

# Social Individualism

## Walter Gropius and his Appropriation of Franz Müller-Lyer's Idea of a New Man

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In 1929, Walter Gropius developed the 'High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building' that was based on theories about the emergence of a New Man put forward by sociologist Franz Müller-Lyer. In his lecture at the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne conference in 1929, Gropius appropriated Müller-Lyer's sociology in order to promote and prompt the re-development of high-rise tenements and master households. Gropius' 1931 contribution to the Deutsche Bauausstellung in Berlin incorporated a full-scale community lounge and a recreation area with sporting equipment, as well as a model and plans for a 'High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building' that were designed in accordance with Müller-Lyer's theories. While it shows Müller-Lyer's influence, the boxing equipment found in the recreation area reflects the importance that sport, and boxing in particular, had gained after 1900. Boxing was perceived as a sport that would not only further fitness but also raise the spirits and help the inhabitant to succeed in the modern urban environment. By providing boxing equipment, Müller-Lyer's vision, which envisaged master households as furthering a community of peaceful individuals living in a condition of mutual trust, is weakened. In 1923, the sociologist Helmuth Plessner had regarded utopian visions of ideal communities as antithesis to actual events in the Weimar Republic. The embracing of theories that promised an evolutionary and linear development towards peaceful communities can be regarded as a counterreaction to a present that was perceived as an imperfect and temporary condition. Furthermore, Gropius' appropriation of Müller-Lyer's sociology not only helped to distinguish his position from Marxist and socialist theories but also illustrated the contemporary tendency to accept utopian ideas while simultaneously doubting the practicality of some.

**Keywords:** Franz Müller-Lyer—modernism—Neue Sachlichkeit—New Man—sociology—Walter Gropius

In his article, 'The Housing-types: Flat-, Middle- or High-rise?',<sup>1</sup> which was first published in the magazine *Das Neue Berlin* in April 1929, German architect Walter Gropius (1883–1969) proposed the redesign of the traditional tenement for factory workers in high-density areas of Germany. He had left his post as director of the Bauhaus school in 1928 and the re-design of the high-rise tenement became a major line of activity in the years thereafter.

The tenement had a dire reputation that related to its nineteenth-century predecessor: five-storey buildings grouped in blocks that left only small courtyards and filled most of the site. Because of the poor living conditions in these tenements, they were blamed for high child mortality, and the increase of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases amongst the tenants. Contemporary opponents therefore rejected

the high-rise tenement in general as unhygienic, especially because some apartments did not receive direct sunlight.<sup>2</sup>

Gropius' article was not illustrated with a design for a tenement but with diagrams that promoted 'Streifenbau' or 'Zeilenbau', a construction pattern where tenements are situated in rows.<sup>3</sup> The diagrams demonstrate how far apart buildings of two to ten stories would have to be placed in order to allow sunlight to reach each apartment. Gropius therefore proposed a structure that was considered an improvement in hygiene.

Nevertheless, his article triggered a debate on the merits and flaws of the high rise, which engaged proponents as well as opponents of this building type.<sup>4</sup> In his comments set in front of Gropius' article, Martin Wagner (1885–1957), for example, who was the Stadtbaurat [planning director] of Berlin and editor of the magazine, vehemently criticised the proposal to re-develop the high-rise tenement and claimed—among other things—that inhabitants of single-family dwellings are healthier in body and soul; he implied that their level of satisfaction was higher, and believed that high-rise tenements would not provide sufficient space between neighbours.<sup>5</sup>

In the numerous articles that Gropius published between 1929 and 1931 to promote the high-rise tenement,<sup>6</sup> he nevertheless displayed confidence that a re-designed high rise could fulfil modern standards of hygiene, provide ample sunlight and offer a solution to the severe housing shortage. He also believed that it would answer the needs of the modern man and, in opposition to Wagner's criticism, conform to the changing social and communal parameters of living.

The latter point was elaborated on in October 1929 in the lecture 'Die soziologischen Grundlagen der Minimalwohnung für die städtische Industriebevölkerung' [Sociological Premises for the Minimum Dwelling of Urban Industrial Populations]<sup>7</sup> at the second Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) conference in Frankfurt am Main.<sup>8</sup> The lecture introduced ideas of how communities of tenants within the re-developed high rises would unfold.

The congress was dedicated to the minimal dwelling and related to efforts by Ernst May (1886–1970), planning director of Frankfurt, and his staff who were developing settlements in Frankfurt.<sup>9</sup> The economy of costs, the cost relationship between rent and income, as well as the needs and requirements of the tenants were some of the questions that were discussed. The presence of architects from a number of countries—it was estimated that about 130 architects from 18 countries attended the opening on 24 October<sup>10</sup>—allowed these points to be discussed on an international scale.

In his lecture, Gropius asserted that 'The internal structure of the industrial family makes its turn from the one-family house toward the multi-storey apartment house, and finally toward the centralised master household'.<sup>11</sup> He aimed to develop a housing type adapted to the new structure of families and society, based on the belief that the border between private and communal living would become permeable. In his opinion, master households with collective kitchens, communal recreation areas, kindergartens, schools, libraries, etc. were most suitable for the modern man.<sup>12</sup>

Gropius found proof of this social development in the changing structure of families, and supported his argument with statistical information. According to his data, families were getting smaller, and individuals more independent from place of birth, work and

family, with free-time activities no longer bound to the home. The discrete structure of families was reported to be dissolving, and traditional responsibilities such as education and retirement had become 'socialized' and the responsibility of the state.<sup>13</sup>

These arguments were based not only on statistical data but also paraphrased theories that the German psychiatrist and sociologist Franz Carl Müller-Lyer (1857–1916) had put forward in his seven-volume compendium *Die Entwicklungsstufen der Menschheit* [*The Stages of Development of Mankind*], published between 1908 and 1924.<sup>14</sup> Gropius followed, in particular, Müller-Lyer's texts on the development of culture and family and was interested most in the cooperative epoch of the future.<sup>15</sup>

## The stages of development of mankind

Today, Müller-Lyer is best known for his work on optical illusions. The 'Müller-Lyer illusion' consists of the comparison of two lines of equal length of which one is flanked by inward angle brackets >—< and the other by outward angle brackets <—>. When placed side by side, these lines are perceived to be of different lengths. This illusion has since been the basis for numerous studies on optical illusions and the dynamics of perception.<sup>16</sup>

Müller-Lyer's contributions to sociology commenced during the late 1880s. In 1913, he had co-founded the 'Eurphoristen-Orden' [Eurphorists' Order] that served among other things the dissemination of his sociological position,<sup>17</sup> and in 1915, he was voted chair of the 'Monistenbund' [Monistic League], which had been founded on the initiative of the biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) in 1906.<sup>18</sup> Volumes six and seven of *The Stages of Development of Mankind* were published posthumously by his widow who also undertook travels to Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Scandinavia to promote the writings of her late husband. The circulation of his books was highest during the 1920s, when some volumes were also translated into several languages. In 1922, 75,000 copies of *Zähmung der Nornen* [*Taming of the Norns*] were published in Germany alone. In 1926, a small book was in print to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his death, and in 1928, a biography was available as well.<sup>19</sup> The low prices of his books, his accessible writing style and didactic method led to an exceptional popularity among factory workers in particular; the group of readers that Müller-Lyer's sociology addressed.

Müller-Lyer's writings were based on theories of the philosophers Auguste Comte (1798–1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). His scientific approach was positivistic in that he maintained that scientific research is only possible on the basis of explanations that have been asserted by relating them to 'laws of nature'. Müller-Lyer's approach was furthermore informed by monistic philosophy and included the notion that natural sciences and the humanities share one foundation. His cultural theory is also based on a synthesis of biological and Darwinist principles as well as sociological parameters, all of which are organized into phases of cultural development. Analogies within these phases served to identify directions of cultural development.<sup>20</sup> Müller-Lyer differentiated these phases according to whether they were ruled by: (1) the socialist being, (2) the individualistic being or (3) the social-individualistic being.<sup>21</sup>

The first phase is described as being a socialist society within which the tribe is superordinate to the person, and the concept of individuality does not yet exist. During the second individualistic epoch, a minority such as lords, kings or religious rulers control society. The last—social-individualistic—epoch is distinguished by its superior economic

developments. This leads to specialisation, which makes the individual indispensable, and to the division of labour, with the result that the mistakes of an individual affect the whole society. The individual has to become aware of the needs of the society and must act to increase the welfare of both. The collectivization of labour will cause this solidarity. All former stages of cultural development join to become a new entity. Neither society nor the individual is the sole focus, but instead the focus is the interactions between the single person and society. Müller-Lyer described this stage as 'the ultimate goal of mankind',<sup>22</sup> and proposed that this 'full-human being' will soon develop who 'combines both extremes of the socialist tribesman and the individualistic superman to a higher entity, to social-individualism'.<sup>23</sup>

This New Man<sup>24</sup> finds completion neither in losing himself within society nor in exploiting it, but rather in educating himself in order to serve society, which will reward these efforts by transforming into a harmonious community.<sup>25</sup> The goal of the development of culture is described as a socialist system that is explained not as a result of revolutions but as a product of cultural and societal evolution. Social individualism is ultimately the result of the 'phaseological development'<sup>26</sup> that leads towards the perfection of the human species.<sup>27</sup>

The dwelling where the 'social individualist' would live is outlined in Müller-Lyer's book *Die Familie [The Family]*,<sup>28</sup> where he argues that as a consequence of the collectivization of work and the changing role of women, the traditional household and nuclear family had both become economically archaic configurations. Traditional purposes of the family are regarded as eroding and subjected to socialization,<sup>29</sup> which is why the traditional or inherited house no longer suits the newly developing social system. But, while life in an inherited dwelling, even though it may have been traditionally delineated as safe—a place where morals and culture were passed on and a settled identity was sustained—no longer conforms with the developing lifestyle; life in 'kapitalistischen Mietskasernen' [capitalistic tenements]<sup>30</sup> is both insecure, owing to the constant likelihood of rent increases, and deracinated because of modern methods of production that force labourers to be mobile.<sup>31</sup>

Instead of suggesting a restoration of traditional values, morals and life style, and instead of condemning tenements completely, Müller-Lyer proposed master households, where costs and workloads would decrease for everyone. A central kitchen could supply food, electrical appliances could alleviate domestic chores, the schooling of children in communal institutions would educate them as social beings, and marriages would be possible that would permit self-actualization of both partners.<sup>32</sup> Within such dwellings a cultured community would flourish:

By implementation of master households the companionable interactions could bit by bit be directed to an immeasurable elevation and transformation. In the master households everyone could at any time meet acquaintances in the collective reading-rooms, library, garden, and recreational rooms; the human interactions would experience an increase, of which the system of the single family doesn't give an indication: the social spirit, which has now reached its low point, would progress into a new bloom . . . . A consequence of this higher spiritual companionability would be that an unexpected interest for literature and art would be aroused . . . . Is it not true that the complete culture is only a expression of connections between people, and the more versatile, the more intensive those connections are, the higher is the standing of the cultivation [*Bildung*] of a populace?<sup>33</sup>

Müller-Lyer evoked the image of an ideal community where, once a master household was implemented, an atmosphere of joint participation, sympathy and learning would evolve. He also implied that master households would support this ideal community naturally, which grew from the belief that architecture is able to change life and behaviour.

