

**KINAESTHETIC IMPULSES:
AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, BODILY KNOWLEDGE, AND
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN GERMANY, 1871-1918**

by

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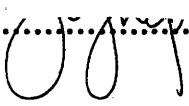
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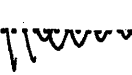
**Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on August 10, 2007 in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture in the
History and Theory of Architecture**

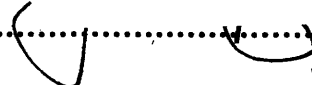
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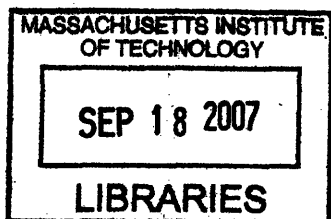
September 2007

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies a moment of transition in German aesthetics in the late nineteenth century. Starting in the 1870s, groups of artists, architects, historians, critics, connoisseurs, and museum officials in Germany declared that traditional aesthetics, which had operated “from above” with metaphysical concepts such as the beautiful and the sublime, was obsolete. According to these intellectuals, the old aesthetics needed to be replaced by a scientific and empirical “aesthetics from below.” The emergence of the new aesthetics was closely related to the rise of mass politics and mass culture in the newly unified Germany. Concerned that an attentive and contemplative perception could not be afforded by the masses, these liberal-minded members of the educated middle classes theorized a new kind of aesthetic experience that was based on corporeal pleasure rather than intellectual judgment. According to this model, an aesthetic encounter with an artwork was primarily kinaesthetic: an artwork elicited an unconscious and immediate effect on the musculature of its beholder.

I examine three episodes, in which this idea was employed to pedagogical ends at the turn of the twentieth century. In the work of the artist Hermann Obrist (1862-1927), the kinaesthetic model of experience became the basis of a new pedagogy for the arts, which utilized the unconscious movements of the body to choreograph the production and reception of aesthetic effects. The architect August Endell (1871-1925) theorized these effects further and attempted to invent an exact science of design, which correlated architectural forms to the reaction that they would produce in the human body. The same idea of kinaesthetic response appeared within art historical circles under the rubric of the Baroque at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly in the debates between Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) and August Schmarsow (1853-1936) on the nature of the painterly (*malerisch*). The double slide lecture was an ingenious solution devised by the incipient discipline of modern art history simultaneously to utilize the pedagogical effectiveness of kinaesthetic experience and to control its sensual excess.

**Thesis Supervisor: Mark M. Jarzombek
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been indebted to many in the process of writing this dissertation, but my advisors deserve the first expressions of gratitude. I am grateful, above all, to Mark Jarzombek for constantly challenging me to extend my intellectual horizons while providing unconditional support at every step leading to the production of this dissertation. As many of my fellow students would agree, his generosity and kindness have created an exceptionally congenial atmosphere of intellectual exchange at the History, Theory, and Criticism Program. I would like to thank Erika Naginski for stimulating my interest in theories of sense perception and, more importantly, for teaching me how to approach historical material in ever refreshing ways. She continues to be a role model for women who choose to make a career in academia. Finally, I would like to thank Dan Monk, who has enthusiastically supported me since the time that I was working on my master's thesis at Harvard. I have always been grateful for his sharp critique, which has kept me on my toes. Other HTC faculty members, Caroline Jones, David Friedman, and Nasser Rabbat, have provided valuable advice along the way.

The support of my fellow students at the History, Theory, and Criticism Program has been nothing less than a blessing. I learned much from those who were writing their dissertations when I entered the program: Jorge Otero-Pailos, Adnan Morshed, and later Erdem Erten. Discussions with Deborah Kully, Fabiola López-Durán, Florian Urban, and Mechtild Widrich have been invaluable. Lucia Allais, Lauren, Kroiz, Michael Osman, Mine Özkar, Ijlal Muzaffar, and Kathy Wheeler generously offered me not only intellectual support but also their close friendship. I am especially grateful to Janna Israel for her intellectual insight, kindness, and her unparalleled sense of humor.

The Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin became my second intellectual home during the time that I lived in Germany. I especially thank Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal for welcoming me into the rich intellectual life of the Institute and making its vast resources available to me. I am also grateful to Skúli Sigurdsson, who carefully read and edited the early drafts and made many useful suggestions. The Institute's extraordinary librarians, particularly Ellen Garske, never failed to find even the most obscure material from libraries throughout Europe. Without their efforts this dissertation would be much impoverished. I am equally indebted to the staff of other libraries and archives in Germany: Kunstbibliothek and Staatsbibliothek in Berlin; the Handschriftenabteilung of the Berlin Staatsbibliothek; the archives of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin; the archives of the Technical University in Berlin; the

archives of the University of Leipzig; and the collections of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich.

I would like to acknowledge the various institutions and foundations that generously provided financial assistance while I completed the dissertation: the Department of Architecture at M.I.T., the Dedalus Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the DAAD German Academic Exchange Service, and the Council on Library and Information Resources. I am particularly grateful to the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art for having faith in my project and for granting me a three-year fellowship.

Finally I wish to thank those closest to me: my mother, who made sacrifices so that I could pursue an academic career, and Zack, whose unconditional love has supported me in ways too many to enumerate here. I dedicate this text to my son Alexander, who arrived while we were living in Germany and whose presence has brought us such pure happiness.

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INTRODUCTION

An Unusual Experiment

On a sunny day in 1906 a schoolteacher by the name of Rudolf Schulze gathered several children in the courtyard of an elementary school building in Leipzig to conduct an experiment. The school was a public *Volksschule* attended by children coming from the poorest and most uneducated families in the city; the subjects in question were girls aged eleven to twelve years. Schulze's experiment proceeded in the following manner: the girls were seated in three rows and asked to keep their eyes closed while Schulze placed a picture in front of them. Once a picture was in place, the girls were instructed to open their eyes again and to pay attention to the image before them. Within the next few seconds, another teacher photographed the girls' reaction with a camera placed just above the picture being viewed. This sequence was repeated for a series of photographs. The purpose of the documentation was to capture—both individually and as a group—the involuntary facial and bodily expressions (*Ausdrucksbewegungen*) that the girls produced while looking at various pictures, ranging from illustrations from children's books to depictions of Christ on the cross. (Figs. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) But the experiment did not end there. Schulze then asked four adults to comment on the emotional expressions documented in the photographs and to match the photographs with the pictures. Schulze announced in a pamphlet that he published the same year that the results were remarkable: with two exceptions the adults were able to identify the artwork from the photographic evidence of the girls' expressions.¹

¹ Rudolf Schulze, Die Mimik der Kinder beim künstlerischen Genießen (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1906).



Reagent A: „Die Stimmung ist verwandt der von Nr. 16 (die Himmerlatten), aber keineswegs so ausgelassen, sondern eine innere Freude, die kommt aus innerem Erleben. Sie erleben es zum erstenmal. Etwas Ironisches ist dabei. Ironisch ist ein bißchen hart, aber sie glauben der Sache nicht ganz – Lambhaft ist es auf keinen Fall.“ Nach Vorlegung der zwölf Steinzeichnungen:



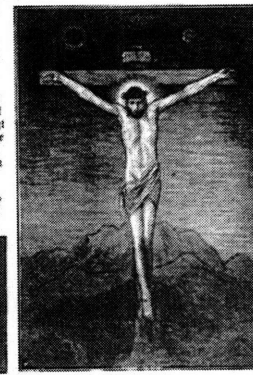
Rumpelstilzchen.



