



## Spaces for the elevated personal life: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's concept of the dweller, 1926–1930

Tanja Poppelreuter

To cite this article: Tanja Poppelreuter (2016) Spaces for the elevated personal life: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's concept of the dweller, 1926–1930, *The Journal of Architecture*, 21:2, 244–270, DOI: [10.1080/13602365.2016.1160946](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2016.1160946)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2016.1160946>



Published online: 31 Mar 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 36



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Spaces for the elevated personal life: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's concept of the dweller, 1926–1930

Tanja Poppelreuter 

*Belfast School of Architecture, University of Ulster,  
United Kingdom (Author's e-mail address: tanja.  
popp@gmail.com)*

Within the discourse that sought to develop housing during the inter-war era in Germany, standardisation was regarded as a means with which to create adequate solutions for the working class. Housing needs were subsumed into a set amount of common denominators that led to beliefs that the design of the house would alter and enhance the conduct of the inhabitant.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's declaration, in the Catalogue of the 1927 housing Exhibition in Stuttgart-Weißenhof, that standardisation, whilst suitable as a means, must never be the goal of architecture, enunciates his critical view of such normative solutions and attempts to coerce the dweller towards a prescribed way of living. In consulting the writings of a number of contemporary philosophers and critics, Mies was able to develop an alternative understanding of the dweller. The book *Body—Soul—Unity*, by the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn, provided Mies with a way of thinking about the inhabitant not as a human being whose lifestyle had to be remediated, but as one who is confident and in harmony with the world. The concept of man and worldview as outlined in *Body—Soul—Unity* was one of the fundamental intellectual tools that helped Mies in developing his spatial designs of the late 1920s.

I  
For the 1930 Tugendhat house (figs 1, 2), the domestic successor of the Barcelona Pavilion, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) had found a client who sought to depart from traditional notions of living and 'aspired to a freer, more noble, artistic and philosophical life than the traditional house could support'.<sup>1</sup> Here, he was able to actualise concepts of building art that he had developed since 1926 and which Walter Riezler (1878–1965) acknowledged as a demonstration of modern architecture that was not merely functional but also spiritually and intellectually conceived 'for the elevated personal life'.<sup>2</sup>

The open space provided in the interior prompted critics to doubt that it was suitable for a domestic building. Justus Bier (1899–1990) declared it 'unbearable to live in' and a room which 'dwarfed the individual lives',<sup>3</sup> whilst Roger Ginsburger (1901–1980) perceived the house as an intimidating piece of art which would not tolerate any change by the inhabitant without suffering destruction.<sup>4</sup>

Fritz and Grete Tugendhat (1895–1958 and 1903–1970) replied to the critiques, and Grete wrote: '... I never sensed these rooms as displaying pathos, but rather as severe and great—but not in a sense that overwhelms but in one that liberates'.<sup>5</sup> She explained this further in stating: 'For just as



Figure 1. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, Tugendhat House, Brunn, 1928–1930: living room and office on the ground floor, with dividing wall made of golden and white onyx, 1929 (photograph in the Bauhaus-Archive Berlin, Inv. Nr. F9271/2; © DACS 2016).

one sees in this room every flower in a different light and as every work of art gives a stronger impression, ... individuals too and others stand out more clearly against such a background'.<sup>6</sup> The liberating property of the spaces can be found in the ways in which the mind is allowed to perceive ordinary things differently, as well as in how the human figure is accentuated. The open spaces seemed to have generated a feeling of freedom rather than one of intimidation as Bier and Ginsburger had claimed.

The Tugendhat House—if understood as a place where '... a contemplative, if not philosophical life ...'<sup>7</sup> could unfold—is attuned to a secure and open-minded being equipped with self-assuredness. Its spaces are created with a confident and receptive dweller in mind who would enjoy spaces that encourage a sensation of spatial freedom.

The debate on the Tugendhat House echoed an observation Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948) had made after visiting Mies' block of flats at the

Figure 2. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, Tugendhat House, Brünn, 1928–1930: Dining area (photograph, Foto Marburg, Dr. Franz Stoedtner Archive, Neg.-No. 1.183.884, 1930/1931; © DACS 2016).



housing exhibition and settlement *Die Wohnung* ['The House'] in Stuttgart-Weißenhof in 1927 (figs 3–5). Here, the construction made it possible to forgo almost all supporting walls and columns and to integrate flexible wall units, so that the plan of each flat could be devised individually.

Schwitters was not sure whether this freedom of choice was going to overwhelm and intimidate future tenants;

Tall, noble beings stride through the doors, full of new spirit. Hopefully at least. ... It might happen,

that the residents afterwards turn out to be not as mature and free as their own doors. But let us hope that the house will ennoble them.<sup>8</sup>

In Schwitters' understanding Mies' block of flats presupposed a mature and free dweller who would be decisive enough not to need an architect to devise a floor plan and a way of living but who would instead create an individual lifestyle out of concise knowledge and reflection upon their wants and needs.

The negative critiques of Villa Tugendhat, as well as of the block of flats in Stuttgart, demonstrate

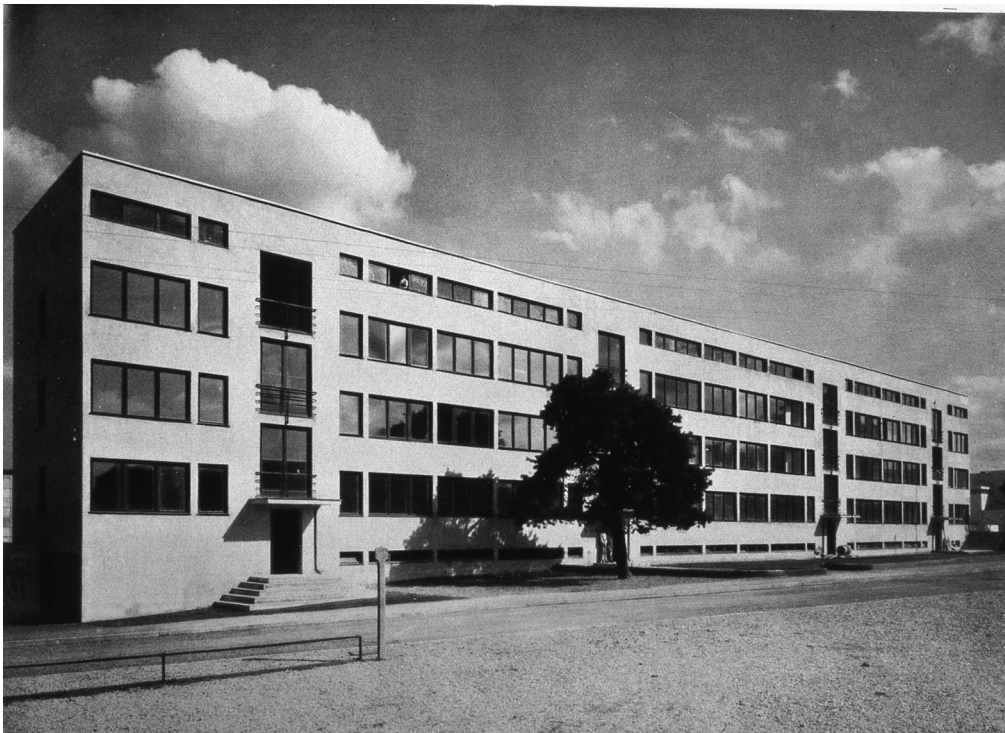


Figure 3. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Block of Flats for the Housing Exhibition in Stuttgart-Weißenhof*, Stuttgart, 1927: façade (photograph by Otto Loosen; in, Arthur Korn Glas. *Im Bau und als Gebrauchsgegenstand* [Magdeburg, 1929], p. 95; © DACS 2016).

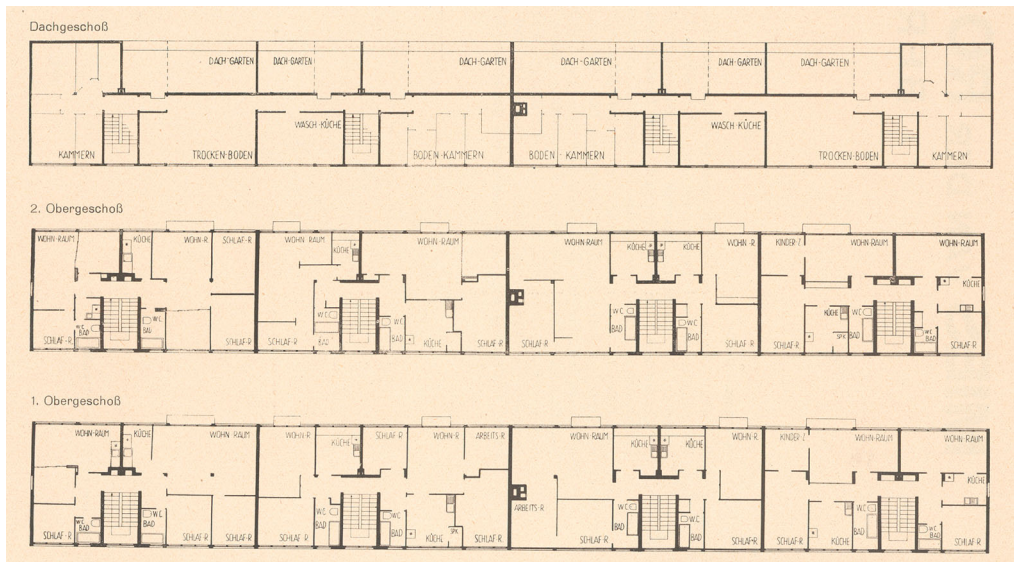
that Mies' spatial configurations were perceived as outside the norm and with a different dweller in mind than expected. Taking an oppositional stance against the prevalent contemporary perception of the dweller, Mies developed an alternative understanding of the human being whom his designs would house. Fritz Neumeyer, in his book *The Artless Word* (1986) describes this shift:

The new arrangement of space around life—or to be more exact, around a specific idea of what life

could be or should be, and therefore still an idea of life—moved after 1926 into the centre of Mies's work. The social responsibility of architecture, as Mies perceived it, consisted in creating a suitable environment for new modes of living, rather than in the normative division of space according to the new methods of mass production.<sup>9</sup>

Neumeyer described and analysed some parameters that helped Mies in developing this

Figure 4. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Block of Flats for the Housing Exhibition in Stuttgart-Weißenhof*, Stuttgart, 1927: floor plans; in, Deutscher Werkbund, *Bau und Wohnung. Die Bauten der Weißenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. Errichtet 1927 nach Vorschlägen des Deutschen Werkbundes im Auftrag der Stadt Stuttgart und im Rahmen der Werkbundaustellung 'Die Wohnung'*, Stuttgart, 1927, p. 78 (© DACS 2016).



