of the artist in the service of the prince, who in the hierarchy of merit, which also doubled as a social hierarchy, was to be regarded as an intermediary to the divine. Furthermore, according to

Warnke's thesis, the "elevated" aura of art in modernity is a concealed legacy of the feudal situation of the court artists:

The fact that we speak of art as an elevated spiritual ability ... and regard those things that appear under the name "art" as a particular system of human activity [is] a consequence of the particular forms of courtly intercourse with art and artists. ... The contribution of the arts to the visible appearance of the princely aura, the privileged closeness of the artist to the ruler generated the impression of a "higher" and extraordinary activity, which was nourished by particular gifts, and blessed with universal competence.⁵⁰

That Behrens thought in the terms of Warnke's descriptive hierarchy of values is confirmed by the fact that he consistently described the Duke as "godlike," while indeed associating the "higher" aspects of art with a "second, eternal life."⁵¹ In contrast to the modern artist, however, the court artist did not have to refer ever anew to the prince, for once he was in position, he could fall back on the established hierarchy of values, and be assured of the identification of the divine with his art. Budensieg reports that around 1901 Behrens had hoped in vain for a royal appointment from the Kaiser. But as this prospect of an official position had not been realized, there was a need for a cult that insistently made imaginary reference to an extinct feudalism as an alternative to a real position as court artist. The tortuous, litany-like character of Behrens's text is conditioned by the compulsion to repeat constantly the connection to the aura of a prince, who, just at the moment when he might respond, no longer has princely power.

But in the case of Behrens, the art itself is no longer what it had been under the true princes. If one looks in the Behrens texts for a differentiation between the concepts of art and of design, or for any sort of exact definition of what art actually is, one once again comes up against an artfully contrived ambivalence. Behrens's sentence: "We wish never to be separated from our art" actually points to a unanimity between the public and the sphere of art, which should express itself in the fusion of the theater stage and the auditorium. The theatrical performance and the vitality of the audience become fused; art and life joined as one. A precisely defined sphere of production or even an object that might be described as art can no longer be identified. In the Behrens texts, art is no longer treated as an object, as a technical proficiency, or as the plaudit accorded a handmade product, but rather as a value. Art then comes into being when life itself gains that higher state of consecration through the ritual celebration set amid our quotidian existence, through the cult at whose center stands the figure of the prince. For Behrens, therefore, the word "art" denotes no more and no less than the divine status legitimized by proximity to the prince, which was once bound to art.

The production of art is not defined by Behrens as the production of art objects, but as the production of values. Art becomes a symbolic machinery, which, in Behrens's own words, ennobles both the beholder and the producer.

VI

Were we not inclined to believe that only with the cynical culture of postmodernism was it possible to understand art production as merely an accretion of social legitimacy? Behrens and his interpreters have, in fact, understood the creation of an imaginary praxis of the artistic in daily life as work toward the establishment of a new hierarchy of social values. The reference to Nietzsche and in particular to Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which has been firmly established philologically by Buddensieg, did not depend on one's broader education, but referred to a theory that was currently expedient. In his work on Nietzsche and Nietzscheanism in Germany, Ernst Nolte has identified which of Nietzsche's theories were drawn on by the philosopher's many prefascist disciples in Germany.⁵² It is the establishment of a new elite within the sham of invisibility that is understood as the modern society. Nietzsche offered a retrospective reading of Christianity as an ideologically underpinned rebranding of the weak members of a poor and defenseless class in the Roman Empire into the possessors of an ideology that guaranteed a fictive heaven and thus privileged them. This theory impressed those in Wilhelmine Germany who perceived their own cultural position as weak and unsecured. To this group assuredly belonged Peter Behrens of Darmstadt, whose designs for mass production originally failed to find industrial patrons and whose status as an artist in the context of design practice for everyday use appeared to be more than insecure. On the historical example of Christianity, Nietzsche had shown that a belief system or a cult could be invented for political ends: this was one of the consequences of his theory of the *lie*.