Welche Stimmung zeigen die Kinder? Reagent A: „Es ist der direkte Gegenlag zur vorigen Stimmung (die Himmerlatten), Etwas von der Stilleheit spielt sich in den Gesichtern, die Kinder unterdrücken es.“ — Was heißt das, der direkte Gegenlag? „Es hat vielleicht etwas mit der heiligen Legende zu tun, vielleicht sind Engel auf dem Bild, überhaupt etwas frommes.“ Welches Bild könnte es dann sein? „Das Sujet dürfte nicht so fälschlich sein, wie bei der heiligen Nacht, vielleicht ist es der Auferstehende.“ — Sicher ist, daß der gezeigte Ernst etwas Konventionelles an sich hat.“

Nach Vorlegung der zwölf Steinzeichnungen: Welches Bild entspricht am besten der Stimmung der Kinder? „Christus der Gekreuzigte.“

Reagent B: „Der harte Ausdruck der Stimmung beweist, daß etwas außerordentlich Pafendes den letzten Ausdruck völlig verdrängt hat. Sterbende oder allgemein stauender Drogung.“ Welches Bild? „Christus der Gekreuzigte.“



Reagent C: „Ein stimmungsvolles, wohl religiöses Bild, gegen das vorige völlig absteckend.“ — Interessant die Hände und Körperhaltungen, besonders der Dieren rechts und die Augenablenkung. — Hiernach alle gleich gegriffen.“ Welches Bild? „Christus der Gekreuzigte.“



Welche Stimmung zeigen die Kinder? Reagent A: „Es ist eine ruhigeren Stube als beim vorigen Bild („Einjame Höhe“), die Stimmung ist einheitlich bis auf Knäuel (Hilfsmitte). Was sagen alle eckige Knäuel? Die Stimmung ist heiterer als beim vorigen Bild, vielleicht auch ernst.“ Was sagt Kinder? „Es ist eine heilige Szene, es scheint, daß ein Knäuel sich schließt, halb ernst, aber der Ausgang nach der guten Seite wird erwartet.“ Nach Vorlegung der zwölf Steinzeichnungen: Welches Bild entspricht am meisten der Stimmung der Kinder? „Wenn der Mund aufgeht“, „Einjame Höhe“, „Pappeln im Sturm“, Entscheidung: „Pappeln im Sturm.“



Pappeln im Sturm. Von Gullas Kempmann.



Welche Stimmung zeigen die Kinder? Reagent A: „Vermutlich ist es eine Lambhaft, etwas störrisch. Vielleicht sind Kinder auf dem Bild.“ Nach Vorlegung der zwölf Steinzeichnungen: Welches Bild entspricht am meisten der Stimmung der Kinder? „Blütenpracht.“



Mimik des Süßes: Zucker.



Bitter: Blos.

Süß: Zucker.

Blütenpracht. Von Karl Biele.

Fig4. 1.1-4: Plates VIII, IX, XI, XIII from Rudolf Schulze, *Die Mimik der Kinder beim künstlerischen Genießen*, 1906. (Clockwise from top left) “Rumpelstilzchen,” “Christus der Gekreuzigte,” “Blütenpracht,” and “Pappeln in Sturm.”



Fig. 1.5: Plate XIV from *Die Mimik der Kinder beim künstlerischen Genießen*, showing permutations of pleasure, displeasure, arousal, and repose.

Schulze, who was also the director of the *Institut für experimentelle Pädagogik und Psychologie* (Institute for Experimental Pedagogy and Psychology) in Leipzig, drew several conclusions from this experiment. First of all, the forms and colors of the pictures seemed to produce an immediate, emotional effect on the children—an effect which manifested itself on their faces, hands, and even throughout their bodies. Schulze demonstrated the results of his analysis in a matrix of photographs: the richness of expression observed on the children's faces, he argued, was produced by the permutations of pleasure and displeasure, on the one hand, and of arousal and repose, on the other. (Fig. 1.5) For this reason, Schulze compared his own analysis with photographs taken by the French

physiologist Duchenne de Boulogne in the 1860s.² Duchenne's experiments had involved giving his subjects electrical shocks with the purpose of inducing facial and bodily expressions. (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2, bottom images)

Secondly, Schulze reported, there was not only a correspondence between the general atmosphere (*Stimmung*) of the pictures shown and the children's moods but also between the reaction of the adults and that of the children and the response of the children with respect to each other. For comparative purposes, Schulze had also carefully photographed the same girls' facial expressions as they consumed sweet, bitter, and sour foods, and the similarities between their reaction to a pleasant painting and a pleasant taste seemed to him to be unmistakable. (Fig. 1.6) Finally, Schulze suggested, this

² G.-B. Duchenne de Boulogne, *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine ou analyse électro-physiologique de l'expression des passions applicable à la pratique des arts plastiques* (Paris :Chez Ve Jules Renouard, 1862). translated by R. Andrew Cuthbertson as *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme, 1990).