‘specific idea of what life could or should be’— and within the critical literature on Mies since, Neumeyer’s findings have repeatedly been corroborated. Literature that studied the spatial arrangements of Mies’ buildings honed an understanding of their effects and impacts on the user. In addition to this the value of the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Romano Guardini (1885–1968) and Raoul Francé (1874–1943) for Mies’ thinking has been subject to critical assessment; however, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn’s (1886–1933) writings and their role in providing further intellectual underpinnings that helped form Mies’ understanding of the dweller have not been given explicit attention.<sup>10</sup>

## II

The shift in Mies’ thinking was developed from a critical opposition towards efforts that sought to find solutions to the pressing housing shortage apparent after the First World War. Apart from having to provide housing for urban working-class dwellers in great numbers, the housing problem also encompassed questions of, for example, how to improve hygiene and how to foster the development of technologies leading to prefabricated building parts, housing-factories, and the standardisation of houses and units.<sup>11</sup> The industrialisation of the building process and of the standardisation of floor plans was furthermore based on the belief that rational planning and low-cost construction

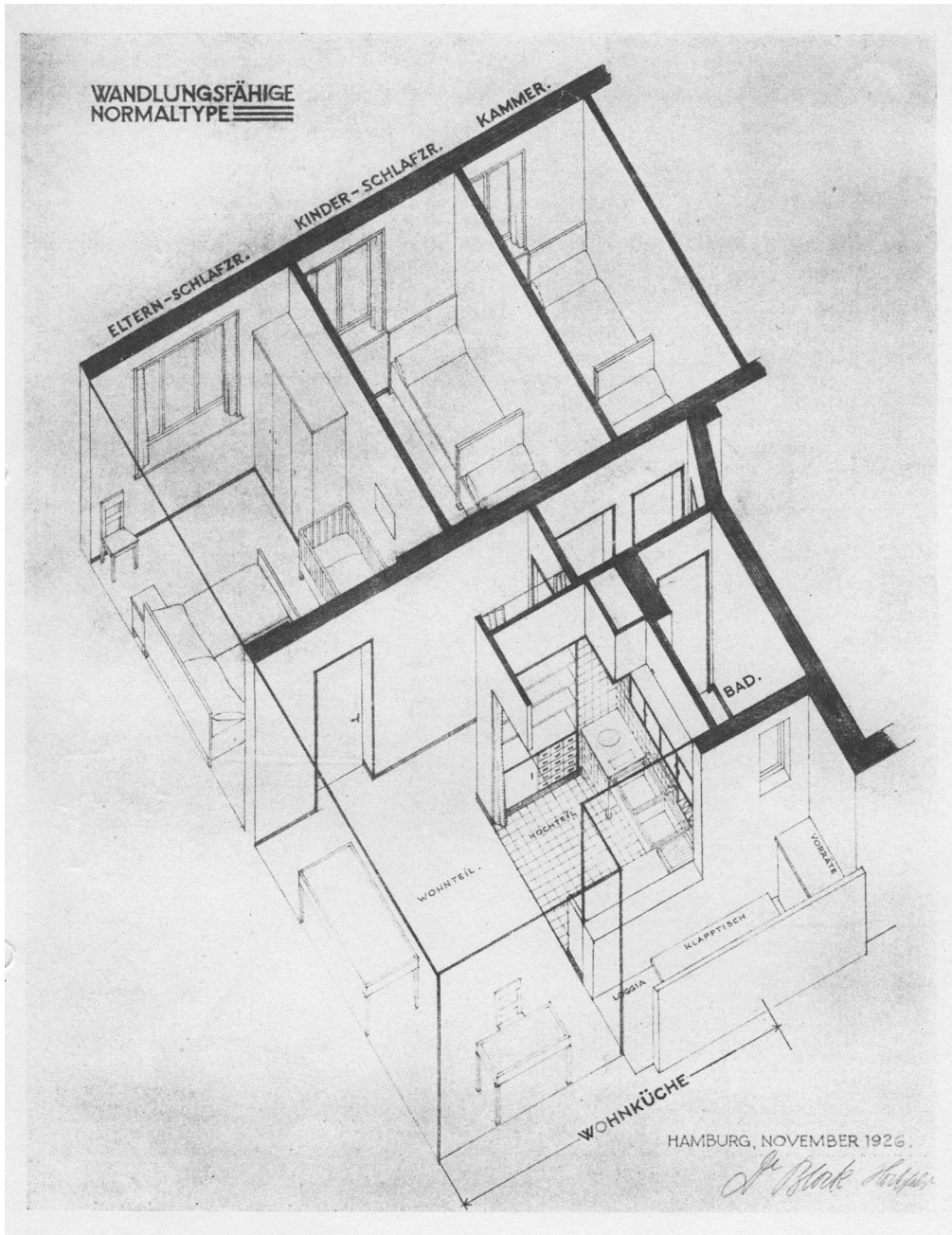


Figure 5. Fritz Block, *Standard Type*, 1926: axonometric view; in, F. Block, 'Wohnform und Wandlungsfähigkeit', *Die Form*, 2 (1927), p. 45 (© Heidelberg University Library).

methods would satisfy a universal right to appropriate, affordable housing. It was also based on the premise that the majority of dwellers have a general set of requirements that needed to be determined prior to the standardisation of units into types.<sup>12</sup>

Members of the influential hygiene movement, as well as of the municipal health care system, expressed the hope that standardised floor plans might bring solutions to broader social problems. Wilhelm von Drigalski (1871–1950), for example, a medical officer of health in Berlin between 1925 and 1933, considered overcrowding and hygienically squalid urban living conditions to be responsible for moral waywardness in children and argued that if hygienic living units of sufficient size and with beds for each inhabitant were present, the family father would be kept from going to the public house, which would add to peace at home and would help children to become decent members of society.<sup>13</sup> This way of thinking made it possible to perceive housing as a tool with which to alter the conduct of working-class tenants.<sup>14</sup> One of the architects who implemented this way of thinking was Fritz Block (1889–1955) of Block & Hochfeld in Hamburg.<sup>15</sup> His article 'Wohnform und Wandlungsfähigkeit' ['Forms of Dwellings and Capability to Transform'] was based on the premise that 'the majority of the working population must be intensely educated and influenced'<sup>16</sup> so that floor plans were a means with which to prevent *Wohnuntugenden* ['vices of living']<sup>17</sup> that were considered unhealthy, morally objectionable, or simply not practical (Fig. 6, 7).

Essential for this concept was that the living quarters were designed as inalterable units: 'Here, no

part of the home could be assigned to a different function. Coercion into a [behavioural] mould should be executed generally wherever possible in all rooms of the small unit.'<sup>18</sup> Block's perception of the dweller was that of a person in need of coercion towards morals and correct habits, and therefore an example of the belief that inhabitants are the products of the environment that can, if correctly designed and laid-out, change habits and behaviour towards an ideal lifestyle.

### III

Block's proposal met with intense criticism from Adolf Rading (1888–1957). In his text *Wohnge-wohnheiten* ['Habits of Living']<sup>19</sup> Rading acknowledged standardisation as an inescapable necessity but considered that it could not be the task of the architect to stipulate a particular way of living. Instead, individually designed floor plans should be developed for a dweller whose way of life might change over time.<sup>20</sup> Rading supported this with a floor plan based on a construction scheme of five by five metres between load-bearing beams that would create one large space within which walls might be inserted according to the requirements of the dweller (figs 8, 9).

He perceived the problems faced by architects in the development of new floor plans as based upon the lethargy of the dweller whose interests are directed towards being able to fit furniture inside the new living spaces rather than on reflecting on their lifestyle. He nevertheless emphasised, in context of the 1927 Exhibition at Weißenhof again, that it was not the task of the architect to force the dweller into a precon-