The idea of master households was informed by nineteenth-century ideals of utopian socialists such as Robert Owen (1771–1858) and Charles Fourier (1722–1837), as well as by the texts of Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928) on Garden Cities.<sup>34</sup> Müller-Lyer did not experience master households that were established in the Soviet Union; he died in 1916, but he nevertheless mentioned a number of recent examples that had been established on the basis of Fourier's principles.<sup>35</sup>

## CIAM

By appropriating Müller-Lyer's theories in the lecture at the CIAM conference, Gropius was able to stress the importance of the new housing he was proposing. The contemporary statistical information he added on the changes in society supported the perception of Müller-Lyer's theories as modern, scientifically provable and credible. This can be understood as an answer to Martin Wagner's criticism of Gropius' article in *Das Neue Berlin*.<sup>36</sup> It served to justify the design of high-rise apartments and to dispel criticisms such as:

No ten-storey machine for living will supply the urban dweller with the bodily distance that he longs for when during the day, at work or leisure, he bears—voluntarily or involuntarily—tightly-pressed humanity. . . . To provide not only the buildings but also the people with distance, this is the basic demand of the ideational as well as the social and economic stock-take of the metropolis.<sup>37</sup>

Gropius' elaborate and close rendering of Müller-Lyer's sociology served to confront such criticism. While Gropius did not mention master households in the article in *Das Neue Berlin* in April, they were part of the lecture in Frankfurt in October. Wagner's claim that a high-rise tenement could not provide sufficient space and privacy was countered by the argument that master households would support the newly developing social-individualistic being that would seek community above privacy.

While master households might have been included in Gropius' lecture in order to counter anticipated critique, in the context of the CIAM congress Müller-Lyer was also used as an ideological pointer.

Eric Mumford outlined the similarities between Gropius' explanations of master households and the minimal dwellings that were being considered at the same time in the Soviet Union. He further noted how Gropius' summary of Müller-Lyer's sociology is comparable to Marxist theory.<sup>38</sup>

While it is likely that Gropius was aware of Soviet endeavours, as well as of the ideology that supported them—within the context of the CIAM congress in Frankfurt it is significant that Gropius drew upon Müller-Lyer's sociological theories and not on socialist or Marxist ones. Gropius aligned himself with a sociology akin to socialism and Marxism<sup>39</sup> but nevertheless one that was dissimilar on a number of central points. Müller-Lyer's phaseological approach proposed change without revolution. For Müller-Lyer, change in society is brought upon by natural development instead of by punctual, immediate action and the progress of history is driven forward by a continuous growth in the



**Fig 1.** Walter Gropius. High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building, 1929–30: Perspective, 1929–30. Ink, gouache, washes, and collage elements on paper; 59.1 × 84.4 cm (23 1/4 × 33 1/4 in.). Harvard Art Museums, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius, BRGA.44.27. Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

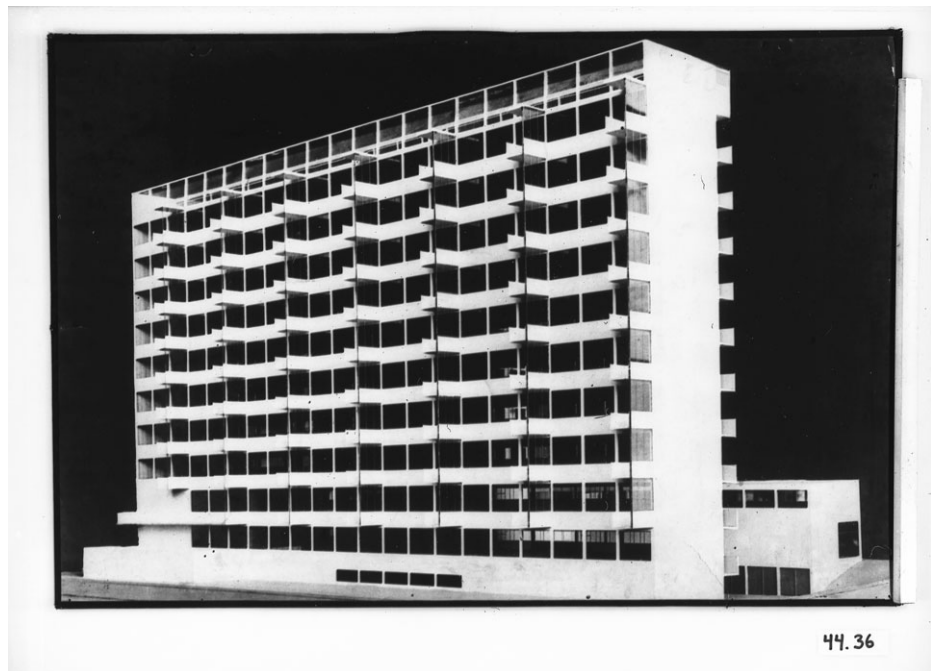
realization of rationality and humanity in the human subject. Gropius therefore embraced the notion of gradual change based on monistic and evolutionary thinking.<sup>40</sup>

Gropius' lecture in Frankfurt stirred controversy but was not discussed in depth since it was put forward at a conference on minimum dwellings, not on building types or master households.<sup>41</sup> These topics were examined at the third CIAM conference in Brussels in 1930.<sup>42</sup> Here, Le Corbusier (1887–1965) presented the *Ville Radieuse*<sup>43</sup> and gave a lecture on 'The Subdivision of the Land in Cities', Richard Neutra (1892–1970) talked about 'High-, Mid-, and Low-rise Buildings in American Circumstances', and Herbert Boehm (1894–1954) delivered, together with Eugen Kaufmann (1892–1984), a study on 'Inquiry into the Overall Cost of Two- to Twelve Storey Construction Methods'.<sup>44</sup> Gropius addressed the audience with an updated version of the article 'The Housing-types: Flat-, Middle- or High-rise?'<sup>45</sup>, and presented the *High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building* [1]. The photograph of the model and the perspective drawing show that—apart from some windows in the foundation and the terrace on the second floor—no floor is accentuated over another [2]. The terrace indicates where in the floor plan a communal space is located [3]. All apartments are accessible through hallways along the north side of the building. Each minimized apartment consists of a hallway, off which are situated the bathroom, a small kitchen and, in an extension, the living room with a small balcony. A children's bedroom and a master bedroom are situated adjacent to the bathroom [3].<sup>46</sup>

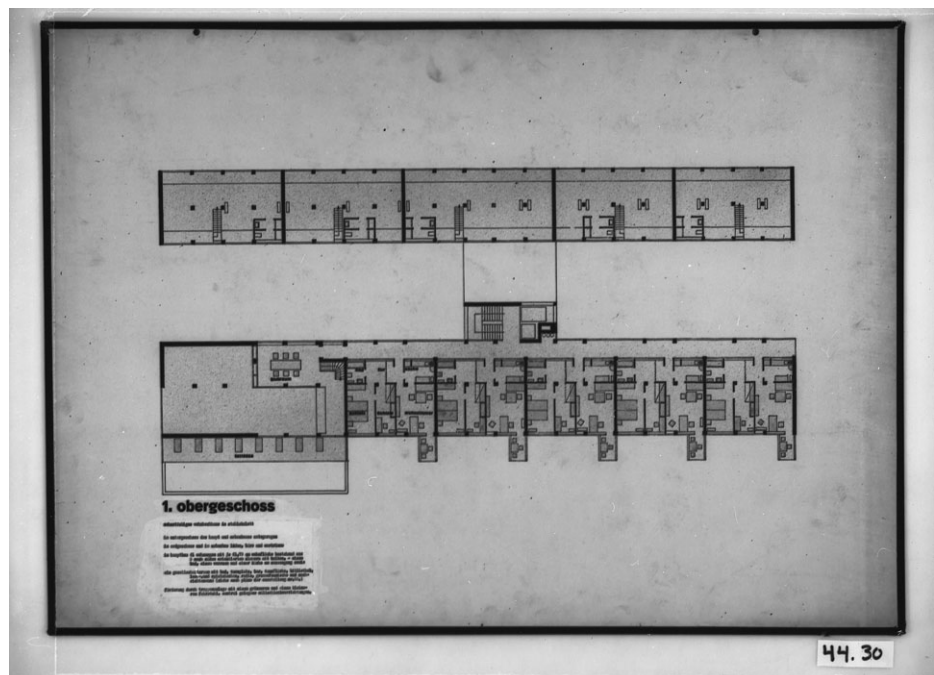
The kitchens in the individual apartments were a deviation from Müller-Lyer's idea of master households, where a collective kitchen was an essential component. In *Die Familie* Müller-Lyer had, for example, praised 'Einküchenhäuser' ['One-Kitchen-Houses'] in Vienna as an example of how the workload of women could be lightened.<sup>47</sup>