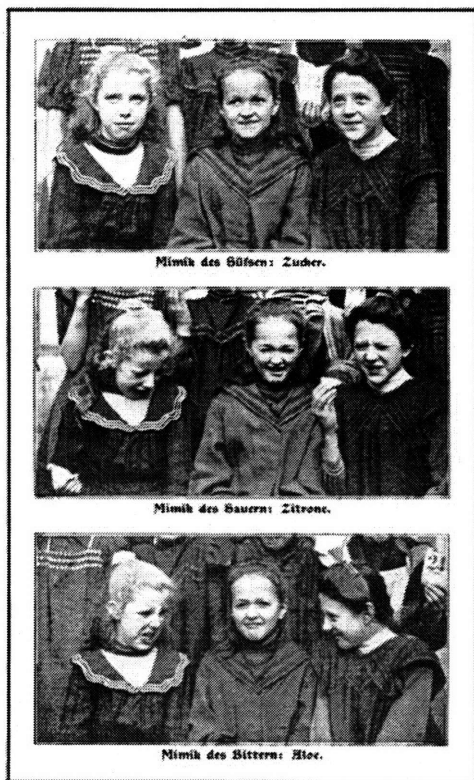


Fig. 1.6: Plate VII from *Die Mimik der Kinder beim künstlerischen Genießen* showing the children taste sugar, lemon, and aloe.

experiment refuted once and for all the argument that the so-called “lethargic masses” were incapable of displaying the attentiveness that was necessary for true art appreciation.³ Whereas attention would have been a problem in the classroom, the unmediated appeal of the pictures and the immediate reaction that they elicited made the children focus on the pictures without making it necessary to resort to traditional disciplinary measures.⁴

This unusual experiment was designed and carried out to provide evidence for the endeavors of the aforementioned Institute of Experimental Pedagogy and Psychology, by means of which teachers such as Schulze sought to reform the elementary school system of Imperial Germany.⁵

This system was socially stratified and rigidly hierarchical: the best education was reserved for the male children of the Protestant upper middle classes.⁶ At the *Gymnasien*, the prestigious secondary schools which prepared

³ Schulze, cited above, 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵ For the larger context of Schulze’s efforts, see Marjorie Lamberti, “Radical Schoolteachers and the Origins of the Progressive Education Movement in Germany, 1900-1914,” *History of Education Quarterly* 40.1 (Spring 2000): 22-48. Lamberti explains that the Institute for Experimental Pedagogy and Psychology was founded in Leipzig in 1906 by the Leipzig branch of the German Teacher’s Association (*Deutscher Lehrerverein*).

⁶ There were three types of high school for men in Wilhelmine Germany: *Gymnasien*, *Realgymnasien*, and *Oberrealschulen*. As explained above, the most prestigious of these was the *Gymnasien*, which prepared their students for the university with a curriculum loaded with history, literature, and Greek and Latin. *Oberrealschulen* were intended for those destined for more practical professions while the *Realgymnasium* offered an education that was a compromise between the two. Enrollment at the *Gymnasien* increased from 63,200 in 1873 to 103,000 in 1911; *Realgymnasien* doubled their enrollment to 48,100 in the same period while the less prestigious *Oberrealschulen* grew tenfold from 4,120 in 1882. This was still a very small percentage of the population. Those who had some form of high school education accounted for 0.4% of the population in 1870, for 2.7% in 1900 and for 3.2% in 1911. For these statistics see, Volker Rolf Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1918: Economy, Society, Culture and Politics* (New York: Berghahn, 2005) 85-86. On elementary and secondary schools in Imperial Germany, see Marjorie Lamberti, *State*,