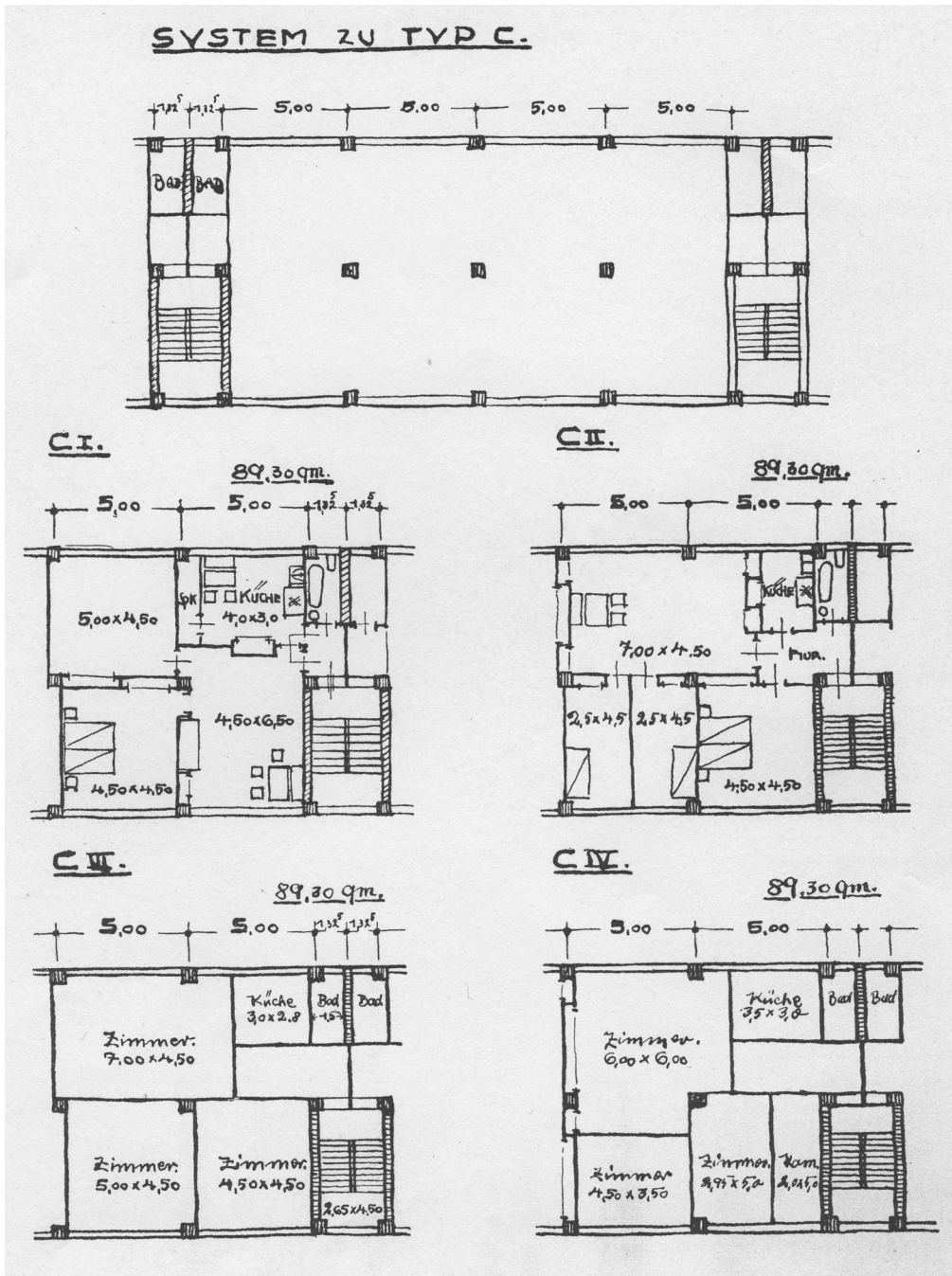
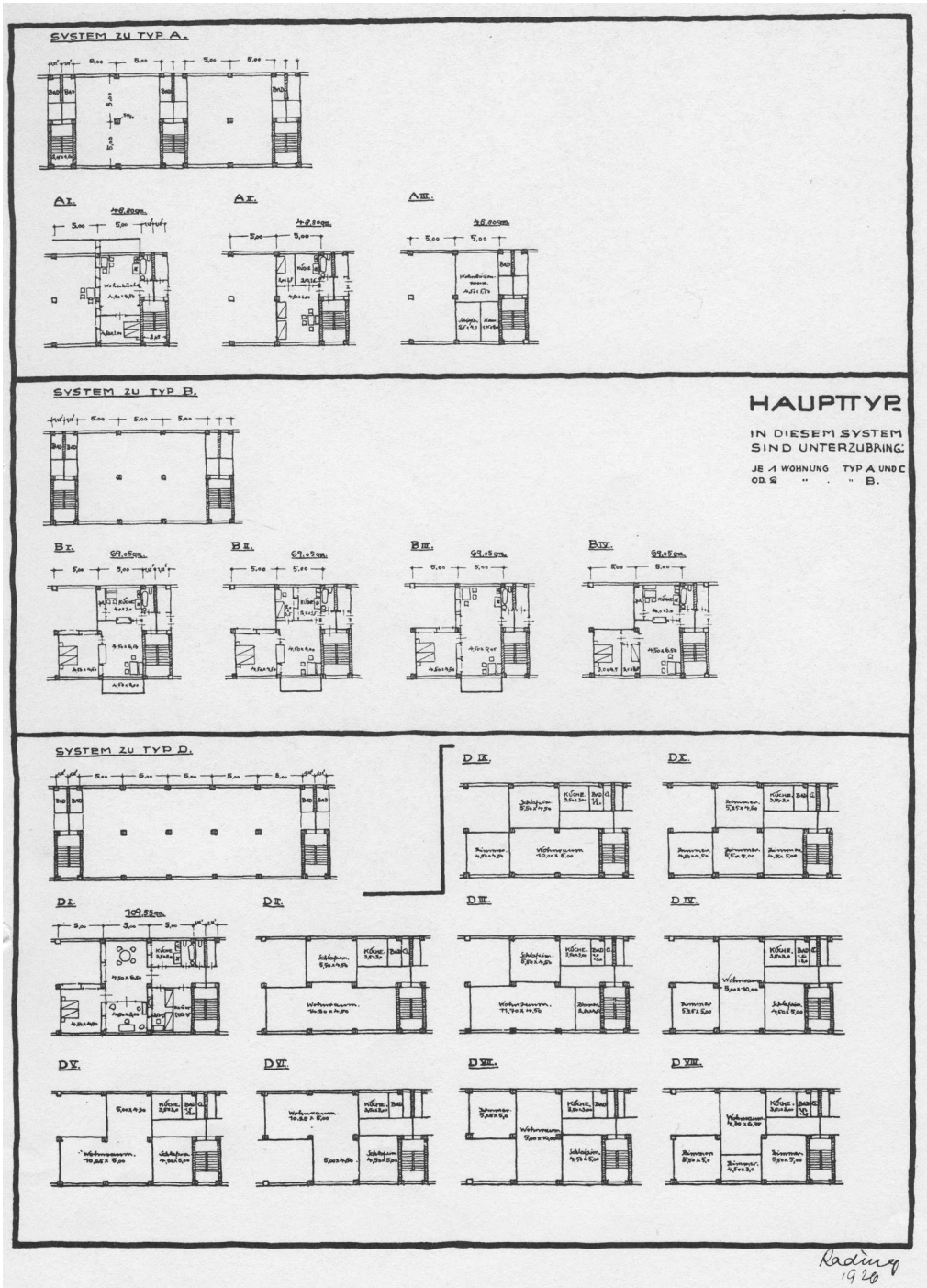


Figure 6. Adolf Rading, *Main Type. System for Type C: floor plans*; in, A. Rading, 'Wohngewohnheiten', *Die Form*, 2 (1927), p. 48 (© Heidelberg University Library).

Spaces for the elevated personal life:  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's concept  
of the dweller, 1926–1930  
Tanja Poppelreuter

Figure 7. Adolf Rading, *Main Type*. System for Type A, B and D: floor plans; in, A. Rading, 'Wohngewohnheiten', *Die Form*, 2 (1927), p. 49 (© Heidelberg University Library).



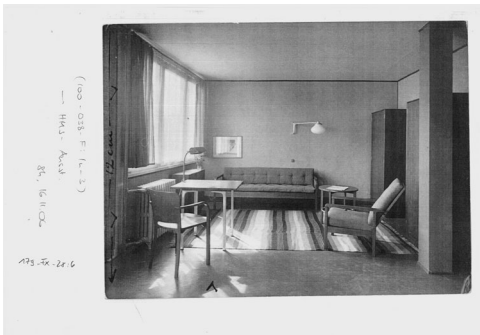


Figure 8. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Block of Flats for the Housing Exhibition in Stuttgart-Weißenhof*, Stuttgart; interiors designed by the Schweizer Werkbundkollektiv (photograph in the gta Archiv/ETH, Zürich, Schweizerischer Werkbund SWB; © DACS 2016).



Figure 9. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Block of Flats for the Housing Exhibition in Stuttgart-Weißenhof*, Stuttgart; interiors designed by the Schweizer Werkbundkollektiv (photograph in the gta Archiv/ETH, Zürich, Schweizerischer Werkbund SWB; © DACS 2016).

ceived mode of living as such attempts would represent an overestimation of the architect's competencies:

Human beings are neither miscreants nor children. Only arrogance or invincible stupidity can try to place them under custodianship. Let us be humble, let us realise: the attempt to predict destiny has failed miserably; is a sin toward man, inconsequentially good will, and helpfulness.<sup>21</sup>

Mies, who organised the Exhibition in Stuttgart Weißenhof on behalf of the *Deutsche Werkbund* ['German Association of Craftsmen'], developed a similar solution and outlook to the one proposed by Rading. One of the main goals of the event had been to exhibit the latest examples of mass-producible building techniques as well as housing solutions<sup>22</sup> and Mies used this event to explain his critical position towards rationalisation and standardisation.

Mies' block of flats in Stuttgart had almost no supporting walls and columns. Only staircases, bathrooms and kitchens were fixed. 'Internal partitions', according to Riezler in a review of Mies' flats 'can be drawn variably at will, so that various possibilities for floor plans for the same living-unit arise'.<sup>23</sup> To demonstrate, twenty-nine architects and interior designers furnished the block. No two floor plans of the twenty-four flats were identical so that the 'greatest freedom of usage'<sup>24</sup> was achieved (figs 10, 11; see also Figure 4 above).

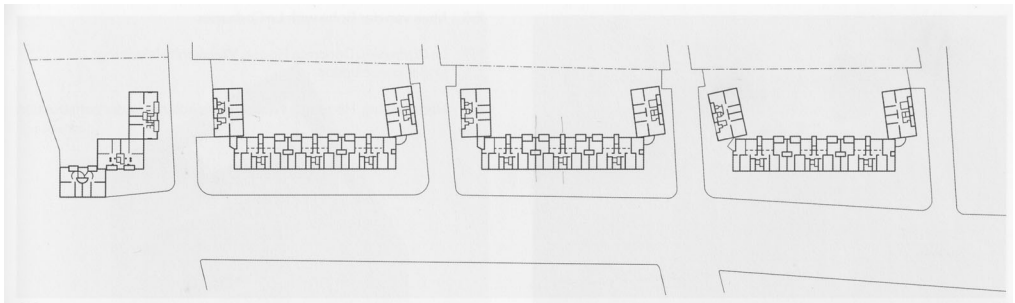
The significance of the change in Mies' outlook in Stuttgart becomes visible when comparing the floor plans for Mies' Houses at the *Afrikanische Straße* in Berlin to the ones at the block of flats in Stuttgart: both buildings were finished in 1927 (figs 11, 12).<sup>25</sup> At the *Afrikanische Straße*, the plans seek to provide cross-ventilation, a balcony off the kitchen—presumably to disperse cooking smells, and to allow light and air into the flat—but they still consist of a set number of rooms of defined sizes.