In the floor plan of the ground and first floors, no clear account of a master kitchen is given. According to Winfried Nerdinger, the low adjoining building on the north side was to accommodate shops and offices as well as communal facilities. Whether or not this would include a communal kitchen is not clear. Nevertheless, Nerdinger

**Fig 2.** Walter Gropius.  
High-Rise Steel Frame  
Apartment Building, 1929–30:  
Model, c. 1929–30. Harvard Art  
Museums, Busch-Reisinger  
Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius,  
BRGA.44.36. Photo: Imaging  
Department © President and  
Fellows of Harvard College



**Fig 3.** Walter Gropius.  
High-Rise Steel Frame  
Apartment Building, 1929–30:  
First floor plan, 1929–30.  
Photomechanical print with  
applied type and typewritten  
text on paper; sheet: 60.5 ×  
85.2 cm (23 13/16 × 33 9/16 in.).  
Harvard Art Museums,  
Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of  
Walter Gropius, BRGA.44.30.  
Photo: Imaging Department ©  
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College



also pointed out that Gropius was aware of estimations of the costs of communal facilities in high rises. According to these calculations, the project was uneconomical; the implementation of master kitchens, for example, was believed to be ‘not efficient for fewer than 500–600 people’,<sup>48</sup> which might have been the reason why Gropius resorted to individual kitchens.



**Fig 4.** Walter Gropius. Apartment House Communal Rooms for Deutsche Bauausstellung, Berlin, 1931, c. 1931. Harvard Art Museums, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Ise Gropius, BRGA.52.29. Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Gropius exhibited plans, models and a full-scale communal lounge at two exhibitions: in Paris, on the occasion of the annual 'Société des artistes décorateurs' in 1930 and in Berlin at the 'Deutsche Bauausstellung' in 1931 [4, 5].<sup>49</sup> One of Gropius' conclusions from reading Müller-Lyer was that the individual apartment could unhesitatingly be cut down in size—which matched the concept of the social-individualistic man who seeks the company of others rather than privacy.<sup>50</sup> The apartments were therefore designed according to assumptions of minimum requirements.

The building and its concept attracted the attention of the Czech artist Karel Teige (1900–51), who would become one of its fiercest critics. In his 1932 book *Nejmeši byt*<sup>51</sup> Teige wrote:

Gropius may point out that for the choice of future housing form, political evolution and the evolution of a [new] worldview will be decisive; however, he does not derive from this statement the professional consequences in his work and is [instead] content with escaping to the future through a diplomatic back door.<sup>52</sup>

Teige and Gropius had similar views on the social implications of master households but Teige accused Gropius of being inconsequential.<sup>53</sup> It was Gropius' translation of these views into an architectural model that did not satisfy Teige's expectations and communist approach, which demanded that:

... only the complete destruction of the existing social and economic order will allow for the full utilization of modern technology and construction, whose potential will unfold in the new socialist order.<sup>54</sup>



**Fig 5.** Walter Gropius. Apartment House Communal Rooms for Deutsche Bauausstellung, Berlin, 1931: Gym and pool, c. 1931. Harvard Art Museums, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Walter Gropius, BRGA.52.2. Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College

The implementation of kitchens in the individual apartments in particular sparked this criticism because in Teige's opinion they still supported the bourgeois family structure [3].<sup>55</sup> If master households were meant to free women from housework and cooking, then the individual apartment would not need individual kitchens but master kitchens instead that would provide all meals. In Teige's view, the presence of these individual kitchens were expressions of bourgeois diffidence.

## Communal lounge

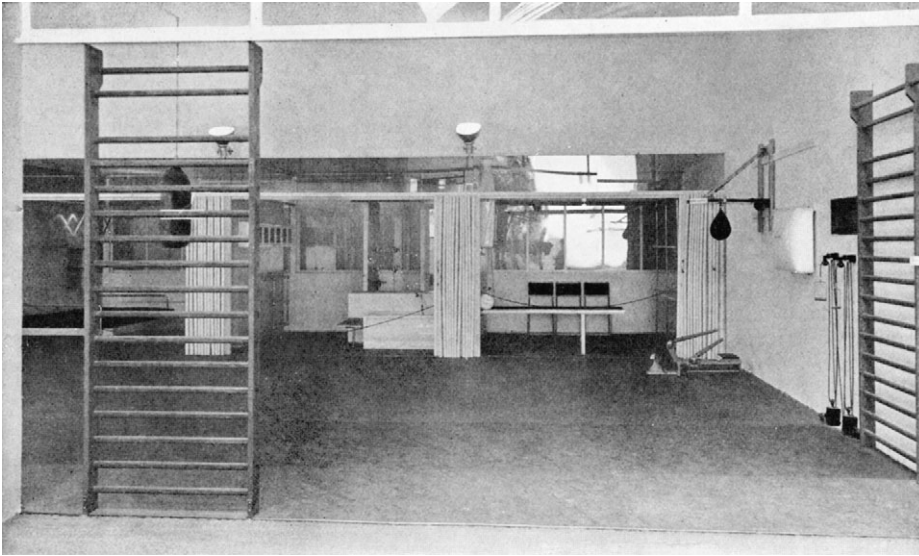
Essential to Gropius' design was its large communal lounge [4, 5] that was projected to serve all tenants as a meeting point. Müller-Lyer had described master households as places where 'everyone could at any time meet acquaintances in the collective reading-rooms, library, garden, and recreational rooms; [and where] the human interactions would experience an increase, . . . the social spirit . . . would progress into a new bloom'.<sup>56</sup> At the exhibition of Gropius' communal lounge in Berlin in 1931 a collective reading room with library [4] and a recreational room [5] were part of the design and the urban structure of 'Zeilenbauweise'<sup>57</sup> provided open spaces [1] to include the demand for gardens. The communal lounge thus provided a space that was largely in accordance with Müller-Lyer's ideals and the notion of the social-individualistic being. Here, a society of strangers would be bound into a community of friends, creating an atmosphere of stability and intimacy.<sup>58</sup>

One might observe somewhat cynically that Müller-Lyer's theory provided a convenient justification for the reduction of space in Gropius' minimized apartments, for which the communal living area provided some compensation, but this area bespeaks of more than simply additional space.

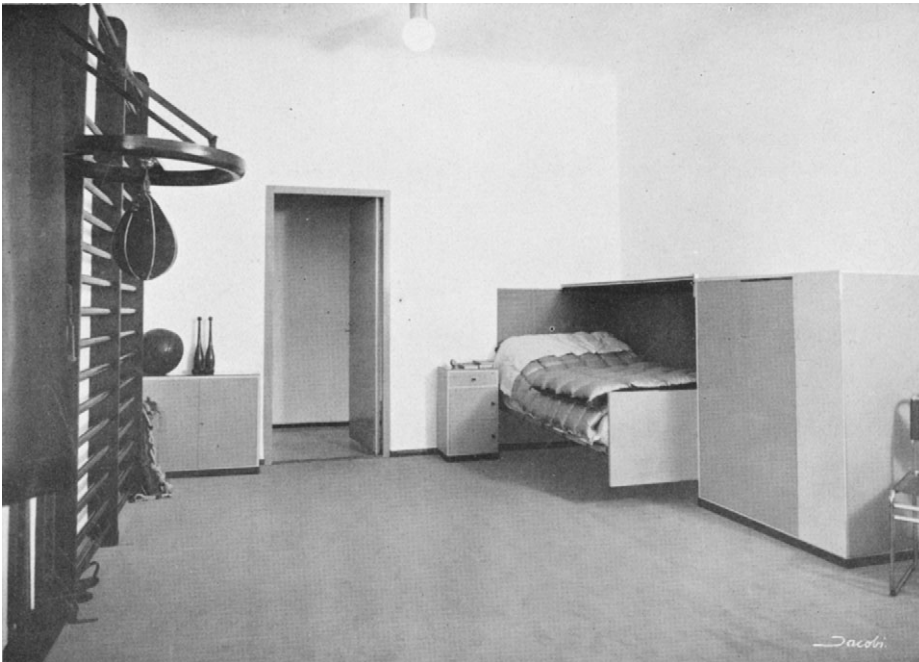
A large part of the recreation room in the model shown in Berlin was taken up by sports equipment and a pool [5].<sup>59</sup> This reflects the importance sport had acquired by this time.<sup>60</sup>

Together with the rise of 'life reform' and 'hygiene' movements around 1890, sport had become an important element of everyday life. Nudists, vegetarians and a number of other 'life reform' groups declared sport and outdoor activities essential for a healthy lifestyle and the endeavour to become a renewed being. Sport was believed to aid in the search for an intrinsic relationship with body and soul, human and nature, and was thought to lead to a freer coenaesthesia.<sup>61</sup> Together with the fight against dust, and for clean, light and well-aired apartments, sport was an important part of the hygiene movement that had also evolved since the 1890s.<sup>62</sup> The increased importance of sports led to the foundation of sports clubs, which in turn created the necessity for cities to provide playing fields.<sup>63</sup> Amongst the larger settlements that were built during the mid- and late 1920s in Germany, sports fields were now part of the infrastructure. In 1926, Herbert Boehm, for example, presented a plan for the expansion of the Riederwaldsiedlung in Frankfurt. A never-realized zoning plan envisaged the implementation of five sports fields at the fringes of the settlement.<sup>64</sup>

It is therefore not unexpected to encounter sports facilities and equipment in Gropius' 'High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building'. When examining the equipment in Gropius' communal lounge more closely, one can also see what kinds of sports were given preference: weight lifting, rowing, swimming and boxing were offered. The punching ball in particular was an item found in various interiors at that time [6, 7]. At the 'Deutsche Bauausstellung' in Berlin 1931, for example, the same exhibition where