students for the university and usually for civil service, students were indoctrinated with a neo-humanistic curriculum that was loaded with the study of history, literature, and classical languages such as Greek and Latin.⁷ In other words, the uniquely German concept of *Bildung*, which simultaneously connoted education, culture, and self-cultivation, did not only represent the ideals of personal growth and self-cultivation but also a particular neo-humanistic pedagogy and the institutions established in the early nineteenth century to preserve and perpetuate them.⁸ *Bildung* had never been meant for everyone: even those with a social conscience and a liberal mindset at the turn of the twentieth century would find the matrix of thought and language inherent in neo-humanistic pedagogy inappropriate for the lower echelons of society. The girls in Schulze's experiment—these “children of the people (*Volk*),” as Schulze called them—signaled another direction for the education of those not destined for a humanistic *Bildung*. Young, poor, and, it was implied, of the inferior sex, these girls might never be proficient in Latin, Greek, or even in their native German, but, as Schulze pointed out, they could still express themselves in subtle ways through the rich, non-verbal language of facial expressions, gestures, and postures.⁹ If even the most uncultured could demonstrate such a strong response to art, then there was reason to believe that the challenging task of educating the common folk would be best achieved through ‘aesthetic’ means.

Society, and the Elementary School in Imperial Germany (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); James Albisetti, Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and James Albisetti, Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁷ On the philhellenism of the institutions of *Bildung*, see the excellent study by Suzanne Marchand, Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁸ On the concept of *Bildung*, see Walter Horace Bruford, The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: Bildung from Humboldt to Thomas Mann (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Margaret Kraul, “Bildung und Bürgerlichkeit” in Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich, eds. Jürgen Kocka and Ute Frevert (Munich: DTV, 1988): 45-73; Georg Bollenbeck, Bildung und Kultur. Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters (Frankfurt: Insel, 1994); and Rudolf Vierhaus, “Bildung” in Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972-1974).

⁹ Note that Schulze preferred the word *Volk* over *Massen*.

However, the ‘aesthetic experience’ staged by Schulze and his colleagues was unlike the disinterested contemplation of the beautiful that a student at the all-male *Gymnasium* would be taught to exercise. Since the girls in the experiment were assumed to have no knowledge of art—neither about genres nor the symbolism employed—what produced the facial and bodily expressions, according to Schulze, could therefore not be the content of the pictures but their forms and colors. In the case of a landscape painting, Schulze explained, the expression of serene pleasure on the girls’ faces was the result of the artist’s decision to emphasize the horizontal by means of line and color. This forced the eye to move sideways and grasp the broadness of the landscape, albeit, unwittingly.¹⁰ This process was purely physiological: it was a fundamental rule in the theory of affects, Schulze argued, that any change in the innervation of a muscle manifested itself as a change in expression.¹¹ The relationship between forms and the body, in other words, was imagined to be direct, mechanical, determined by the physiological structure of the body, and unmediated by higher mental faculties. What the children felt as aesthetic pleasure or displeasure was not an intellectual understanding of beauty made concrete in a picture, but simply the self-enjoyment that they felt in their bodies. As such, Schulze suggested, the experience of viewing the pictures was not at all different from the experience of tasting sugar, lemon, or aloe: they could be enjoyed not only by those who had been educated to engage in the right kind of attentive perception but by anyone who had a body.