The solution in Stuttgart reflected Mies' concerns about the concept that a change in the conduct of the dweller is achievable through architectural design, and that standardisation and technological

Figure 10. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Municipal Housing Development, Afrikanische Strasse, Berlin-Wedding, 1925–27*: exterior View (photograph in the Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin, Obj. Id 80704; © DACS 2016).

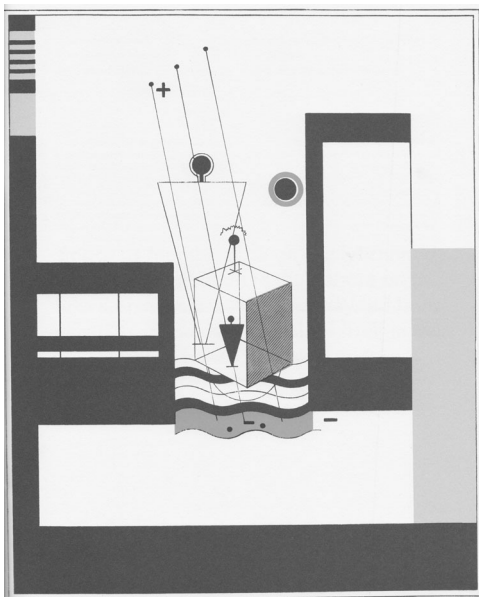


Figure 11. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Municipal Housing Development, Afrikanische Strasse, Berlin-Wedding, 1925–27*: floor plan; in, M. Egger-Gerozissis, 'Wohnhäuser an der Afrikanischen Straße', in, T. Riley, B. Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin* (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2001), p. 206 (drawing: Amanda Reeser, 2000)



advances can provide solutions to social problems: in his opening speech for the Exhibition his stance was that contemporary efforts to standardise types were wrong, stating that only parts of

houses should be standardised into types but not whole houses,<sup>26</sup> and maintaining that 'rationalisation and standardisation are only means, [and] must never be goals'.<sup>27</sup>



Mies did not wish to presuppose anything about or demand anything of a dweller who—as Schwitters' mockery had indicated—would be as mature or noble as the interior; his solution developed out of the understanding that what he had called the 'intellectual problem' was still in need of discussion, and the 'fight for new ways of life' still ongoing, so that the subordinate 'fight for the New Living Space' could not be fought first. The flexible housing unit would allow for many future developments. Mies' floor plans were a result of and a reaction to the changes of lifestyle but speak also to the realisation that there was a lack of knowledge about the requirements and the new life-style of the dweller. While architects such as Block viewed their designs as a mould, from which a new type of human being could emerge, their critics emphasised the idea that standardisation was a tool only, and that the discussion should not centre around how to standardise life into types but how to understand life so that standardisation could be used as a tool with which to support life.

Figure 12. Siegfried Ebeling, *Der Raum als Membran* (Dessau, Bauhaus, 1927), Frontispiece (© Rago Torre-Ebeling, Germany).

This stance was based upon the conviction that a new lifestyle was developing which hindered the conception of a static plan:

The problem of the New Living Space is basically an intellectual problem and the fight for the New Living Space only an element in the great fight for new ways of life.<sup>28</sup>

By providing walls that could be moved by the tenant, Mies avoided devising a floor plan that fitted all requirements and instead deferred to the dweller. And here Mies' stance departs poignantly from Rading's, who had bemoaned the fact that the main interest of the dweller was to know if the new architecture could accommodate their furniture.

At Weißenhof the spaces demonstrate Mies' way of forgoing normative solutions and are evidence of an evolving understanding of the dweller, as well as of the social responsibility of the architect. It led him to develop his understanding of a building art that seeks 'freedom of usage' instead of coercion through housing.

#### IV

Amongst the writings which aided Mies in formulating this opposition towards his contemporaries and in developing his alternative understanding of the dweller, were, as identified by Neumeyer, Siegfried

Ebeling's (1894–1963) 1927 *Der Raum als Membran* ['Space as Membrane'; 1927],<sup>29</sup> publications by the architect Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961) and by the philosopher Romano Guardini. Prinzhorn's 1927 book *Leib—Seele—Einheit. Ein Kernproblem der neuen Psychologie* ['Body—Soul—Unity. A Core-Problem of the new Psychology'; 1927]<sup>30</sup> must be included as a further source. It outlined a *Menschenbild* ['view of man'] that can be integrated into the broader intellectual framework of Mies' thinking.

Ebeling was a Bauhaus student of Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and Marcel Breuer (1902–1981) and his text was particularly stimulating for Mies because his assertions were based on the study of Nietzsche and Francé, with both of whom Mies had been familiar.<sup>31</sup>

For Ebeling, contemporary attempts that aimed to renew architecture aesthetically and which sought to react to economic changes in developing modes of industrial production, overruled the spiritual value of architecture. Instead of pursuing questions as to what the essence of architecture might be, such attempts placed architecture in the service of politics.

In *Space as Membrane* (fig. 12) Ebeling regards the house as a mediator between the ground, the light, and the physiology and psychology of the inhabitant, so that the degree to which ground, light and house are harmoniously arranged is crucial for the character and quality of architecture. The main premise is to propose a biological architecture based on an understanding of the effects of rays, sunlight, electricity, water, veins, etc., on the body. The outer shell of the house thus must be developed in order to utilise such natural forces.<sup>32</sup>

Essentially, Ebeling argued for a change in orientation from understanding architectural space not as a force that seeks to make a psychological impact with which the dweller must come to grips; instead Ebeling sought to create a 'negative space' which:

... merely creates the physiological preconditions ... which enable the individual to unfold—on the basis of the structure of its soul, completely based upon its own laws and free of all external suggestions—to an independent for-itself (microcosm).<sup>33</sup>

Ebeling's idea of negative space provided Mies with a theoretical framework that regarded architecture as an instrument able to incorporate the sensuousness of the dweller,<sup>34</sup> but also with an outlook that pointed towards the conceptual shortcomings in contemporary architecture, and one which demanded an alternative consideration of the role of the house and the inhabitant. The idea that the house is merely the provider of physiological conditions in support of the dweller was therefore in contrast to those that sought to coerce the dweller. At the basis of Ebeling's theory is the idea of allowing the soul freedom to develop, without interference and external suggestions.

The architect Schwarz, on the other hand, whom Mies had possibly first met during the early 1920s in Berlin,<sup>35</sup> provided a critical stance towards the role ascribed to technology as a source for progress. Schwarz's text *Vom Widerstand gegen die Gewalt* ['On the Opposition Against Brute Force'; c. 1927]<sup>36</sup> asserted the existence of a spirit, indicating also that rationalisation and technology are merely subordinate considerations.<sup>37</sup> As with Mies, Schwarz did not reject progress *per se* but rather

the ways in which technology was considered as the central solution to questions that sought to define the nature of progress and the spirit of the time. Technology was for Schwarz as well as for Mies a means, never the goal and part of an overarching worldview.<sup>38</sup> Schwarz's text helped Mies to formulate a theoretical stance as well as a critical distance from advocates of functionalism<sup>39</sup> and clarified Mies' attitude toward technology-driven experiments in the building industry, which were largely based on their lack of an overarching understanding of the spirit of the time.

Schwarz was active in the Catholic youth movement 'Quickborn' during the 1920s and it was through this organisation that Mies and Guardini, a philosopher of religion, became acquaintances. During the late 1920s Guardini's dialectic and his 1925 *Der Gegensatz. Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten* ['The Antipode. Attempts Towards a Philosophy of the Living-Concrete'] had a pivotal influence on Mies' worldview.<sup>40</sup> Mies followed Guardini in understanding that life must be thought of as a balance between opposite poles of chaos and order. It must nevertheless acknowledge both poles in order to ascertain the degree to which it opens itself towards each extreme. Essentially, a genuine order and authentic life is sought which shields itself against unformed chaos on one side and unyielding formalism on the other. Neumeyer explained Mies' interpretation of Guardini's text thus:

Reality calls for an artfully designed order ... that secures life but allows room for the unfolding of the spirit, providing for twentieth-century man the ordered, if contrasting, reality of both

freedom and retreat, expansiveness and restraint.<sup>41</sup>

Modernism has provided man with freedom from traditionalism, so that the task for those generations following modernism is to reconsider, reassess and redefine life. Mies underlined this sentence in his copy of Guardini's book: 'Our task is to progress further to a new, albeit critically tested unity.'<sup>42</sup> A new order is sought that essentially embraces progress while at the same time enabling the soul to unfold freely.

Guardini and Schwarz provided Mies with a thesis that helped in clarifying a critical stance towards technology and one that justified the search for a deeper-rooted understanding of the spirit of the times. Prinzhorn's book *Body—Soul—Unity* (1927) perceived body and soul as inseparable parts of the human being so that Prinzhorn's view of mankind adds to concepts explicated in particular by Ebeling who sought to support the soul in unfolding itself and who spoke of an environment of balance in order to achieve freedom. Prinzhorn sought, on the basis of a similar philosophical background to that of Ebeling, Schwarz and Guardini, an understanding of the changes in life and perceptions of man and provided Mies with a concept whereby the human being is distinguished by rationality and freedom.