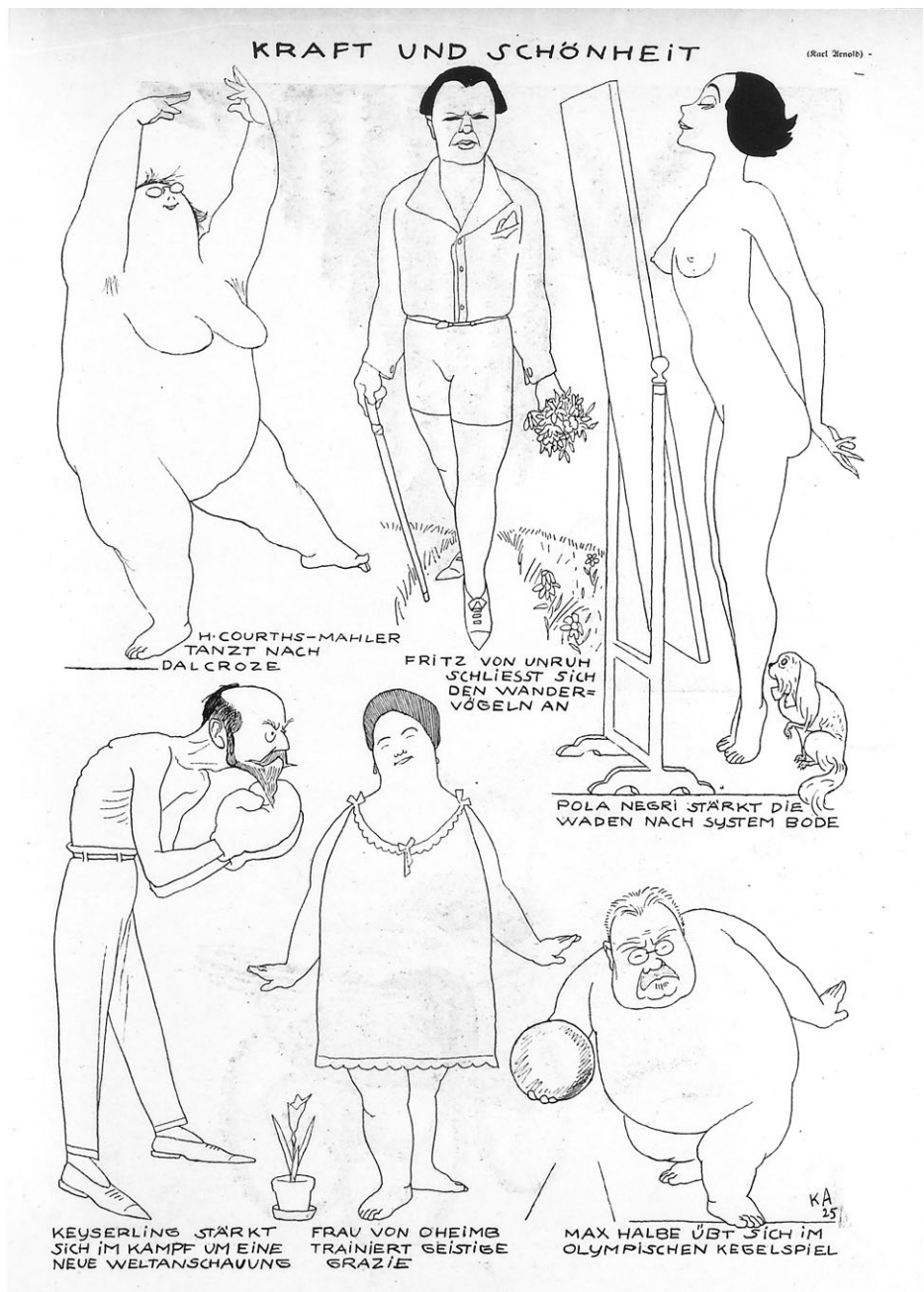
**Fig 6.** Unidentified photographer, Marcel Breuer and Gustav Hassenpflug, Haus für einen Sportsmann, Trainings-Raum, Deutsche Bau-Ausstellung 'Die Wohnung unserer Zeit' 1931 in Berlin, in *Die Form*, vol. 6, no. 6, 1931 p. 211



**Fig 7.** Unidentified photographer, Marcel Breuer, Piscator Apartment, Berlin, Interior view, 1926 or 1927, in Sigfried Giedion, *Befreites Wohnen* (Zürich, Leipzig: Orell Füssli Verlag, 1929), p. 26

Gropius presented the *High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building*, Marcel Breuer exhibited the *House for a Sportsman* [6].<sup>65</sup>

Boxing was a signifier that stood for modern design and lifestyle and was popular enough to be used by the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* in order to caricature the ageing philosopher Hermann Graf Keyserling (1880–1946) as boxing for a new 'Weltanschauung' ['world-view']. He was depicted together with other cultural celebrities of the time, such as the writer of light novels Hedwig Courths-Mahler as a nudist dancer, the Polish actress Pola Negri doing gymnastics and the expressionist writer Fritz von Unruh as a hiker [8].



**Fig 8.** Karl Arnold, Kraft und Schönheit [Power and Beauty], in *Simplicissimus*, vol. 30, no. 5, 1925, p. 67. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2010

Another caricature mocked the interior design of the new objectivity as cold and ‘un-gemütlich’ [uncomfortable] and showed a punching ball in front of an industrial-style window that alludes to the Bauhaus Building in Dessau. It hangs side-by-side with furniture similar to the cantilevered tubular steel chairs, which Mart Stam, Marcel Breuer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had designed during the mid- and late 1920s [9]. The inhabitants of the house huddle together in the attic where the old furniture has been stored.

In the literature of the 1920s, too, boxing was promoted as a recommended sport that would help ‘sich durchzuboxen’—a German idiom used in order to stress

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**Fig 9.** Walter Trier, Der einzige gemütliche Raum im Haus, [The only Cosy Room in the House], 1931, in UHU. Das neue Monats-Magazin, vol. 7, 1931, p. 60–1, © Walter Trier Heirs, Vancouver, Canada

the vagaries of life and the difficulties of pushing through them. The impact that boxing was thought to have on body and soul and on one's success in life was articulated in an article that the poet Frank Thiess (1890–1977) published in 1926 [10]<sup>66</sup>:

With the noble sweat, without which it won't work, one gets rid of all sorts of dross. Dross of blood and spirit, complexes and undisplaced unconsciousness, silly thoughts and other weeds which prevent one from finding one's form.<sup>67</sup>

Thiess claimed that with boxing not only a healthy and fit body could be attained but also a quick, assertive mind that helps with leading a successful life. Sport in general—but boxing especially—was thought to free the spirit from unnecessary thoughts and in turn lead to goal-orientated, rational thinking. The unemotional, precise and rational manner in which the punches have to be carried out aided the perception of boxing as a sport that promotes perseverance in the competitive modern environment.<sup>68</sup> It reflected the struggles of the individual in society and was regarded as a sport that could help in overcoming obstacles that the individual would encounter when confronted with problems such as, for example, unemployment. Accordingly Georg, the protagonist of the novel of the same name by Siegfried Kracauer (1889–1966) receives the advice: 'Learn how to box. With boxing you will get through everything'<sup>69</sup> after he has just lost his appointment and has no prospects of re-employment. Boxing was associated with the struggles of the working class<sup>70</sup> and the punching ball related to the perception of the factory worker who was allegedly in need of being a



**Fig 10.** Unidentified photographer, *Die Morgenarbeit des Dichters*. Frank Thiess, der bekannte Romanschriftsteller bei seiner morgendlichen Übung am Punchingball [The Morning-work of the Poet. Frank Thiess, the renowned author of novels at his morning exercise with the punching ball], photograph, in UHU. *Das neue Monats-Magazin*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1926, p. 68

rational, objective, unemotional and assertive being in order to persevere in modern society.

Boxing was therefore a sport that matched, not so much the ideal of the social-individualistic man whom Müller-Lyer described, but rather a struggling but goal-oriented individualist. The presence of the punching ball in Gropius' communal lounge pointed towards a perception of modern labourers conflicting with the one promoted by Müller-Lyer, and therefore seemed to contradict the communal goals that were an essential part of the concept of the design.

Even though Gropius' recreation room was intended to support a social-individualistic being, it was furnished in order to equip the modern worker with the skills to enhance the individual, not the community. It appears then that the sports equipment catered for the development of the individualistic rather than the social-individualistic being that Müller-Lyer described. The punching ball therefore seems to be out of place in an environment where a community of mutual trust is meant to thrive.

This incongruity is linked to the phenomenon of the time that assigned high esteem to utopian ideals; while the agitated political climate of the Weimar Republic, the harshness of living and working conditions stood in stark contrast to these ideals.<sup>71</sup> To enhance these living conditions and to decrease the housing shortage were the initial grounds for Gropius to propose a re-development of the high-rise tenement. His implementation of Müller-Lyer's theories at the same time upheld the notion

that mankind would develop into a stage where peaceful, communal living would eventuate.

### *Borders of Community*

The book *Borders of Community*<sup>72</sup> published in 1924 by the sociologist Helmuth Plessner (1892–1985) gives insight to this phenomenon. It was published against the backdrop and in reaction to the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the subsequent occupancy of the Rhineland and Ruhr area, attempted right-wing coups such as the Kapp-Putsch (1920) and the Hitler-Putsch (1923), as well as attempted left-wing coups such as by the Rote Ruhrarmee (1920).<sup>73</sup> It criticized concepts that called for or foresaw a communal state in contemporary society and is therefore related to expressions of *Kulturpessimismus* and books, such as Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes [The Decline of the West]*<sup>74</sup> or Ludwig Klages' *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele [Mind as the Soul's Adversary]*<sup>75</sup> both of which criticized contemporary capitalism, civilization and science.<sup>76</sup>

The incongruity between actual events and utopian concepts Plessner explained as being an antithetical reaction to the disquietude within the Weimar Republic.<sup>77</sup> He analysed the trend, the belief that the creation of communities was possible, and that a New Man, whose actions are predictable and who is 'good' in his essence, was about to emerge. He observed that the idealisation of 'communities' was a dominant

phenomenon of the time, but interpreted this as a sign of suppression of social circumstances.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, he turned against contemporary tendencies that called for utopian communities.