This unusual and innovative experiment encapsulates many of the elements of the historical phenomenon that I will be examining in this dissertation. Starting in the 1870s, the nature of aesthetic experience emerged as a topic of debate among the educated middle classes (*Bildungsbürgertum*) of the newly unified Germany.¹²

¹⁰ Schulze, cited above, 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² Here I will accept and use the term *Bildungsbürgertum*, which was coined in the 1920s and is today frequently used by historians of modern Germany. This term denotes a subsection of the German bourgeoisie, defined, above all, by their academic training. Professors, pastors, teachers, artists, musicians, civil servants as well as professionals such as doctors, lawyers, justices, and engineers in Imperial Germany were members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. This was an urban, non-noble elite, which almost always came from Protestant backgrounds. The *Bildungsbürgertum* represented a very small fraction of the overall population: in 1871 only 0.5% of the population had an academic education; in 1900 this percentage increased to 0.9%, and in 1910 to 1.3%. See Rolf Berghahn, Imperial Germany, 1871-1918: Economy,



Fig. 1.7: A. Staehle “*Unerwartete Wirkung*” (Unexpected Effect) from *Fliegende Blätter* 89.2247 (1888) 66.

Aesthetics had always played a central role in the German humanistic tradition. From the philhellenistic writings of J. J. Winckelmann (1717-1768) to the ‘aesthetic education’ espoused by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), a carefully cultivated disinterested pleasure, purified from all sensual gratification and perfected through the appreciation of Classicism, was considered an indispensable part of *Bildung*.¹³ In the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, a competing version of aesthetic perception began to emerge. According to a growing number of artists, critics, museum officials, academics, and teachers, embodied experience was now to

become the central focus of aesthetics. Experience would then have to be re-defined as an instinctual and physiological response to forms. Viewed through the lens of this particular form of ‘aesthetic experientialism,’ an encounter with an artwork was a thoroughly corporeal occurrence, which had more to do with the physiological machinations of the body and less with the workings of the mind. As in Schulze’s experiment, artworks were imagined to impact the physiology of the human body in an immediate and forceful manner by means of effects (*Wirkungen*). The recipient of these effects was presumed to react by producing unconscious, automatic, and reflex-like reactions to the formal qualities of the work. A cartoon from 1888 titled “*Unerwartete Wirkung*” (Unexpected Effect) captured this idea of effect: “The new seascape by the artist Stormybird was so overpowering,” the caption announced, “that all the viewers

Society, Culture and Politics, 85-86. See the discussion in the next section about the *Sonderweg* thesis and the role of the bourgeoisie in Germany’s modern history.

¹³ Schiller, disillusioned by the outcome of the French revolution, argued that an “aesthetic education” was the best means of preparing man for the ideal social and moral order. When considering the pedagogical significance of aesthetics in Germany, one should add to canonized texts such as Winckelmann’s *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764) and Schiller’s *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen—in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1795) the adamantly anti-modernist text by Julius Langbehn [Originally published under “Von einem Deutschen”], *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld, 1890).

became seasick.”¹⁴ (Fig. 1.7) The relationship thus imagined between forms and the body was neither haptic nor optical—to use the art historian Alois Riegl’s (1858-1905) contemporaneous terminology—but rather kinaesthetic. Forms were now understood to literally impress themselves on the musculature of the body while leaving the intellect unmoved.

This dissertation is the history of this seemingly self-evident idea: that forms produce an automatic, unconscious, and kinaesthetic response upon the physiology of the human body. In other words, the kinaesthetic model of experience that was central to Schulze’s experiment is also the protagonist of this history. In the first chapter, I begin by setting the discursive stage for the emergence at the end of the nineteenth century of a new aesthetic discourse, in which kinaesthesia had a crucial place. The boundaries of this discourse, which frequently described itself as an “aesthetics from below” (*Ästhetik von unten*), were never well-defined. The kinaesthetic model of experience was not invented within the confines of a single institution, discipline, or movement; rather it was an assumption implicitly shared by an overlapping set of discourses. As I will show in Chapter 1, the idea of kinaesthetic response was developed by the joint efforts of artists, architects, cultural critics, and academics from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. At a moment when the educated middle classes worried about the decline of *Bildung* and the intellectual hazards of new forms of mass consumption, this new discourse promised to anchor aesthetics in ordinary, lived experience. In the remaining chapters I examine three different cases in which re-formulations of aesthetic experience played a crucial role. Chapter 2 is devoted to the endeavors of the artist Hermann Obrist (1863-1927), whose idea of the ‘kinaesthetic sketch,’ purportedly prompted by occult visions, became the foundation of his idiosyncratic pedagogy of art, which defined art’s task as the production and reception of effects (*Wirkungen*). In Chapter 3, I examine how the architect August Endell (1871-1925) theorized these effects further and attempted to invent an exact science to correlate form—particularly architectural form—to the kinaesthetic response that it would produce in the human body. Finally, I turn to the late-