## V

Prinzhorn was a well-known psychiatrist and art historian, and a prolific writer of philosophical studies.<sup>43</sup> Among his publications, his book *Bildneri der Geisteskranken. Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie und Psychopathologie der Gestaltung* ['Artistry of the

Mentally Ill. A Contribution to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Configuration'; 1922] is his best known.<sup>44</sup> It is a study based on a collection of artwork by patients in the psychiatric clinic of the University of Heidelberg. Questioning the merits of patient's artwork as a diagnostic tool, it was one of the first studies interested in the creative work of mentally ill patients as a form of creative expression.<sup>45</sup>

Because of his attention to defining the core of the creative process, the book led to an interest by *avant-garde* artists and architects, and fostered Prinzhorn's contributions to the magazines *G. Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* ['G. Material for Elementary Form-Creation']<sup>46</sup> and *Das Neue Frankfurt* ['The New Frankfurt']<sup>47</sup> as well as to guest lectures at the Bauhaus under all three directors.<sup>48</sup>

*Body—Soul—Unity* was the third of one hundred planned volumes in the series *Das Weltbild. Bücher des lebendigen Wissens* ['The Worldview. Books of the Living Knowledge'] that were to provide '... a complete overview of the current worldview in its structure, devoid of all ornamentation of detailed knowledge'.<sup>49</sup>

The argument relied heavily on the work of Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) and Carl Gustav Carus (1789–1869), but its basis was mostly derived from Nietzsche's philosophy and that of Prinzhorn's contemporary Ludwig Klages (1872–1956).<sup>50</sup> Prinzhorn's *Menschenbild* ['image of man'] is therefore situated within *Lebensphilosophie*,<sup>51</sup> a branch of philosophy that had emerged after 1900. Its protagonists sought primarily to re-think philosophical categories such as life and

nature, morality and ethics. Within the broad scope of the interlinking sections of *Lebensphilosophie* Klages was part of German *Kulturkritik*, which was an anti-Modernism movement and critical of, according to Oliver Botar:

... rampant urbanization, industrialization, internationalization, and the instrumentalist view of nature ... *Kulturkritik* emerged from the central problem of *Lebensphilosophie*: the distinction between Geist, that is intellect, and Seele, or soul, which is the locus of life. The unconscious is valorized as the authentic self, a self which must be accessed to ensure authentic expression.<sup>52</sup>

In this context *Body—Soul—Unity* mainly aimed to offer clarification about the sources of the 'deep change of our entire perception of the human being',<sup>53</sup> reassessed traditional psychology, and explicated Prinzhorn's precept of life based on a practical knowledge of man.<sup>54</sup> Prinzhorn criticised the stance that in the technology-driven worldview of psychology around 1900 the soul had been studied separately from the body and the hypothesis had been upheld that the natural sciences would be able to quantify and measure the essence of life.<sup>55</sup>

To support the foundations of his thesis Prinzhorn introduced Nietzsche as being pivotal in changing this conception:

... the purification of our image of man, the deliverance from pressure of European obsessive brooding, the production of the natural feeling of the body-soul-unity, the differentiation of real values from those falsified by man, in short, the rehabilitation of the dignity of the human being as a nature-bound being—thereto his [Nietzsche's] call arouses.<sup>56</sup>

The distinguishing elements between Nietzsche and 'all psychologists' is that Nietzsche aimed to expose the 'self-deception' that there are causal relationships which lead to the belief that:

...a creation can inform about a creator, an offence can give explanations about the offender, an ideal can provide conclusion about those who need it, and that conclusions can be traced back from all ways of thinking and modes of evaluation to the underlying need that commands them.<sup>57</sup>

Nietzsche's removal of this self-deception is based on the insight that instincts and drives override and determine conscious decisions and self-determination.<sup>58</sup> This argument is further developed in the chapter *Umriss der neuentstehenden Lebenslehre* ['Outline of the Newly Emerging Precept of Life']<sup>59</sup> where Prinzhorn stressed the importance of studying the unconscious processes of life in order to gain an understanding about the soul, since the human mind is thought to be ruled by unconscious drives rather than by conscious ones. Prinzhorn furthermore harks back to Carus' theories as developed in *Psyche. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* ['Psyche. On the History of the Development of the Soul']<sup>60</sup> in order to assert that the key to an understanding of the conscious inner life lies in the region of the unconscious,<sup>61</sup> before ultimately relying on Klages and his explanation that all processes of life express themselves in polarised relationships. These are outlined with the aphorism: 'the soul the sense of body, the body expression of the soul'.<sup>62</sup> Following Klages' *Kulturkritik* Prinzhorn's view of the human being was determined through a tension between the spirit [*Geist*] and life [*Leib-Seele*].<sup>63</sup> The 'mind' [*Geist*] is defined as

the opponent of the soul. Within it 'the will' is situated. The will replaces 'drives and instincts' and fosters a cultural situation that is responsible for decadence and many defects of the current age.<sup>64</sup>

This understanding of the role of the will was heavily influenced by Klages' best-known work, the *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* ['Mind as the Soul's Adversary; 1929']<sup>65</sup> The main premise here was to understand the role of the mind [*Geist*] and the will, which in Klages' thinking was a manifestation of the mind but not a part of life and was instead an entity that invades life. This understanding of the will was in turn related to Nietzsche's understanding of it. In a speech delivered in 1928, Klages used the metaphor of a sailing boat to explain his understanding of drives [*Triebe*] and the will. To him it was crucial that a sailing boat can only sail in the same direction that the wind blows—consequently the basic character of the will in comparison to that of drives [*Triebe*] is denoted by an ability to steer in a certain direction. The freedom of choice, to exercise self-control is an expression of the will, which is an action directed against acting on impulses (drives).<sup>66</sup>

Klages emphasises the destructive character of the mind as it destroys peace, nature and life itself, and is as such responsible for the invention of destructive tools such as industrialisation and technology.<sup>67</sup> The essence of what Klages says about [*Geist*] is that it dispossesses everything it turns its attention to and claims it for its own.<sup>68</sup> For Prinzhorn too the will was the force responsible for a crisis more substantial and deep-rooted than any crisis caused by political agendas, economic, governmental or religious ideals. Prinzhorn consequently explains that the

newly developing worldview is one in which a body-soul-unity is fostered and he speaks of the emergence of a human being who would defy Nietzsche's self-deception and who would not be subordinate to the will.

For [Prinzhorn's precept of life is] certainly not initiated through the needs and desires of the self-suffering and world-despairing coeval, but instead through the still rare confidence about the world of human beings who, in unison with the great rhythms of nature and all living entities, would have found themselves.<sup>69</sup>

This individual<sup>70</sup> would view the values of civilisation sceptically and as illusions, but would respect them, albeit '... not adoringly as absolutes but with critical objectivity'.<sup>71</sup>

## VI

As part of the series *Das Weltbild*, the book *Body—Soul—Unity* concentrated on providing an overview of Prinzhorn's understanding of the newly developing human being that was not steered by the will but instead integral in body and soul. His main interest was to highlight a general shift from a mechanical and technology-driven world view, one that compartmentalises and studies parts of the human being, to an holistic one which affirms that the body needs to be understood as part of the soul and *vice-versa*, and in which unconscious drives [*Triebe*] are the basis of an understanding of the workings of the soul.

Other books in this series were planned to support and synthesise his worldview. Among those was *Baukunst. Von der Höhle zum Hochhaus* ['Art of building. From the Cave to the High-rise'], a book

that Prinzhorn had invited Mies to write for the series. Prinzhorn attached great importance to Mies' contribution as a statement in *Body—Soul—Unity* demonstrates. Prinzhorn's belief that: 'Our new view of the world as a whole will probably be similar to some good room-designs which here and there succeed in our new architecture'<sup>72</sup> shows that, with newly developing architecture, tangible proof for the developments described in his book could be provided. In a letter to Mies, written before February, 1925, Prinzhorn explains the importance of Mies' contribution for the book series in more detail:

Gravity and momentum of the endeavour depends on truly meeting the structure of the new worldview in its main tenets. This, however, floats half-born, not yet viable, in between the times and can lean its authority and dignity neither on a cultural tradition nor a dogma. The first group of authors especially must—as a substitute for this absence of elemental validity—be categorically representative of the ethos and must—from the outset—provide confidence.<sup>73</sup>

Mies did not deliver the manuscript: however, a lecture given on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1926, appears to have been written in relation to the planned content of the book.<sup>74</sup> The lecture is considered paramount in Mies' development towards a critical view of contemporary architecture and was written during a time when the social responsibilities of architecture moved into the centre of Mies' attention.<sup>75</sup>

Here, Mies defined the nature of building as 'the spatial execution of spiritual decisions', which had to serve the spirit and the means of the time.<sup>76</sup> To

adhere to traditional forms on the other hand he explained was a mistake, as the spiritual material conditions of the present—not those of the past—determine the work of the architect. He pointed towards a lack of historical understanding and misconceptions concerning the interdependencies between the changing of ‘things’ and of life. Mies harked back to the Greek philosopher Plato to explain his belief that changes of forms are brought about because of changes in the soul of a populace, which forms state and society. Forms of life on the other hand influence the soul.

Mies furthermore regarded the interdependencies between landscapes, economic conditions and society as essential for an understanding of culture; one influences the other so that transformations and changes in formal expressions are fostered.<sup>77</sup> Only a masterly understanding of the interconnections that drive the emergence of form can lead to the ability to create things that ‘serve the spirit and the means of the time’. Mies deemed it ignorant to place the will of the individual above this system in an attempt to regulate life. In a statement that echoes Klages’ understanding of the ways in which the will invades life Mies explains:

Nothing is more stupid than to assume that our will is adequate to change the situation under which we live, in this or that direction [...] Only what lies in the direction of our life’s goals can find fulfilment.<sup>78</sup>

The power of the will of those who wish to regulate life can never be effective enough to supersede the overarching system of interconnections that ultimately directs all development. Mies offered an understanding of how life forms ‘things’, explained

his understanding of the mechanisms and drives of cultural developments, and gave indications that the creator of these mechanisms must acquire knowledge on how ‘building is intertwined with living’. He stressed that building must be on the basis of knowledge of the interconnections that drive ‘the transformation of [...] building forms’, not on the basis of the will only.<sup>79</sup>

In a book review Ernst Kállai (1890–1954) perceived *Body—Soul—Unity* as a reminder of the limits of the power architectural creations have on the dweller. He adopted Prinzhorn’s observation that the building industry did not regard the dweller as an integral being so that housing solutions were signs of ‘mechanistic industriousness plus spiritual deracination’.<sup>80</sup> For Kállai, such architectural structures stood in stark contrast to the unstable political, social and economic climate of the time, so that Prinzhorn’s book served as a reminder that life was ‘... despite all marvellous accomplishments of the mind and technology, not an equation that will be satisfied, but one that retains absurdity, a gruesome lack of self-control and dreary obscuration’.<sup>81</sup> He asked his readers for humility in view of the achievements of the building industry which appear as fictions of order and clarity, while life remains unpredictable.