The book met with numerous and diverse reviews. It received attention because of the ways in which it criticized trends that vehemently embraced the notion of the development of future communities and because of Plessner's defence of distance as a space that in his view is necessary to preserve the dignity of the individual.<sup>79</sup>

One review was written by Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), author of the 1886 book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* [*Community and Society*]<sup>80</sup>—a sociological study in which the dichotomy of the terms community and society was first established for sociological discourse. Both terms had been essential for the development of Plessner's argument. 'Community' was described as a condition of mutual trust. 'Society'<sup>81</sup> on the other hand was related to modern cities and was described as a condition in which the natural, pristine and consistent status had been lost. Tönnies' had outlined the concept of 'society' as a phenomenon of the city and linked it to the newly developed social 'castes' who lived in the also newly developed cities. While 'community' characterizes a durable cohabitat, society refers to temporary and ephemeral relationships. Furthermore, community was viewed like a living and growing organism but society as an artificial and mechanical aggregate.<sup>82</sup>

The ideal of a community, in which peaceful living dominates, reveals in Plessner's analysis that the illusion was upheld that the human being is acting according to predictable parameters. This illusion also maintained that violence, as a part of human nature, could be overcome by acting rationally and logically. As a result—according to Plessner—all rules that traditionally guided social interactions were abandoned<sup>83</sup> and an almost naive optimism dominated in the general thinking that fair play and mutual trust could be found everywhere. He wrote:

Our age does not understand how to give up the hope, that at some point everywhere cards will be placed on the table and openness, honesty and fraternity will rule on earth.<sup>84</sup>

The hope to be able to attain a peaceful community was one aspect of the optimism Plessner discerned,<sup>85</sup> and which he saw as a counterreaction to the excessive coldness of actual societal relationships:

The ideal of this age is community. . . . Excessive coldness of human connections due to mechanical, commercial, political abstractions causes excessive counter reaction in the ideal of a glowing, . . . community. The calculating mindset, the brutal profiteering is mirrored in the counter image of a blessedness of senseless altruism; the suspicious jaggedness in armoured countries – the world-union of the people to ensure eternal peace.<sup>86</sup>

Plessner found many expressions of this phenomenon within contemporary art, literature and architecture. He criticized one of the major attributes of modern architecture—the rational, clean and unobstructed space that had been designed so the New Man could be free from the burden of the past and that was to provide space for exercise and communal living.<sup>87</sup> It was Plessner's claim that this architecture, which tried to establish communities without providing personal space, exposes the inhabitants by removing the possibility of distance between individuals. The hygienically designed, minimized and unobstructed space was interpreted as intrusive, and as generating a 'Pole of coldness' that can only house a fictional human being.<sup>88</sup>

When extending this critique to architectural designs that try to establish or support a community, the radical minimization of floor plans and the relocation of the living area into a public space, as in Gropius' example of the 'High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building', is—following Plessner—deemed inhumane because of its lack of space that would grant individual distance. The collectively planned life of a community of new social-individualistic beings thus transforms into an artificial and unattainable construct. Moreover, Plessner asserted that the status of a community could not be achieved with architecture alone, as Gropius and Müller-Lyer implied, which displays a genuine distrust in the belief in utopian ideas of communities as well as in the thought that they could be created artificially with the help of architecture.

## Conclusions

The utopian ideas of future societies of the 1920s can be understood as expressions of wishes to reform and move away from a present that was perceived as a temporary and fragmentary version of an ideal condition. They are therefore a reaction to actual crises and struggles. This way, the contemporary conditions in politics and society would be explainable, and a goal for the future, leading out of this temporary condition, was clearly located. For Gropius, who was pursuing change within his field—one of these goals, and an essential one, was to advance a solution for the housing shortage—utopian societies as described in Müller-Lyer's books provided such goals, supported them with scientific research, and offered a solution that presupposed a linear, evolutionary development of history.<sup>89</sup> Evolutionary theories that explained the development of mankind as being driven by natural forces were held in high esteem, especially after the 1917/1918 revolution that triggered doubt as to whether an ideal condition could be reached by active means. The status of utopian ideas that promoted 'natural' developments was now perceived as more feasible.<sup>90</sup> Gropius' appropriation of Müller-Lyer's text thus exemplifies a contemporary tendency that still adheres to utopian ideas but nevertheless begins to display doubts about the practicality of some.

Plessner's critique was not only a 'critical regulative' of a given devotion to utopia but also had become possible because utopian visions of a New Man and a renewed world were an essential part of the political programme of the time.<sup>91</sup> The dogmatism often inherent in visions of utopian societies and the New Man had often been the departure point for critique—as has the idea of an ideal community that likewise carries within itself a static and forced configuration of the individual and its relation to society.<sup>92</sup> Plessner criticized visions of the New Man as inhumane abstractions, but the human characteristics, which were rescinded to formulate the ideal vision of a New Man, where those that had given rise to the anxieties that had initially led to those visions.

The contradictions displayed in Gropius' re-developed tenement mirror these tendencies in the society of the 1920s, where utopian visions of a better and new world, society and human being were deeply embedded in the architectural, political and sociological discourses, but where at the same time actual events caused anxieties that also conditioned these discourses.

It might have been this mixture that accounted for the constant struggle with modernism since the 1950s, in that it seems to be difficult to overcome its promises of a healthier, enlightened, and peaceful life.

When Ernst Bloch, for example, published *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* [*The Principle of Hope*]<sup>93</sup> between 1954 and 1959, the notion that all architecture aims at creating a

paradisiacal space reappears. While Bloch saw the purest and most extreme expressions in Egyptian and Gothic architecture, modern architecture seemed to him bourgeois, supporting capitalism, and an architecture that, as Hilde Heynen observed in relation to Bloch's text, 'makes use of a thoroughly misguided image of utopia'.<sup>94</sup> The belief that architecture is aimed at creating 'paradise' was part of his argument. Nonetheless, the means by which modernist architects aimed at reaching this state were dismissed as questionable. In subsequent years, numerous authors, theoreticians and architects struggled with the legacy of modernist utopian visions.<sup>95</sup>

The promise of a community that can be artificially created within the 'right' environment is still upheld. Traces of Tönnies' definition of community could, for example, still be found in 2000 when Tony Blair stated:

At the heart of my beliefs is the idea of community. I don't just mean the local villages, towns and cities in which we live. I mean that our fulfilment as individuals lies in a decent society of others. My argument . . . is that the renewal of community is the answer to the challenges of a changing world.<sup>96</sup>

While it is not further defined what a 'decent society' would be, the term 'community' was not only used in order to differentiate New Labour from the New Right but also to imply a status of trust and safety and 'society' as a more vague and potentially 'indecent' condition.<sup>97</sup> The community that is evoked here is one of safety. When applied to modern housing estates, the keyword 'community' is still being used for this end but it has acquired a more exclusive than inclusive meaning. In order to promote housing estates today, 'community' has become an advertising slogan for housing estates that promote safety behind locked gates and high walls, that are exclusively available for a clientele that fears 'indecent society' and seeks a protected 'community'.<sup>98</sup>

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## Notes

- 1 W. Gropius, 'Die Wohnformen: Flach-, Mittel- oder Hochbau?', *Das Neue Berlin*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1929, pp. 74–80.
- 2 W. R. Krabbe, *Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform. Strukturmerkmale einer sozialreformerischen Bewegung im Deutschland der Industrialisierungsperiode*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1974, p. 185, and C. J. Fuchs, *Zur Wohnungsfrage. Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig, 1904, p. 64.
- 3 Gropius also executed a building of this type in Karlsruhe Dammerstock in 1927 and twelve-storey tenements for a competition for Berlin Haselhorst in 1929 that remained a project. W. Nerdinger (ed.), *Architect Walter Gropius: Drawings, Prints and Photographs from Busch-Reisinger Museum of Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass. and from Bauhaus-Archive*, Mann Verlag, Berlin, 1996, p. 136.
- 4 The Hygiene Museum in Dresden, for example, warned about the dangers of being infected with tuberculosis in small and damp living spaces. Deutsches Hygienemuseum (ed.), *Der Mensch. Zur Einführung in die Sammlung 'Der Mensch'*, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, Dresden, 1921. On the impact of the hygiene movement and related reform movements see A. K. Vetter, 'Reformbewegung und Neue Architektur', in *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung*