The response of many intellectuals in the Wilhelmine period to the shifting of social divisions was the voluntaristic formation of new social groups and circles, which often gathered around an artist. The circle around Stefan George is the most striking example of the formation of a distinctive social group, and Buddensieg has shown that Behrens was close to the George circle around 1901, without, admittedly, belonging to it.⁵³ The link between the two was the critic Kurt Breysig, who published a long article about the Behrens house on the Mathildenhöhe. In this text, Behrens's game with the allocation of social status—the disclosure offered in his writings of the symbolic machinery of gaining status—is replaced by a brutal directness. Breysig builds on the definition of art undertaken by Nietzsche late in life as the vital creator in

modern society of value-creating fictions. Nietzsche had posed the question: "How far does art reach into the inner essence of the world?" and answered: "The world itself is nothing other than art."⁵⁴ The creators of art were characterized by Nietzsche as "the artists of the future,"⁵⁵ who by means of their ability to construct fictions are working on a new, voluntarist world order, which stands under the slogan "Do not seek for meaning in the things themselves, but insert it."⁵⁶ The work of the artist has a directing, dominant function in the formation of new "constructs of domination" [*Herrschaftsgebilde*] in which a clear "hierarchy" prevails.⁵⁷ Following Nietzsche, this hierarchy expresses itself in different world orders for the rulers and those who are ruled: "The meaning of the herd should be dominant within the herd,—but not extend beyond it: the leaders of the herd need a fundamentally different appreciation of their own actions, just like the independent spirits or the 'predators,' etc."⁵⁸ In this spirit, Kurt Breysig identified two essentially different spheres within society: on one side that of the "core of commercial life, with its sweating torpor and servile mass oppositionism," and on the other side that of the "leaders and masters."⁵⁹ Everything to do with the formation of the identity of the governing and dominating elite, and even of the "entire apparatus" of "state, law, and national economy," was defined by Breysig as a human "game," and as the expression of the most elevated human ability, namely the ability to create art. Thus the artist assumed a relatively high rank in the hierarchy of human values. But even higher is he that knows that art in general is a socially creative function, and is therefore in the position not only to produce works of art, but to reinvent "himself" and his "existence" as a "work of art." Those who have at their command this conception of a universal art production for themselves and for others form a new elite, a new aristocracy: "Never before has a nobility emerged that established its claims on the basis of a higher conception of existence, as well as on the sword and the family tree."⁶⁰ Behrens belonged to this new aristocracy since, according to Breysig, he had reunited the fine and applied arts and had revealed their unity as a socially creative activity. Precisely the fact that Behrens's life on the Mathildenhöhe was pure pretence, is seen by Breysig as a particular cultural achievement that anticipated the imaginative formation of new ruling circles: "Once again this decision will be made on the borders between art and daily life, a decision on which everything will be dependent, whether mankind will once again gain the strength to transform itself into a work of art, whether the notion of the integration of the world and of a life vision will regain its potency, and whether a new culture will emerge from creative work and total being."⁶¹ As Buddensieg has noted, Behrens agreed enthusiastically with Breysig's interpretation.⁶² Behrens had inserted his reconstructive work on the symbolic sphere of art into a social hierarchy. Indeed, his efforts were dedicated not only to the reconstruction of art, but also to the consolidation and reestablishment

of a social pyramid at whose pinnacle stood the aristocrat, whose status was newly legitimized by the work of the artist, and who, at the same time, elevated and therefore legitimized the arts. It is for this reason that Behrens was so well disposed toward interpretation of his fictional life on the Mathildenhöhe as the model for a new construct of sovereignty within modern society.

Karl Scheffler had also understood the political implications of Behrens's house on the Mathildenhöhe, and had assigned to the artist the following rank in society: "By instinct Behrens is an aristocrat; he has no sensibility for the social compassion that afflicts both the life and the work of some artists. That may lead weak spirits to take against him, as it appears 'unfair'; a strong art, however, never has anything to do with fairness, but only with the appreciation of power."⁶³ In Scheffler's view, however, Behrens is less concerned with establishing new power structures than with situating art at the focus of the actual social debate. According to Scheffler, a new kind of art is at work in Behrens's oeuvre, to which Scheffler gives the name "abstraction." This direction in art, which in 1902 had not even found tangible form in actual artworks, first appeared in text. Its ideology predated it and was subsequently ascribed to it. How could the still unborn "abstraction" thus become *reality* insofar as it had emanated from the "need for art" endorsed by Hegel and had extended its hand to the need of the people to become more self-confident?