Mies’ understanding of Prinzhorn’s thesis was more profound than Kállai’s, as Prinzhorn’s thesis is reflected in Mies’ utterances on more levels than the ones that reject the architect as demiurge of a new egalitarian society and as moral guide who exercises coercion towards approved and appropriate behaviour. Mies as well as Prinzhorn perceived the will as the power that hinders superseding drives. Mies was not only familiar with Prinzhorn’s

writing, but also with Nietzsche's philosophy and had knowledge of his understanding of the will as a force that fosters decay. Changes were not brought about through an intellectually devised model of the will but by underlying drives. These drives express themselves in polar-opposite relationships that Prinzhorn expresses in the aphorism 'the soul the sense of body, the body expression of the soul'<sup>82</sup> whilst Mies explains that changes of forms are fostered by changes in the soul of a populace and that forms of life influence the soul.

Both theories have in common a suspicion of the will as the demiurge of change and sought to allow life to unfold freely and unhindered. Prinzhorn's precept of life offered knowledge to achieve mastery so that solutions in the 'fight for new ways of life' could be developed. The new architecture that was developed out of the requirements of life, and not the will, provided examples as to how the new precept of life was taking shape currently, which might have motivated Prinzhorn to invite Mies to contribute to his book series.

Mies, on the other hand, in searching for theories that could answer questions on the present condition of life, could, with *Body—Soul—Unity*, acquire knowledge of what the structure and essence of the current worldview might develop towards. It offered a framework and intellectual basis which would provide a worldview that helped in gaining a better understanding of the changes at hand and the implications these had for life.

## VII

Mies' opposition to trends in the building industry, trends that he perceived as absorbing a search for

overarching answers to questions sparked by the onset of a new epoch, led him to search for alternative perceptions of the role of technology and of progress. This search had the goal of creating new arrangements of space around life within.

Amongst the numerous sources Mies consulted, Prinzhorn's thesis provided him with a clearer understanding of the dweller. His explanations about the emergence of a new precept of life were symptomatic of the schism present in the complex attitudes towards the working-class tenant for whom mass-producible houses were developed. He provided not only an alternative understanding of man, one which helped to rethink purely rational considerations that regarded the basic needs of the dweller as quantifiable, and who aimed to solve the housing problem by satisfying physical needs only. Prinzhorn also provided Mies with an outlook and theoretical framework that envisioned a human being as confident about the world, as not corruptible by economics, religion or politics. In therefore not adhering to a worldview that separated body and soul, and in being sceptical about technological advancements fostered by the will, Mies comprehended life as a unity of body and soul. Based upon the belief that the soul would and could unfold itself once a space was created which provided the physiological preconditions for it.

In 1926 Mies acknowledged that the new worldview was still developing and no answer could be given as to what lifestyle would unfold. Here, Mies begins to move away from conventional notions of organising life within architectural space. He explains that the spirit of the time develops out of a number of parameters but cannot be steered by

the will of an individual. The masterly understanding which Mies calls for concerned these parameters, and for interconnections that foster changes in life and that influence the soul.

The changes in spatial arrangement between Mies' houses at the Afrikanische Strasse and the block of flats in Stuttgart demonstrate Mies' move away from providing preconfigured spaces, and instead towards enabling inhabitants to adapt the space to their changing lifestyles. The spatial configurations of the 1930 Tugendhat Villa are less flexible than those of the flats of the block in Stuttgart in that the functions of the overall open space are described with the help of furniture and partition walls. The curved wall in the main space at Villa Tugendhat, for example, clearly delineates a dining space rather than a lounge space. Whilst the function for the spaces available here are perhaps as rigidly prescribed as in conventional arrangements, the lack of dividing walls, the use of precious materials, the large window-panes and views, together with the proportions of the spaces, are all planned in interconnection with each other, which displays Mies' self-image of providing spaces that support life and that seek an understanding of how a 'building is intertwined with living', and one that ultimately leads to spaces of the elevated personal life.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dieter Voss, in Hemer (Germany), for sending me information on Hans Prinzhorn, as well as to the staff at the Library of Congress, Washington DC and at the Museum of Modern Art, New York for providing

me with the letters exchanged between Hans Prinzhorn and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

### ORCID

Tanja Poppelreuter  <http://orcid.org/http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0202-3113>

### Notes and references

Generally, where the German original is provided in footnotes, the Author has translated the cited material in the text.

1. D. Mertins, *Mies* (London, New York, Phaidon, 2014), p. 180.
2. W. Riezler, 'Das Tugendhat Haus in Brünn', *Die Form*, 6:9 (September, 1931), p. 76 (translation in D. Mertins, *Mies*, *op. cit.*, p. 175).
3. J. Bier, 'Kann man im Haus Tugendhat wohnen?', *Die Form*, 6:10 (October, 1931), pp. 392–3.
4. R. Ginsburger, 'Zweckhaftigkeit und geistige Haltung. Eine Diskussion zwischen Roger Ginsburger und W. Riezler', *Die Form*, 6:11 (November, 1931), p. 433. The clients Grete and Fritz Tugendhat replied with their own assessments of the house in individual responses to *Die Form*: F. Tugendhat, 'Kann man im Haus Tugendhat wohnen?', *Die Form*, 6:11 (November, 1931), pp. 437–8; G. Tugendhat, [no title; letter to the editor], *Die Form*, 6:11 (November, 1931), pp. 437–8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 437 (translation in D. Mertins, *Mies*, *op. cit.*, p. 175).
6. *Ibid.*, (translation, *ibid.*).
7. D. Mertins, *Mies*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
8. 'Grosse, edle Gestalten schreiten durch die Türen, voll neuen Geistes. Hoffentlich wenigstens. ... Es kann vorkommen, dass nachher die Einwohner nicht so reif und frei sind wie ihre eigenen Türen. Aber hoffen wir, dass das Haus sie adelt': K. Schwitters, 'Stuttgart. "Die