- von *Leben und Kunst um 1900*, K. Buchholz et al., (eds.), Häusser, Darmstadt, 2001, pp. 535–40. Furthermore, in his popular self-help book *Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer* [*Nature as Physician and Helper*], the physician Friedrich Wolf aimed at providing basic medical knowledge about the most common diseases and their cures. Wolf summarized in the chapter *Wie sollen wir wohnen?* [*How Shall We Live?*] demands and beliefs of the Hygiene movement, reiterated statistics on child mortality in apartment buildings and gave an abridged overview of contemporary discussions on architecture. The only apartment building that was considered healthy because of its large windows was Mies van der Rohe's apartment block built for the exhibition of the Deutsche Werkbund in Stuttgart-Weißenhof in 1927. F. Wolf, *Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer. Das neue naturärztliche Hausbuch*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1928. Moreover, in his book *Neues Wohnen—neues Bauen* [*New Living—New Architecture*] architectural critic Adolf Behne illustrated the need for new housing for the working class in the cities, with the help of photographs. The photographs were placed in the first chapter of Behne's book so they would illustrate the unhygienic and overcrowded apartment houses and would prepare readers for the arguments propagating large windows, ornament-free exteriors and unobstructed interior spaces. A. Behne, *Neues Wohnen—neues Bauen*, Hesse & Becker, Leipzig, 1927.
- 5 M. Wagner, 'Vorwort des Herausgebers', *Das Neue Berlin*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1929, pp. 74–5.
  - 6 Gropius, 'Die Wohnformen', op. cit. W. Gropius, 'Die soziologischen Grundlagen der Minimalwohnung für die städtische Industriebevölkerung', *Die Justiz*, vol. 8, 1930, pp. 454–66. English: W. Gropius, 'Sociological Premises for the Minimum Dwelling of Urban Industrial Populations', in *Scope of Total Architecture*, W. Gropius, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1956, pp. 105–16. W. Gropius, 'Flach-, Mittel- oder Hochbau?', *Das Neue Frankfurt. Monatsschrift für die Probleme moderner Gestaltung*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1931, pp. 22–33. W. Gropius, 'Neue Wohnhochhaus-Projekte von Prof. Gropius (Berlin)', *Das Werk. Schweizer Monatsschrift für Architektur, freie Kunst, angewandte Kunst*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1931, pp. 121–8. W. Gropius, 'Grosshaus—Flachhaus', *Innen-Dekoration. Reich-illustrierte kunstgewerbliche Zeitschrift für den gesamten inneren Ausbau*, vol. 42, 1931, p. 257. W. Gropius, 'Flach-, Mittel- oder Hochbau?', *Moderne Bauformen. Monatshefte für Architektur und Raumkunst*, vol. 30, no. 7, 1931, pp. 321–8. W. Gropius, 'Wohnhäuser im Grünen. Eine großstädtische Wohnform der Zukunft', *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung. Mit Nachrichten der Reichs- und Staatsbehörden*, vol. 51, no. 49/50, 1931, pp. 743–7. W. Gropius, 'Flach-, Mittel- oder Hochbau?' in *Rationelle Bauweisen*, CIAM (ed.), J. Hoffmann, Stuttgart, 1931, pp. 26–47. W. Gropius, 'Flach-, Mittel- oder Hochbau?' *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, vol. 11, 1931, pp. 95–101. An edited English translation is published as: W. Gropius, 'Houses, Walk-ups, or High-rise Apartment Blocks?', in *Scope of Total Architecture*, op. cit., pp. 103–15.
  - 7 Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., pp. 105–16.
  - 8 CIAM 'was conceived of as an instrument of propaganda to advance the cause of the new architecture that was developing in Europe in the 1920s'. From the first conference in 1928 to the end of the organization in 1959, the congresses provided from the beginning a wide-reaching platform to discuss architecture and city planning. In 1929, Sigfried Giedion read the lecture on behalf of Gropius. E. Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 2000, pp. 9 and 35.
  - 9 For a critical analysis of May's efforts in Frankfurt see H. Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity. A Critique*, MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 1999, pp. 44–50.
  - 10 Mumford, op. cit., pp. 29–44.
  - 11 Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., p. 114.
  - 12 Gropius' interest in communal housing and the evolution and development of society can also be found in some of his other projects during the late 1920s. One of these examples is the settlement for 20,000 inhabitants that Gropius designed in 1929 together with Friedrich Paulson and Stefan Fischer for an undefined location in the south of Berlin. A. Schwab, 'Ist die Genossenschaftsstadt möglich?', *Die Form Zeitschrift für gestaltende Arbeit*, vol. 4, no. 11, 1929, pp. 296–7.
  - 13 Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., pp. 105–11.
  - 14 The *Stages of Development of Mankind* comprises the following volumes: Vol. I: *Der Sinn des Lebens und die Wissenschaft* [The Sense of Life and the Science], München, 1910. Vol. II: *Phasen der Kultur und Richtungslinien des Fortschritts* [Phases of Culture and the Course of Progress], München, 1908. Vol. III: *Formen der Ehe, der Familie und der Verwandtschaft* [Structures of Marriage, Family, and Kinship], München, 1912. Vol. IV: *Die Familie* [The Family], München, 1912. Vol. V: *Phasen der Liebe* [Phases of Love], München, 1913. Vol. VI: *Die Zähmung der Normen I. Erster Teil* [Taming of the Norms I. First part], München, 1918. Vol. VII: *Die Zähmung der Normen II. Zweiter Teil* [Taming of the Norms II. Second Part.] München, 1924. Gropius cites his source as follows: 'Dr. F. Müller-Lyer: Die Entwicklungsstufen der Menschheit. München: J. F. Lehmann 1912'. Gropius, 'Die soziologischen Grundlagen', op. cit., p. 455. Gropius' interest in Müller-Lyer's sociology might have originated in 1919, when Gropius worked on the utopian project *Wohnberge* [*Mountains for Living*]. A drawing shows several large, oval-shaped, terraced and mountainous structures that were to be connected via a ring street. Reginald R. Isaacs assumed that the *Wohnberge* originated from Gropius' association with the group of architects and artists that exchanged the Glass-Chain letters. The descriptions of what kind of cooperative life was envisioned within the *Wohnberge* were to my knowledge first published in Isaacs' biography of Gropius. The inhabitants would live in collective households, within which the concept of families had lost relevance. Education and upbringing of children is also

- envisaged as collective deed. Men and women are emancipated, and the household is maintained cooperatively. R. R. Isaacs, *Walter Gropius. Der Mensch und sein Werk. Die Grundlagen. Die Zeit bis zum Weggang aus Deutschland*, Mann Verlag, Berlin, 1983, vol. 2, pp. 114 and 195. While the design of the *Wohnberge* and the *High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building* are dissimilar, the explanations of how inhabitants were imagined to live are similar. Since no documents or floor plans dating before Isaacs' book seem to have survived, it must remain uncertain if this concept was originally part of the *Wohnberge* project if Gropius assigned it a later date to provide evidence that his search for collective households was indeed a long-standing one.
- 15 Gropius introduced Müller-Lyer in the following way: 'The history of sociology is the story of man's gradual evolution from the wilderness through barbarism to civilisation. The late German sociologist Müller-Lyer, whose scientific results are referred to, distinguishes between four major legal eras of human society: 1. The era of kinship and tribal law. 2. The era of the family and family law. 3. The era of the individual and individual law. 4. The future era of cooperatives and communal law. He establishes these as the successive phases of gradual social refinement. A detailed examination of these phases is useful because their regularity shows clearly that certain phenomena in modern society that are regarded by many as manifestations of regressive decay are actually evidence of evolutionary progress in a society which is in the process of stratification'. Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., p. 105.
- 16 A. Esser, 'Müller-Lyer, Franz Carl (eigentlich Franz Xaver Hermann Müller)', *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 18, 1997, pp. 503–04 [Online version] <[http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/artikelNDB\\_n18-503-01.html](http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/artikelNDB_n18-503-01.html)> (accessed 1 June 2010).
- 17 S. Curth, *Soziologie als Programm sozialer Reform. Evolutionstheorie und demokratische Aktion: F. Müller-Lyer*, va&g Verlag Arbeiterbewegung und Gesellschaftswissenschaft, Marburg, 1986, p. 23.
- 18 R. Nöthlich et al., 'Weltbild oder Weltanschauung? Die Gründung und Entwicklung des Deutschen Monistenbundes' *Jahrbuch für Europäische Wissenskulturr*, vol. 3, 2007, pp. 19–67. A detailed biography can be found in Curth, op. cit., pp. 1–41.
- 19 Curth, op. cit., p. 31.
- 20 Esser, op. cit.
- 21 '1. der sozialistische Mensch, 2. der individualistische Mensch und 3. der sozialindividualistische Mensch'. F. Müller-Lyer, *Die Entwicklungsstufen der Menschheit. Eine systematische Soziologie in Überblicken und Einzeldarstellungen. Der Sinn des Lebens und die Wissenschaft. Grundlinien einer Volksphilosophie*, vol. 1, Albert Langen, München, 1923, p. 210. Own translation.
- 22 '. . . der letzte Zweck des Menschentums.' Ibid., p. 225. Own translation.
- 23 '. . . verbindet die beiden Extreme des sozialistischen Herdenmenschen und des individualistischen Herrenmenschen zu einer höheren Einheit, zum Sozial-Individualismus.' Ibid., pp. 213–14. Own translation.
- 24 The term 'New Man' is a cumbersome translation of the German 'der Neue Mensch' that would be more accurately translated as 'the new human being'. The term, however, has been widely used in connection with utopian concepts of the period discussed and serves as a signifier for topics specific to modernism, which is why it has been chosen here. It is, however, not my intention to indicate that there is no gender scope inherent in the topic discussed. Müller-Lyer's theories explicitly engage with the role of women in marriage, household and society and his books *Structures of Marriage and Kinship*, 1912, *The Family*, 1912 and *Phases of Love*, 1913 discuss traditional social structures and how they are going to be transmuted. The advent of master households is further supported with the argument that women will become more and more independent and that traditional family structures will change. Gropius adopted these prognoses by supporting them with statistical data. Architects that were involved in developing housing during the 1920s mostly referred not to gender but to class differences. Gropius' engagement could be analysed as an exception to this tendency and compared to books such as Bruno Taut's *Die neue Wohnung. Die Frau als Schöpferin*, which aims at educating women as rulers and managers of the household who are here perceived as in need of education and information about the new hygienic rules of living. Some of these points, albeit not in relation to Gropius and Müller-Lyer, are discussed in M. Peach, "'Der Architekt Denkt, Die Hausfrau Lenkt": German Modern Architecture and the Modern Woman' *German Studies Review*, vol 18, no. 3, 1995, pp. 441–63. Even though a closer analysis would be fruitful for this particular topic, it is beyond the scope of this article and will not be discussed further.
- 25 Müller-Lyer, *Die Entwicklungsstufen*, op. cit., pp. 219–27.
- 26 Esser, op. cit.
- 27 Curth, op. cit., p. 166.
- 28 F. Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, München, 1912. See also Curth, op. cit., pp. 358ff.
- 29 This is further explained with the observation that the traditional role of women, that defined the house as domain of the housewife, is deemed to be replaced with new and yet-to-be-defined activities outside the house. Now, children attend schools, do not inherit the occupation of their fathers, and the elderly as well as orphans and invalids depend on the subsidiary help of the government. Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., pp. 278–9. Gropius paraphrased this string of arguments closely to Müller-Lyer's original text. W. Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., pp. 105–16.
- 30 Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., p. 211.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 211–12.