And in reality, the people resisted "abstraction" before it even existed! At any rate, this was what was observed by Scheffler; and this, says Scheffler, is the reason why Behrens fought so hard in 1902 to explain the tendency to abstraction that was present in his work, which was incomprehensible to the broad mass of the people. Abstraction, according to Scheffler, is reserved for the self-awareness of "higher beings." As Scheffler argues:

He who craves for harmony and beauty is most certainly appalled by the teeming, sweating crowd, which blindly serves the future ... People are only to be lured away briefly from this work, in the service of a nameless, inexplicable beauty ... In the realm of abstraction they are not following a resonance, but only redemptory words.⁶⁴

According to Scheffler, Behrens had spoken these words, and in his work had created a cult around abstraction, had called his house on the Mathildenhöhe a theater, and with the help of this formulation had turned precisely this house into a "rallying point for the emergent culture."⁶⁵ Behrens had created a "cult" which ultimately attracted people of all classes. For those who understand art, he had created a "cult without sacraments," namely abstraction; while for the others, those who labor and know nothing of art, he had offered tangible concepts.

In the eyes of his contemporaries, the artist Behrens—who surrounded his formal creations with the staging of a social practice—was engaged with the task of creating new social structures that were necessary in the context of the changing Wilhelmine society. Behrens showed himself to be in agreement with this interpretation, and also subscribed, it would seem, to the Nietzschean slogan: “Theory of the construction of power rather than sociology,”⁶⁶ which contrasted analytical and descriptive work on society with the positively engaged creative work on the theory and on society. The artist was to contribute to the formation of the new construction of power. His work should reveal that it is putatively possible to plan and form society on the basis of self-proclaimed elites.

Finally, is it possible to rescue Behrens’s design output from its ideological delusion, to tear it out of the prefascist game with the creation of new structures of power? The simple directness [*Sachlichkeit*] of the Behrens designs in the house on the Mathildenhöhe is convincingly linked by Tilmann Buddensieg to the “shattering” of the customary symbolic associations of utilitarian objects.⁶⁷ According to Buddensieg and also to Kurt Asche,⁶⁸ Behrens replaced the customary design work in developing the specific characteristics of a particular utilitarian object to the exclusion of other comparable objects with the consistent application of a unified grid and unified network of forms. This net was cast, for example, over doors and ceilings, wineglasses and chairs, appearing to transform them into formal units within a universal field of activity. In the process, says Buddensieg, the habitual identification of consumer goods with a familiar branch of commerce was shattered. And what else, one might ask, was this destruction of the customary practice if not an attempt to set up new patterns of social activity? What was this destruction if not the attempt to replace the established hierarchies with new ones, generated in the abstract by the artist? Behrens’s innovations in formal design also become apparent in the results and in their formal expression as objects inspired by the idea of the socially creative power of the artist. In the contemporary texts, this general facility to project human praxis in advance is linked to the notion of abstraction. In Hegelian theory abstract form was, of course, already considered, but as a negative, whose positive evaluation would have meant the acceptance of the possibility of a complete division between the *truth* of art and the *truth* of praxis and of ideology. Under the influence of the Nietzschean theory of the *lie*, however, the notion of praxis (which was already for Hegel immanent to the categorical system) is entirely and now self-consciously torn away from real life, which was a concept that no longer existed for Nietzsche or for his successors such as Behrens.

The threatening realization that twentieth-century design in Germany was from the very outset no longer orientated toward the praxis of people working independently of text, yet who at the same time accepted a politically neutral concept of daily life, was arguably the reason

for Buddensieg's fury against the work of Mittag and Herding on Albert Speer. For Mittag and Herding were seeking to situate a *different* concept of daily life outside and beyond the production of Albert Speer. They insisted, however, that the concept of the everyday still needed further clarification.⁶⁹ And truly, are not the questions concerning the concept of daily life that they are posing, not those that ask if those things that they are designing were ever anything else but imaginary praxis?