- Wohnung. Werkbundausstellung", *i10. Internationale Revue*, 1 (1927), p. 348.
9. F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word. Mies van der Rohe and the Building Art* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991), p. 197.
  10. The friendship between Prinzhorn and Mies is mentioned briefly in the literature: D. Mertins, *Mies*, op. cit., pp. 206–7, 217; D. Mertins, M. W. Jennings, G. *An Avant-Garde Journal of Art, Architecture, Design, and Film* (Los Angeles, Paul Getty Trust, 2010), pp. 89–90, 154–6; Fritz Neumeyer, trsl., Mark Jarzombek, *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1991), p. 21 (see especially footnotes p. 345 and p. 358); F. Schulze, E. Windhorst, *Mies van der Rohe. A Critical Biography* (Chicago, London, The University of Chicago Press, 2014), pp. 45, 89, 91. The relationship between Mies and Prinzhorn has interested me since my PhD thesis and this paper presents new material and findings: see, T. Poppelreuter, *Das Neue Bauen für den Neuen Menschen* (Hildesheim, Olms, 2007), pp. 127–143.
  11. The industrial production of houses, based on principles of rationalisation and standardisation, was deemed exemplary because it promised the acceleration of the building process and that construction was possible throughout the year. Among the best-known results are the *Frankfurter Kleinwohnungstypen* ['Frankfurt Standard Ground Plans']. Standardisation enabled Ernst May to realise approximately 15,000 housing units between 1925 and 1930: C. Mohr, 'The New Frankfurt —Housing Construction and the City 1925–1930', in, C. Quiring et al., eds, *Ernst May. 1886–1970* (Munich, Prestel, 2011), pp. 51–68.
  12. Gropius was a major proponent of this argument and pursued similar goals in Dessau-Törten as well as in lectures and publications throughout the late 1920s.: W. Gropius, 'Wohnhaus-Industrie', in, W. Gropius, L. Moholy-Nagy, eds, *Ein Versuchshaus des Bauhauses in Weimar* (Munich, Albert Langen Verlag, 1925), pp. 5–14; W. Voigt "'Triumph der Gleichform und des Zusammenpassens". Ernst Neufert und die Normung in der Architektur', in, W. Nerdinger, ed., *Bauhaus-Moderne im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Anbiederung und Verfolgung* (Munich, Prestel, 1993), p. 188.
  13. W. von Drigalski, 'Über Wohnungsbau und Hygiene', *Wohnungswirtschaft*, 6 (1929), pp. 281–2. See also: L. Wagner-Speyer, 'Wohnung und Siedlung', *Technisches Gemeindeblatt*, 31:12 (1928), p. 155; R. Neubert, *Der Mensch und die Wohnung* (Dresden [1926]), pp. 24–6
  14. To accommodate such principles, floor plans were developed by architects of the *Neues Bauen* (such as Walter Gropius and Ludwigh Hilberseimer) as well as by those who pursued traditionalism: L. Hilberseimer, 'Großstädtische Kleinwohnungen', *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, 49 (1929), p. 509. Wilhelm Finkbeiner, councillor for building and construction in Lüdenscheid, for example, published floor plans that resembled those by Gropius and Hilberseimer while the façades were of traditional appearance: W. Finkbeiner, 'Beschränkung der Wohnungsgröße', *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, 50 (1927), pp. 793–4.
  15. F. Block, 'Wohnform und Wandlungsfähigkeit', *Die Form*, 2:2 (1927), pp. 40–6.
  16. *Ibid.*, p. 41: '... die Masse der werktätigen Bevölkerung noch stark erzogen und beeinflusst werden muß'.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 46. Following the plan, living, dining and kitchen areas are combined in one large room wherein the kitchen is separated by a curtain. The bedrooms are small to discourage residents from spending time there other than for sleeping and learning. Block's Standard Type aimed to remediate the custom of letting beds to night-lodgers and of preserving a 'state parlour' in pristine condition for guests and holidays only.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 46: 'Hier kann der Wohnteil keiner anderen Bestimmung zugeführt werden. Zwangsformung sollte man überhaupt, wo eben möglich, bei allen Räumen der Kleinwohnung durchführen.'
19. A. Rading, 'Wohngewohnheiten', *Die Form*, 2:2 (1927), pp. 47–9.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
21. 'Die Menschen sind weder Bösewichter noch Kinder. Nur Arroganz und unbelehrbare Dummheit können versuchen, sie unter Kuratel zu stellen. Seien wir bescheiden, sehen wir ein: der Versuch, Vorsehung zu spielen, ist kläglich gescheitert, Versündigung am Menschen, belanglos guter Wille, Hilfsbereitschaft.': A. Rading, 'Zeitlupe', in Deutscher Werkbund, ed., *Bau und Wohnung. Die Bauten der Weißenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, F. Wedekind, 1927), p. 103.
22. *Ibid.* and K. Kirsch, *Die Weißenhofsiedlung. Werkbund-Ausstellung 'Die Wohnung'— Stuttgart 1927* (Stuttgart, DVA Verlag, 1987).
23. 'Die Zwischenwände können beliebig gezogen werden, so daß sich verschiedenste Grundrißmöglichkeiten für die gleiche Wohneinheit ergeben': W. Riezler, 'Die Arbeiten in der Werkbund-Ausstellung "Die Wohnung". Stuttgart, 23. Juli–9. Oktober 1927', *Die Form*, 2:7 (1927), p. 213. Mies described his idea in detail in a letter to the interior designer Erna Meyer in January, 1927: L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Letter to Erna Meyer dated January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1927' (*Mies-van-der-Rohe-Archiv, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Weissenhof Folder #6.1.*). See also K. Kirsch, *Die Weißenhofsiedlung*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77ff.
24. 'größte Freiheit in der Benützungart.': L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Zu meinem Block', in Deutscher Werkbund, ed., *Bau und Wohnung*, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Mies van der Rohe was of course not the first who envisioned and developed open spaces or moveable wall units. Le Corbusier's 1914 Dom-ino system visualised how a ferro-concrete construction would enable flexibility and Gerrit T. Rietveld's 1923 Schröder-house in Utrecht incorporated moveable walls. Gropius also had grappled with the problem of how to allow for flexible houses that might grow together with the income and size of the family. In 1923 he had proposed a *Baukasten im Großen* ['large-scale building set'] – a system to consist of pre-fabricated modules that could be added to a core module: W. Gropius, L. Moholy-Nagy, eds, *Ein Versuchshaus*, *op. cit.*, p. 14. See also: A. Jaeggi, *Adolf Meyer. Der zweite Mann. Ein Architekt im Schatten von Walter Gropius* (Berlin, Argon-Verlag, 1994); F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–1. The idea of undefined floor plans had interested Mies since the early 1920s as publications for the magazine *G.* demonstrated. These theoretical designs envisioned a skyscraper for Berlin Friedrichstraße (1921), a concrete office building (1923) and a concrete country house (1923). Functions and purposes were not stipulated tightly and spaces remained adjustable: D. Mertins, 'Architecture, Worldview, and World Image in G', in D. Mertins, M. W. Jennings, G. *An Avant-Garde Journal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–8. See also, L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Lecture', in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–50.
25. The houses in Berlin constituted a large-scale housing project also built for the requirements of the working-class inhabitant. The ensemble consisted of four blocks, three of which were identical in plan. Each block was three storeys high and framed by two wings of two storeys. M. Egger-Gerozissis, 'Wohnhäuser an der Afrikanischen Straße', in T. Riley, B. Bergdoll, eds, *Mies in Berlin* (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2001), p. 206.
26. L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Letter to Richard Döcker, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1926' (*Mies-van-der-Rohe-Archiv, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Weissenhof Folder #12.3.*)

27. 'Rationalisierung und Typisierung sind nur Mittel, dürfen niemals Ziel sein.': L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Vorwort' in *Ausstellungsleitung*, ed., *Amtlicher Katalog der Werkbundaussstellung. Die Wohnung* (Stuttgart, Tagblatt Buchdruckerei, 1927), p. 5.
28. *Ibid.*, 'Das Problem der Neuen Wohnung ist im Grunde ein geistiges Problem und der Kampf um die Neue Wohnung nur ein Glied in dem großen Kampf um neue Lebensformen'.
29. S. Ebeling, *Der Raum als Membran* (Dessau, Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1926).
30. H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit. Ein Kernproblem der neuen Psychologie* (Potsdam, Zürich, Müller & Kiepenheuer Verlag, Orell Füssli Verlag, 1927).
31. Nietzsche had provided Mies—as well as many of his contemporaries—with a philosophy that demanded decisiveness, engagement and forceful action. Mies had also a lasting interest in Francé's work as it provided answers to his search regarding the nature of an absolute order. To treat nature decently was, according to Neumeyer, derived from Mies' reading of Francé and a principle central to Mies' worldview in the early 1920s. It related to accepting the existence of a great and absolute 'lawfulness' within which the individual is subordinate. An understanding of this absolute lawfulness can be gained, according to Francé, through the search for the intrinsic which inspired Mies to turn against aesthetic speculation and subjective theory in his building art and which might also have made him susceptible for Prinzhorn's thesis. F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36ff, 102–6, 171 and D. Mertins, *Mies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108ff. On Mies van der Rohe's reading of Nietzsche see F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–61.
32. S. Ebeling had previously studied philology and theology in Tübingen (1912–15), archaeology in Jena, as well as art history in Leipzig (before 1920). He based his thesis on *The Geophysical Phenomena* (1911) by Willy Hellpach, a psychologist at the Technische Hochschule in Karlsruhe. His main premise was based on the belief that the human organism is part of Earth's electrostatic field and that the body needs natural rays such as ultraviolet light for its well-being: W. Hellpach, *Die geopsychischen Erscheinungen. Wetter, Klima und Landschaft in ihrem Einfluss auf das Seelenleben* (Leipzig, W. Engelmann, 1917 [1911]), p. 112. Ebeling too argued that buildings isolate the body from natural rays and maintained that the correlation of natural forces and human physiology and psychology should be studied so that materials could be found and developed which would make use of, for example, natural rays. In 1927 he was given the opportunity to develop his theories when he became head of the research department for housing construction at Junkers in Dessau—a company commonly known as a manufacturer of aeroplanes and motor cars, but which also invested in developing metal houses. Aside from *Der Raum als Membran*, he published an article 'Kosmologie Raumzellen', *Junge Menschen. Monatshefte für Politik, Kunst, Literatur und Leben aus dem Geiste der jungen Generation* (Sonderheft 'Bauhaus Weimar'), 5:8 (1924), pp. 173–4 and also *Extra Muros* (Hamburg, Phönix, 1947). (Curriculum Vitae details for Siegfried Ebeling are held at the Bauhaus Archive, Berlin.)
33. '... nur die physiologischen Vorbedingungen schafft ... unter denen das Individuum sich auf Grund seiner seelischen Struktur völlig eigengesetzlich und frei von allen fremden Suggestionen zu einem eigenständigen Fürsichsein (Mikrokosmos) entfalten kann.': S. Ebeling, *Der Raum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 11 and F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

35. Today, Schwarz is best known as an architect of churches constructed during the 1950s: W. Pehnt, H. Strohl, *Rudolf Schwarz. Architekt einer anderen Moderne* (Ostfildern, Gerd Hatje, 2000).
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–9: R. Schwarz, 'Vom Widerstand gegen die Gewalt'.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, p. 165; W. Pehnt, 'Licht im Dunkel. Mies van der Rohe und Rudolf Schwarz', in W. Pehnt, H. Strohl, *Rudolf Schwarz*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
40. R. Guardini, *Der Gegensatz. Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten* (Mainz, Werkkreis im Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1925).
41. F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 201; R. Guardini, *Der Gegensatz*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
43. W. Geinitz, *Zur Biographie Hans Prinzhorns*, in W. Pöldinger, ed., *Kulturelle Psychiatrie und Psychologie* (Karlsruhe, Braun, 1992), p. 68.
44. H. Prinzhorn, *Bildnerie der Geisteskranken. Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie und Psychopathologie der Gestaltung* (Berlin, Springer, 1922). He had studied Art History in Tübingen, where his interest in architecture led to a PhD thesis on Gottfried Semper and Medicine in Freiburg. P. Prange, 'Prinzhorn, Hans' in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 20 (2001), p. 730 (URL: <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118814125.html>); 'Hans Prinzhorn', *Sammlung Prinzhorn* (URL <http://prinzhorn.ukl-hd.de/index.php?id=79&L=title%3DStation&f&are>). [Both accessed 10/06/14.]
45. Prinzhorn was concerned with the core of the creative process. Essential for it was the tension between expression and creation [*Gestaltung*], the quality of both was not measurable, but they were seen as instinctual [*triebhaft*] tendencies, and thus affixed to 'the living' [*das Lebendige*]. Only with the help of empathy and 'Wesenschau' is it deemed possible to understand the 'spiritual atmosphere' [*seelische Atmosphäre*] of the creative mind. On the basis of this understanding, Prinzhorn saw in the creative work of inmates of the psychiatric clinic in Heidelberg an authentic expression. In the work of professional artists he saw, on the other hand, intellectual construction that replaced authentic expression. H. Prinzhorn, *Bildnerie der Geisteskranken*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 86 and T. Röske, 'Hans Prinzhorn—ein "Sinnender" in der Weimarer Republik', in K. Brodersen, T. Fuchs, eds, *Wahn Welt Bild* (Heidelberg, Universitäts-Gesellschaft, 2002), p. 31. During the 1950s the book would become influential for the 'Informel', 'Art Brut' or 'Outsider Art' movements, and artists such as Jean Dubuffet.
46. H. Prinzhorn, 'Form-Creation and Health', *G. Materials for Elemental Form-Creation*, 3 (1924), in D. Mertins and M. W. Jennings, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 154–5; *ibid.*, p. 231: H. Prinzhorn, 'The Magic of Signs. From Bildnerie der Geisteskranken', *G. Materials for Elemental Form-Creation*, 5-6 (1926).
47. H. Prinzhorn, 'Das neue Menschenbild der Psychologen bietet den Erziehern neue Richtpunkte', *Das Neue Frankfurt. Monatsschrift für die Probleme moderner Gestaltung*, 2:11-12 (1928), p. 197.
48. P. Bernhard, 'Die Gastvorträge am Bauhaus—Einblicke in den zweiten Lehrkörper', in A. Baumhoff, M. Droste, eds, *Mythos Bauhaus. Zwischen Selbsterfindung und Enthistorisierung* (Berlin, Reimer Verlag, 2009), p. 90.
49. '... eine Gesamtdarstellung des heutigen Weltbildes in seiner Struktur, abgesehen von allem Ornamentwerk des Detailwissens': H. Prinzhorn, 'Undated letter to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe [probably written before February, 1925]' (*Library of Congress, Washington D. C., Manuscript Division. Estate Mies van der Rohe, Container 1.*) A number of letters and postcards exchanged between Mies van der Rohe and Prinzhorn