- 32 Ibid., pp. 279–82.
- 33 ‘Durch die Einführung der Großhaushalte würde der gesellige Verkehr nach und nach einer unermeßlichen Hebung und Umwälzung zugeführt werden. In den Großhaushalten könnte jeder zu jeder beliebigen Zeit Bekannte in den gemeinsamen Lese-, Bibliotheks-, Garten- und Erholungsräumen antreffen; der Verkehr von Mensch zu Mensch würde eine Steigerung erfahren, von der das System der Einzelfamilie keine Ahnung gibt; der soziale Geist, der jetzt seinen Tiefpunkt erreicht hat, würde in eine neue Blüte treten . . . Eine Folge dieser höhern [sic] geistigen Geselligkeit wäre es, daß ein ungeahntes Interesse für Literatur und Kunst wacherufen würde . . . Ist doch die gesamte Kultur nur der Ausdruck der Beziehungen zwischen den Mensch, und je vielseitiger, je intensiver diese Beziehungen sind, um so höher steht es um die Bildung eines Volkes.’ Ibid., pp. 294–5. Own translation.
- 34 J. Posener (ed.), *Ebenezer Howard. Gartenstädte von morgen. Das Buch und seine Geschichte*, Ullstein-Verlag, Berlin, 1968.
- 35 Müller-Lyer gave a number of examples where master households have already been established. Among these Upton Sinclair’s colony ‘Helicon Hall’ in Englewood, New Jersey, founded in 1906 is mentioned as well as homes for widows in Frankfurt/M. and several other examples. Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., p. 282.
- 36 Gropius, *Das Neue Berlin*, op. cit., pp. 74–80.
- 37 ‘Keine zehnstöckige Wohnmaschine wird dem Großstädter die Leibeshälft verschaffen, nach der er sich sehnt, wenn er tagsüber bei Arbeit und Vergnügen ein enggepreßtes Menschentum gewollt oder ungewollt ertragen hat. . . . Nicht nur den Häusern, sondern auch den Menschen Distanz geben, das ist eine Grundforderung der ideellen wie der sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Bilanz der Großstädte’. Wagner, op. cit. Author’s translation.
- 38 The idea of *dom-kommuna* as well as a number of master households planned by Konstantin Melnikov (1890–1974), and design competitions by the Soviet research and design section for the standardization of housing (Stroikom) is introduced here in connection to Gropius’ lecture. Mumford, op. cit., pp. 37–8.
- 39 The proximity to Marxist theory is ostensible in that Müller-Lyer stressed that synergic cooperation would lead to the abolishment of artificial privileges due to birth, the exploitation of a majority by a minority, and the liberation of women. The prognostic character of Müller-Lyer’s methodology furthermore aims at guiding and educating the reader that also shows similarities to the above-mentioned theories. On the other hand Müller-Lyer was sceptical towards the Marxist focus on the sociological functions of economy and deemed it in its radical form as unprovable. Curth, op. cit., pp. 33 + 155 + 162.
- 40 Ibid., p. 33.
- 41 Mumford, op. cit., p. 39.
- 42 See F. Forbat, ‘Flach-, Mittel- und Hochbau. Der III. Internationale Kongress für neues Bauen in Brüssel’, *Die Baugilde. Baukunst, Bauwirtschaft, Bautechnik*, vo. 13, no. 1, 1931, pp. 54–6.
- 43 Plans for the *Ville Radieuse* related back to the *Plan Voisin* (1922) and were developed from his *Tsentrosilsoyuz* project (1928) that led him to travel to Moscow several times. Le Corbusier shared Gropius’ opinion that high-rise buildings were not merely a matter of rationality that helped in swiftly mass-producing houses at low cost. Both believed that these types of buildings would be able to enhance social and spiritual life. Le Corbusier also stipulated a cooperative lifestyle within the high-rises of this town plan. Mumford, op. cit., pp. 44ff. See also, W. J. R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier. Ideas and Forms*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1986.
- 44 Mumford, op. cit., p. 49.
- 45 See Gropius’ article in *Moderne Bauformen*, op. cit., pp. 321–8 and in *Rationelle Bauweisen*, op. cit., pp. 26–47.
- 46 The practicality of master households and collective living conditions had also been examined by Adolf Rading on the occasion of the Werkbund exhibition ‘Wohnung und Werkraum’ in Breslau in 1929. Besides the ‘Hausbetriebs-Organisation’, which encompassed childcare and laundry, communal rooms were also part of the concept. The minimalization of individual apartments in conjunction with communal living spaces is comparable with Gropius’ concept. While Gropius designed unalterable floor plans, Rading used the steel frame construction in order to project variable ones. See C. Nielsen, ‘Breslau und die Werkbundsiedlung 1929. Planungsideen und Wohnkonzepte’, in *Auf dem Weg zum Neuen Wohnen. Die Werkbundsiedlung Breslau 1929*, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ed.), Birkhäuser Verlag, Berlin, 1996, pp. 17–37.
- 47 Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., p. 282. On the One-Kitchen-House, see R. Sieder, ‘Housing Policy, Social Welfare, and Family Life in “Red Vienna”, 1919–34’, *Oral History*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1985, pp. 35–48, and G. Uhlig, *Kollektivmodell “Einküchenhaus”: Wohnreform zwischen Frauenbewegung und Funktionalismus 1900–1933*, Anabas-Verlag, Giessen, 1981.
- 48 Nerdinger, op. cit., p. 136.
- 49 The city planning related to this tenement is described in S. Giedion, *Walter Gropius. Mensch und Werk*, Hatje, Stuttgart, 1954, pp. 77–82. See also: K.-U. Hemken, ‘Die Zukunft im Räderwerk der Harmonie. Utopievorstellungen zweier Werkbund-Ausstellungen im Jahre 1930’, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 1, no. 39, 1994, pp. 79–90, A. Wischek, ‘Die Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin 1931’, in *Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin 1931. Amtlicher Katalog und Führer*, Ausstellungs-, Messe- und Fremdenverkehrs-Amt der Stadt Berlin (ed.), Bauwelt-Verlag, Berlin 1931, pp. 40–1, and H. Hoffmann, ‘“Die Wohnung unserer Zeit” auf der deutschen Bauausstellung Berlin 1931’, *Moderne Bauformen. Monatshefte für Architektur und Raumkunst*, vol. 7, no. 30, 1931, pp. 329–47.