Notes

1. This text offers a rereading of Tilmann Buddensieg's essay "Das Wohnhaus als Kultbau. Zum Darmstädter Haus von Behrens," in *Peter Behrens und Nürnberg. Geschmackswandel in Deutschland. Historismus. Jugendstil und die Anfänge der Industriereform*, exhibition catalog (Nuremberg: Deutsches Nationalmuseum, 1980), pp. 37–47.
2. See Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), and in particular "Restitutions de la vérité en peinture," pp. 291–436. English translation from *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 257.
3. George Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik," vol. 1, in *Werke*, eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 82. English translation from Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: 1975), vol. 1, p. 55.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 52, English translation *ibid.*, p. 31.
5. The romantic idea of a "new unity" was taken over, for example, by Piet Mondrian; a unity that would create the realm of the "spiritual" through "the destruction of all divisions." This postulate, initially formulated as an aesthetic theory, was also proposed as a demand for the abolishment of the division of labor. This led him to collaborate with the anarchist Arthur Müller-Lehning, for whose journal *i 10* he wrote several articles. See Piet Mondrian, "Die neue Gestaltung. Das Generalprinzip gleichgewichtiger Gestaltung," in Mondrian, *Die Neue Gestaltung* (Munich, 1925), pp. 5–28 and in particular pp. 7 and 25. See also Yve-Alain Bois, *Arthur Lehning en Mondrian. Hun vriendschap en correspondentie* (Amsterdam, 1984).
6. See Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), and in particular Volume 2, "Entkoppelung von System und Lebenswelt," pp. 229 ff. [English: *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2, Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).]

7. Tilmann Buddensieg, "Das Wohnhaus als Kultbau. Zum Darmstädter Haus von Behrens," in *Peter Behrens und Nürnberg. Geschmackswandel in Deutschland. Historismus, Jugendstil und die Anfänge der Industriereform*, exhibition catalog (Nuremberg: Deutsches Nationalmuseum, 1980), pp. 37–47.
8. Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst. Eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols: der Künstlerkolonie in Darmstadt gewidmet* (Leipzig, 1900); Peter Behrens, "Einleitende Bemerkungen," in *Haus Peter Behrens*, exhibition catalog, provisional edition of May 15, 1901 (Darmstadt, 1901), pp. 3–10; Peter Behrens, *Ernst Ludwig. Dem Grossherzog von Hessen und bei Rhein, in Ein Dokument deutscher Kunst. Die Ausstellung der Künstlerkolonie in Darmstadt 1901*, commemorative publication (Munich, 1901), pp. 5–12; "Die Lebensmesse von Richard Dehmel, als festliches Spiel, dargelegt von Peter Behrens," *Die Rheinlande: Monatschrift für deutsche Kunst*, 1, No. 4 (1904), pp. 28–39.
9. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 44.
10. Ibid.
11. Hans-Ernst Mittig and Klaus Herding, *Kunst und Alltag im NS-System. Albert Speers Berliner Straßenlaternen* (Gießen: Anabas, 1975).
12. Tilmann Buddensieg, review of *ibid.*, *Kunstchronik*, 29, No. 5 (1976), pp. 148–64.
13. Mittig and Herding, above Note 11, p. 48.
14. Klaus Herding and Hans-Ernst Mittig, response to Tilmann Buddensieg's remarks, p. 6. This text was not accepted for publication by *Kunstchronik*, but is accessible in the Kunstbibliothek der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, catalog number E 10396 b mtl.
15. Cf. Note 14.
16. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 37.
17. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 38, n. 7.
18. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 43. [Translator's note: This is a reference to the Artists' Colony established at Darmstadt in 1899 by Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse. Behrens was one of the seven architects and artists invited to live and work there; the other six were Paul Bürck, Rudolf Bosselt, Hans Christiansen, Ludwig Habich, Patriz Huber, and Joseph Maria Olbrich.]
19. "The extent to which Olbrich's Tietz store served as the mandatory example" is shown by Eberhard Grunsky: "Waren- und Kaufhäuser," in Eduard Trier and Willy Weyres (eds.), *Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts im Rheinland*, vol. 2 (Düsseldorf, 1980), pp. 271–86, this citation p. 278.
20. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 43.
21. Hegel, above Note 3, p. 137, English translation from Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1975), vol. 1, p. 99.
22. Ibid., p. 52.