- are held at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in Washington DC, some of which concern Mies van der Rohe's contribution to Prinzhorn's project.
50. Klages' text *The Psychological Achievements of Nietzsche* (1926) was of particular importance to Prinzhorn. He probably also drew upon *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* as the separation between mind, soul and body is also analysed here. L. Klages, *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1926); *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Bonn, Bouvier Verlag Herberg Grundmann, 1981, 3 vols [1929–39]). Prinzhorn had made Klages' acquaintance in 1920, was influenced by his thinking thereafter and actively promoted Klages' career. W. Geinitz, *Zur Biographie Hans Prinzorns*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
  51. For a detailed definition of the complex term *Lebensphilosophy*, consult N. Lebovic, 'The Beauty and the Terror of Lebensphilosophie. Ludwig Klages, Walter Benjamin, and Alfred Baeumler'. *South Central Review*, 23.1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 23–39 and O. A. I. Botar, 'Defining Biocentrism', in O. A. I. Botar, I. Wünsche, eds, *Biocentrism and Modernism* (Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2011), pp. 16ff.
  52. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
  53. '... eine tiefe Wandlung unserer gesamten Auffassung vom Menschen': H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
  55. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
  56. *Ibid.*, p. 42: '... die Reinigung unseres Bildes vom Menschen, die Befreiung vom Druck europäischer Zwangsgedanken, die Herstellung des natürlichen Gefühls der Leib-Seele-Einheit, die Unterscheidung echter Lebenswerte von menschlich verfälschten, kurzum die Wiederherstellung der Würde des Menschen als eines naturgebundenen Wesens—dazu erweckt sein [Nietzsches] Ruf'.
  57. *Ibid.*, p. 43: '... des Rückschlusses vom Werk auf den Urheber, von der Tat auf den Täter, vom Ideal auf den, der es nötig hat, von jeder Denk- und Wertungsweise auf das dahinter kommandierende Bedürfnis'.
  58. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
  59. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–74.
  60. C. G. Carus, *Psyche. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* (Pforzheim, 1846).
  61. H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
  62. *Ibid.*, p. 62: '... die Seele der Sinn des Leibes, der Leib Ausdruck der Seele'. The area in which such polar relationships—of unconscious processes of life that are visible in the body—can be examined is that of gestures but also through speech, art, and handwriting. Emotions are thus defined as 'changes of the organism, which come to consciousness through processes of life within it.'; *ibid.*, p. 63: '[... Umstimmungen des Organismus, die durch Lebensvorgänge in diesem bewirkt werden und zum Bewußtsein kommen]'.
  63. Politically, Klages was an anti-Semite and Prinzhorn's philosophy too was situated in closer proximity to right-wing than left-wing politics, which was demonstrated in a series of articles entitled 'Über den Nationalsozialismus' ['On National Socialism'] between 1930 and 1932. As Thomas Röske has outlined, this series of publications indicates a shift in attitude as in 1929 Prinzhorn still uttered critical views towards political tendencies that sought to educate the human being according to a prescribed type, which was to be fundamental for Nazi ideology. After 1930 Prinzhorn moved away considerably from the worldview outlined in *Leib—Seele—Einheit*: T. Röske, 'Prinzhorn—ein "Sinnender"', *op. cit.*, p. 34. These articles and Prinzhorn's late writings display strong sympathies with Nazi ideology which led around the year 2000 to a controversial discussion on Prinzhorn as well as the Prinzhorn Collection in Heidelberg. For an under-

standing of the accusations made see: R. Talbot *Hans Prinzhorn—ein Nazi-Ideologe pathologisiert die Kunst*; URL: <http://www.irren-offensive.de/talbotspeech.htm> [accessed 10/06/14]. A reply can be accessed here: I. Jádi, C. Mundt, 'The Prinzhorn Collection. Museum and Research Centre', in *University of Heidelberg Home Page* URL: <http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/press/news/press90e.html> [accessed 10/06/14].

64. H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–9. Prinzhorn pointed towards the contradiction between Nietzsche's early writings, in which the 'will to power' was the harbinger of decadence, and his late work where 'the will to power' appeared as 'the sense of life', but did not resolve this contradiction. He instead referred to Klages' discussion of it: p. 68.
65. L. Klages, *Der Geist*, *op. cit.*
66. R. Falter, *Ludwig Klages. Lebensphilosophie als Zivilisationskritik* (Munich, Telesma, 2003), pp. 32–3. Klages gives this explanation in the lecture 'Die Triebe und der Wille' given in 1928. He later published a shortened version in L. Klages, *Die Sprache als Quell der Seelenkunde* (Zürich, Hirzel, 1948).
67. O. I. A. Botar, 'Defining Biocentrism', *op. cit.*, p. 29.
68. R. H. Thomas, 'Nietzsche in Weimar Germany—and the Case of Ludwig Klages', in A. Phelan, ed., *The Weimar Dilemma. Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 80.
69. 'Denn sie [Prinzhorns Lebenslehre] setzt durchaus nicht bei den Bedürfnissen und Sehnsüchten des an sich leidenden und an der Welt verzweifelnden Zeitgenossen ein, sondern vielmehr bei der noch unzeitgemäßen Weltsicherheit von Menschen, die im Einklang mit den großen Rhythmen des Naturlaufs und mit allen lebenden Gebilde sich gefunden hätten': H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
70. Prinzhorn thought it only possible to understand the human being by regarding its individual characteristics that cannot necessarily be aligned with a model image of man. This point of view led to Prinzhorn's critical distance towards Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis, apparent in his book *Krisis in der Psychoanalyse* (Leipzig, Der neue Geist, 1928). Prinzhorn deemed it problematic that the understanding of the genuine in the patient—on the basis of which the patient was to be formed—was solely founded on introspection. This process reveals, in Prinzhorn's view, a substantial overestimation of the capabilities of the therapist who reduces the patient into a malleable being. N. Lebovic, *The Philosophy of Life and Death. Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics* (London, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 121.
71. '... nicht mehr in schwärmender Verabsolutierung, sondern in kritischer Sachlichkeit': H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 72. Whilst Prinzhorn did not further describe the nature of this new man here, his article in *The New Frankfurt* (1928) explained that self-assertiveness and independence are achieved once a 'trust to the subconscious creative life' that is stronger than reason has been regained. H. Prinzhorn, 'Das neue Menschenbild', *op. cit.*, p. 197.
72. 'Wahrscheinlich wird unser Weltbild im Gesamtcharakter manchen guten Raumgestalten ähneln, die unserer neuen Baukunst hier und da glücken': H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
73. 'Gewicht und Stosskraft des Unternehmens hängt davon ab, dass wirklich die Struktur des neuen Weltbildes in den Hauptzügen getroffen wird. Dieses schwebt aber erst halbgeboren, noch nicht lebensfähig, zwischen den Zeiten und kann weder auf eine kulturelle Tradition, noch auf ein Dogma sein Recht und seine Würde stützen. Die erste Gruppe der Autoren vor allem muss als Notersatz für diesen Mangel an natürlicher Geltung unbedingt repräsentativ für die Gesinnung sein und von vornherein Vertrauen erwecken'; H. Prinzhorn, 'Undated letter to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe'. In another letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1925, Prinzhorn

- wrote: 'In any case it still means a lot to me that your "Art of building" belongs with the first three volumes, because with it one can show the characteristic of the matter best' ['Jedenfalls aber liegt mir nach wie vor sehr viel daran, dass Deine 'Baukunst' zu den ersten drei Bänden gehört, weil man an ihr das Charakteristische der ganzen Sache am besten zeigen kann.']; H. Prinzhorn, 'Letter to Mies van der Rohe dated May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1925' (*Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. Estate Mies van der Rohe, Container 1.*)
74. This is also suggested in D. Mertins, 'Architecture, Worldview, and World Image', *op. cit.*, p. 90. See also: F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
75. L. Mies van der Rohe, 'Lecture, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1926', in F. Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 253, 555.
80. '...mechanisitisch betriebsamkeit plus seelische entwurzelung': Ernst Kállai, 'Bauen und leben', *Bauhaus. Vierteljahr-Zeitschrift für Gestaltung*, 3 (1929), p. 12.
81. *Ibid.*, '...trotz aller unleugbar herrlichen errungenschaften von geist und technik noch immer eine gleichung, die durchaus nicht aufgehen will, sondern einen furchtbaren rest von sinnlosigkeit, von grauenhafter unbeherrschtheit und trüber verdunkelung bewahrt.'
82. H. Prinzhorn, *Leib—Seele—Einheit*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.