- 50 Gropius did not mention Müller-Lyer by name in his lecture at the CIAM conference in Brussels, but he referred to the Frankfurt lecture in his introduction and indicated that the newer lecture was a direct development from the latter. At the Bauausstellung in Berlin in 1931, Alexander Schawinsky designed charts that explained the concept. Here, the close relation to Müller-Lyer is visible again. The charts visualize Müller-Lyer's model of different phases of cultural development such as the change from a patriarchal to a socialized society and the changing role of women. Nerdinger, op. cit., p. 158.
- 51 E. Dluhosch, 'Teige's Minimum Dwelling as a Critique of Modern Architecture', in *Karel Teige. 1900-1951. L'enfant Terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-Garde*, E. Dluhosch and R. Švácha (eds.), The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 1999, pp. 164–71. See also K. Spechtenhaus & D. Weiss, 'Karel Teige and the CIAM: The History of a Troubled Relationship', in *Karel Teige*, op. cit., pp. 217–55.
- 52 K. Teige, *Nejmešl byt [The minimum dwelling]*, Prague, 1932, p. 270, cited in: Dluhosch, op. cit., p. 175.
- 53 Both declared that within master households women would be liberated from housework and cooking and would become equal partners with men, and that each adult would need his/her private room. For Teige see op. cit., p. 177. For Müller-Lyer, see Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., pp. 281ff. See also Dluhosch, op. cit., pp. 142–93.
- 54 Dluhosch, op. cit., p. 148.
- 55 Ibid., p. 175.
- 56 'In den Großhaushalten könnte jeder zu jeder beliebigen Zeit Bekannte in den gemeinsamen Lese-, Bibliotheks-, Garten- und Erholungsräumen antreffen; der Verkehr von Mensch zu Mensch würde eine Steigerung erfahren . . . der soziale Geist . . . würde in eine neue Blüte treten'. Müller-Lyer, *Die Familie*, op. cit., pp. 294. Own translation.
- 57 The Perspective drawing in the Busch-Reisinger Museum does not show any playing fields in-between the high-rises [1] but in a summary of the advantages of this new building type, Gropius indicated the use of the park in between the buildings for leisure and play. Gropius, 'Sociological Premises', op. cit., p. 115.
- 58 The *High-Rise Steel Frame Apartment Building*, as well as all similar projects that Gropius developed during the late 1920s and early 1930s, remained projects. Mumford suggests that W. Van Tijen, J. A. Brinkman and L. C. Van der Vlugt's Bergpolder Apartments in Rotterdam (1932–34) were the first built examples of the category that Gropius' developed. Mumford, op. cit., pp. 38–9.
- 59 Ausstellungs-, Messe- und Fremdenverkehrs-Amt der Stadt Berlin (ed.), *Deutsche Bauausstellung*, op. cit., pp. 163–5.
- 60 F. Neumeyer, 'Der neue Mensch. Körperbau und Baukörper in der Moderne', in *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950. Expressionismus und Neue Sachlichkeit*, V. Magnago Lampugnani und R. Schneider (eds.), Hatje, Stuttgart, 1994, pp. 15–21 and F. Becker, 'Revolution des Körpers—Der Sport in Gesellschaftsentwürfen der klassischen Moderne', in *Der Neue Mensch. Utopien, Leitbilder und Reformkonzepte zwischen den Weltkriegen*, A. Gerstner, B. Könczöl & J. Nentwig (eds.), Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, pp. 87–104.
- 61 K. Helmuth, *Wie werde ich ein neuer Mensch? Der beste Weg zur geistigen und körperlichen Wiedergeburt*, Leipzig, n.d. See also: K. Buchholz et. al. (eds.), op. cit., and Krabbe, op. cit.
- 62 Since its foundation in 1912, it was a priority of the Deutsch Hygienemuseum [German Museum of Hygiene] to educate citizens about the benefits of cleaning, dusting and airing. Healthcare, sexual hygiene and childcare were also part of the educational programme. Exhibitions that toured Germany during the 1920s were curated in order to teach mainly women about hygiene, a healthy life style, and essentially about changing habits. One of these habits, which were promoted as being essential for well-being, was the integration of sports into daily routine. The exhibition *Der Mensch in gesunden und kranken Tage [The human being in healthy and sick days]*, for example, displayed a model day plan in order to influence visitors to imitate this model day. Deutsches-Hygiene-Museum und Zentral-Institut für Volksgesundheitspflege Dresden (ed.), *Ausstellung: Der Mensch in gesunden und kranken Tagen. Sondergruppe der durchsichtige Mensch*. Zentral-Institut für Volksgesundheitspflege, Dresden 1926. See also A. Forty, *Objects of Desire, Design and Society 1750-1980*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1986. The educational component that was part of the hygiene movement was also part of the programme at the Federal School of the German Trade Unions (ADGB). Between 1927 and 1932 Hannes Meyer (1889–1954) and Hans Wittwer (1889–1954) had designed the school in close connection to the socialist education system that the school implemented in order to teach members of the union how to lead a healthy and successful life. Sport belonged to the daily routine of all students. The organizers hoped that once students had adopted the prescribed life style they would continue it after their return home that would then encourage their social group to follow these healthy habits as well. A. Behne, 'Bundesschule in Bernau bei Berlin', *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung. Mit Nachrichten der Reichs- und Staatsbehoerden*. vol. 51, no. 14, 1931, p. 213, and H. Meyer, *Bauen und Gesellschaft. Schriften, Briefe*, VEB Verlag der Kunst, Dresden, 1980.
- 63 By 1919, the councillor for building and construction of Hannover Paul Wolf, for example, regarded playing fields as essential aspects of city planning. P. Wolf, *Städtebau. Das Formproblem der Stadt in Vergangenheit und Zukunft*, Klinkhardt & Biermann, Leipzig, 1919, pp. 76–9.
- 64 H. Risse, *Frühe Moderne in Frankfurt am Main 1920-1933. Architektur der zwanziger Jahre in Frankfurt a. M. Traditionalismus—Expressionismus—Neue Sachlichkeit*, Societaets-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1984, p. 252.

- 65 Another example is the *Apartment for Edmund Wanner* in Genf (1928/29) where Le Corbusier drew a boxer training with a sandbag.
- 66 F. Thiess, 'Dichter sollten boxen, dann würde es um die Literatur besser bestellt sein', *UHU. Das neue Monats-Magazin*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1926, pp. 68–71.
- 67 'Man wird mit dem edlen Schweiß, ohne den es nun einmal nicht geht, allen möglichen Unrat los, Unrat des Blutes und des Geistes, Komplexe und unverdrängte Unbewußtheiten, dumme Gedanken und sonstiges Unkraut, das einen hindert, seine Form zu finden'. *Ibid.*, p. 70. Author's translation.
- 68 Neumeyer, op. cit., p. 15.
- 69 'Lernen Sie boxen. Mit dem Boxen kommen Sie überall durch'. S. Kracauer, *Georg*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1995 [1928], p. 243.
- 70 This worker was a member of an as new perceived class who worked with and understood machines and who was thought to act rationally and thus belonged more to the new industrial age than members of the middle or upper classes. The worker was often perceived as the New Man who had grown up in this new environment, surrounded by machines and able to master life within it. A good indication of this perception is Graf Hermann Keyserling, who had been depicted as a boxer [6] in the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*. His book *Die neuentstehende Welt [The emerging world]* delineated this kind of New Man as 'Chauffeur-type' in order to emphasise that he is in control of technology. H. Keyserling, *Die neuentstehende Welt*, Otto Reichl Verlag, Darmstadt, 1926. On the controversial philosopher and founder of the Schule der Weisheit [School of Wisdom] at Darmstadt, which strove towards an intellectual reorientation of society and politics in Germany, see U. Gahlings, *Hermann Graf Keyserling, ein Lebensbild*, Justus-von-Liebig-Verlag, Darmstadt, 1996, and M. Schwidtal and J. Undusk (eds.), *Baltisches Welterlebnis. Die kulturgeschichtliche Bedeutung von Alexander, Eduard und Hermann Graf Keyserling*, Winter, Heidelberg, 2007.
- 71 In 1903, Georg Simmel had described how the assembly line had long defined and assigned the speed and rhythm of human work. G. Simmel, 'Die Groß-Städte und das Geistesleben [1903]', in *Das Individuum und die Freiheit. Essays*, G. Simmel, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1993, p. 201. In his 1929 book *Die Angestellten [The Salaried Masses]*, Siegfried Kracauer outlined the working and living conditions of mainly white-collar workers and reported on the competitive employment situation. Kracauer explained how during the 1920s the standardization of work processes had begun to determine workplaces and that the employee was expected to be able to keep up a mechanical pace. The worker had to function as well, as quick and as focused as the machine he worked with. This pressure widened from factory workers to office clerks and white-collar workers in general, who were now all viewed as interchangeable parts of workplaces. Rather than mastering the machine the worker had to compete with it. Kracauer, *Die Angestellten*, op. cit.
- 72 H. Plessner, *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft. Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus*, Bouvier, Bonn, 1972 [1924].
- 73 J. Fischer, 'Nachwort', in *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft. Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus*, Helmuth Plessner, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2001, pp. 135–6.
- 74 O. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, Beck, München, vol. 1, 1918 and vol. 2, 1922.
- 75 L. Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, Bouvier Verlag Herberg Grundmann, Bonn, 1981, 3 vols., 1929–39.
- 76 N. Schneiderreit, "'Der 'utopische Standort'" —Helmuth Plessners philosophisch-anthropologischer U-topos gegen das Arkadien einer "Neuen Gemeinschaft"', in *Der Neue Mensch*, A. Gerstner et al., op. cit., p. 41.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 35–51.
- 78 H. Lethen, *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1994, p. 76.
- 79 Fischer, 'Nachwort', op. cit., p. 137.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- 81 F. Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1972 [1887].
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 5. Plessner used Tönnies' dichotomy in his criticism of theories of contemporary culture but turned against it. Plessner did not follow Tönnies' linear approach in which society was a condition of the modern cities and community of the pre-industrial village and instead asserted that both conditions coexist. An analysis of the relationship between Tönnies' and Plessner's use of these terms has been made in: Schneiderreit, op. cit., pp. 42ff.
- 83 Plessner, op. cit., pp. 9–10.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 10. 'Unsere Zeit versteht sich nicht dazu, die Hoffnung aufzugeben, daß einmal überall mit offenen Karten gespielt werden kann und Offenheit, Ehrlichkeit, Brüderlichkeit auf der Erde herrschen'. Own translation.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 86 'Das Idol dieses Zeitalters ist die Gemeinschaft. . . . Maßlose Erkaltung der menschlichen Beziehungen durch maschinelle, geschäftliche, politische Abstraktionen bedingt maßlosen Gegenwurf im Ideal einer glühenden, in allen ihren Trägern überquellenden Gemeinschaft. Der Rechenhaftigkeit, der brutalen Geschäftemacherei entspricht im Gegenbild die Seligkeit besinnungslosen Sichverschenkens, der mißtrauischen Zerklüftung in gepanzerte Staaten der Weltbund der Völker zur Wahrung ewigen Friedens'. *Ibid.*, p. 26. Own translation.
- 87 With the article 'Ornament and Crime' Adolf Loos was one of the first to demand free, unobstructed spaces with the argument that they would enlighten and free the spirit of the modern man. Within the concept of the redevelopment of

the city of Frankfurt, the magazine *Das Neue Frankfurt* published numerous articles that supported the notion that this kind of architecture would be able to educate tenants and subsequently lead them to a higher spirituality. T. Poppelreuter, *Das Neue Bauen für den Neuen Menschen*, Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, 2007.

88 Lethen, op. cit., pp. 75ff.

89 See also Heynen, op. cit., p. 30.

90 Schneidereit, op. cit., p. 40.

91 Ibid., p. 37.

92 R. Levitas, 'For Utopia: The (Limits of the) Utopian Function in Late Capitalist Society', in *The Philosophy of Utopia*, B. Goodwin (ed.), Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 24–43.

93 E. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986.

94 Heynen, op. cit., p. 122.

95 Among the numerous critiques of modernist ideals, the 1969 book *Pessac de Le Corbusier* by Philippe Boudon, Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to our House* and K. Michael Hays' *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject* are only a few prominent examples that reviewed utopian ideas and that aimed at reassessing the all-encompassing power of the modernist idiom.

96 T. Blair, 'Speech to the annual conference of the Women's Institute, 7 June 2000, London'. Cited in: R. Levitas, 'Community, Utopia and New Labour', *Local Economy*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000, pp. 189.

97 Ibid., p. 189–92.

98 Ibid., p. 192ff and see R. Connell, 'The Deceptive Environment: The Architecture of Security,' in *Transformations of Urban and Suburban Landscapes*, G. Backhaus and J. Murungi (eds.), Lexington Books, Oxford, 2002, pp. 55–80.