23. Behrens, "Einleitende Bemerkungen," above Note 8, p. 3.
24. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 43.
25. Behrens, "Ernst Ludwig," above Note 8, p. 5.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
28. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 44.
29. Kurt Asche, *Peter Behrens und Oldenburg: Dokumente Deutscher Kunst*, exhibition catalog (Oldenburg: Kunstverein, 1992), pp. 49–50. Asche refers to Holger Maraun, *Reformen des Kunstgewerbes in Bremen* (Stade, 1992).
30. The registration certificates in the Darmstadt City Archive show that Behrens was registered as a resident in the city from January 1, 1899 until he moved to Düsseldorf on March 21, 1903. For access to this source I would like to thank Dr Peter Engels of the Darmstadt City Archive, and also Dr Ulmer of the Darmstadt Museum for the generous provision of text and illustrative material.
31. Alfred Lichtwark, *Briefe an die Kommission für die Verwaltung der Kunsthalle*, ed. Gustav Pauli, Volume 1 (Hamburg, 1923), pp. 447ff.
32. Gisela Möller, *Peter Behrens in Düsseldorf: Die Jahre von 1903 bis 1907* (Weinheim: 1991), chapter entitled "Der Theaterreformer," pp. 373 ff.
33. Elizabeth Motz, "Pathos und Pose: Zu Peter Behrens' Theaterreform," in Hans-Georg Pfeifer and others (eds.), *Peter Behrens: Wer aber will sagen was Schönheit sei?* (Düsseldorf, 1990), pp. 38–51.
34. Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst*, above Note 8, p. 11.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
38. Behrens, "Einleitende Bemerkungen," above Note 8, p. 6.
39. Julius Posener, "Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Neuen Architektur, III: Das Zeitalter Wilhelms II, in *Arch+* (October 1981), pp. 4–75, cited text p. 50.
40. Christian Norbert-Schulz, *Casa Behrens—Darmstadt* (Rome, 1980), p. 26.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
42. Tilmann Buddensieg in collaboration with Dieter C. Schütz, "Die ästhetische Ausstattung des Lebens," in Werner Busch (ed.), *Funkkolleg Kunst: Eine Geschichte der Kunst im Wandel ihrer Funktionen*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1987), pp. 311–35, cited in text p. 319.
43. Norbert-Schulz, above Note 40, p. 26.
44. Behrens, "Feste des Lebens und der Kunst," above Note 8, p. 13.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
46. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 40.
47. Behrens, "Feste des Lebens und der Kunst," above Note 8, p. 15.

48. See Motz, above Note 33: "The cultural-political context, in which a construction like the Darmstadt Artists' Colony could develop is indicated by the attempt 'to establish modernism once again as a courtly art, ... which at the same time aspired to be the utilitarian art for everybody.'"
49. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 44.
50. Martin Warnke, *Hofkünstler: Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Künstlers* (Cologne, 1985), pp. 9–11.
51. Behrens, "Feste des Lebens und der Kunst," above Note 8, p. 13.
52. Ernst Nolte, *Nietzsche und Nietzscheanismus in Deutschland* (Berlin and Vienna, 1990).
53. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 38 and n.5.
54. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich and Berlin, 1967–77), vol. 12, p. 121. This is a text fragment by Nietzsche from 1885–86, subsequently used in the compilation by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche entitled *Der Wille zur Macht* (The Will to Power).
55. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 238. [Translator's note: Voluntarism in this context refers to the belief that will is the dominant factor in the constitution of the world.]
57. *Ibid.* p. 280.
58. *Idem.*
59. Kurt Breysig, "Versuch über Kunst und Leben," in "Das Haus Peter Behrens," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 9 (special issue, January 1901–2), pp. 135–150, this citation p. 135.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 137–38.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
62. On December 22, directly after receiving the special issue [see above Note 59], Behrens wrote to Breysig: "We are delighted by your essay, by the language, and by all the beautiful sentiments in it. It is without doubt the best piece that has ever been written in regard to my art." Quoted Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 38.
63. Karl Scheffler, "Wer seinen Wünschen nach reineren Lebensformen..." in "Das Haus Peter Behrens," special issue of *Die Kunst*, vol. 6 (1902), pp. 3–48, cited in text p. 21.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 48.
66. Nietzsche, above Note 54, p. 208.
67. Buddensieg, above Note 1, p. 44.
68. Cf. the analysis of Behrens's use of the grid in his post-Darmstadt designs in: Kurt Asche, *Peter Behrens und die Oldenburger Ausstellung 1905* (Weinheim, 1992).
69. Mittig and Herding, above Note 11, p. 8.