¹⁴ Cartoon by A. Staehle, “Unerwartete Wirkung,” *Fliegende Blätter* 89.2247 (1888) 66, reprinted in Beth Irwin Lewis, *Art For All? The Collision of Modern Art and the Public in Late-Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003) 149.

nineteenth century art historical discourse in Chapter 4. Here I look at how, under the guise of a controversy surrounding the Baroque, the incipient discipline of modern art history invented new techniques, such as the slide lecture, to come to terms with the nature of aesthetic experience in the age of mass culture and the so-called ‘mass university.’ Other cases could have been added to the ones examined here: the neo-Kantian philosopher Hans Cornelius’s (1863-1947) adamant defense of a pedagogy of art that was strictly visual, the innovative museum director Alfred Lichtwark’s (1852-1914) pedagogical efforts at the Hamburg Kunsthalle, the conflation of modern dance and modern architecture in the garden city of Hellerau near Dresden before WWI, or the pedagogy of the painter Adolf Hölzel (1853-1934), who instructed his students to begin each day with 1,000 accidental pencil strokes so as to “toughen up the muscles.”¹⁵

While most of the previous scholarship on the aesthetics of Imperial Germany has focused on the work of individual theorists, I understand the dense intellectual territory of this period as a discourse of intertwined theories and practices.¹⁶ German aesthetics at the turn of the twentieth century was remarkably rich not because a few ‘great minds’ produced ‘great ideas,’ but because an overwhelming number of intellectuals—some of them little known critics composing seemingly insignificant pieces in popular publications and others well-regarded professors writing multi-volume treatises—contributed to this complex discourse. In this sense, one could talk of a democratization

¹⁵ Adolf Hölzel, “Die Schule des Künstlers,” *Der Pelikan* 11 (1921) 8.

¹⁶ This is the approach adopted in two important books by Michael Podro *The Manifold in Perception: Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) and *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). The tendency to break down the aesthetic discourse of the period into the theoretical production of individuals continues in the more recent scholarship as well. See, for example, Hermann Drüe, “Die psychologische Ästhetik im deutschen Kaiserreich” in *Ideengeschichte und Kunstwissenschaft. Philosophie und die bildende Kunst im Kaiserreich*, eds. E. Mai, S. Waetzoldt, and G. Wolandt (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1983): 71-98; Christian G. Allesch, *Geschichte der psychologischen Ästhetik. Untersuchung zur historischen Entwicklung eines psychologischen Verständnisses ästhetischer Phänomene* (Göttingen, Toronto, and Zurich: C. J. Hogrefe, 1987); Christian G. Allesch, *Einführung in die psychologische Ästhetik* (Vienna: WUV, 2006); and Moshe Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1990-1998). The Getty translation of some of the most seminal texts from this period into English has made the discourse more accessible to a wider academic audience. See Harry Francis Mallgrave and Ikonomou, Eleftherios, eds., *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994). While these careful first-time translations are an invaluable contribution to scholarship, the book suffers from presenting the aesthetics of the period as the sum of discrete texts with little or no connection between them. The introduction to the volume written by Mallgrave and Eleftherios, while very erudite and thorough, does little to alleviate this problem.

of intellectual production that paralleled the democratization of aesthetic experience that I will be describing. What matters in this study at least as much as the content and inner consistency of these texts, then, is how that they connected to each and to other cultural practices as diverse as occultism, cinema, dance, or traveling lantern lectures. Such intertextuality, however, requires interdisciplinary habits in research, particularly because the aesthetic discourse under examination here evades easy disciplinary pigeonholing.¹⁷

One could argue, as a matter of fact, that the kinaesthetic model of experience itself was an interdisciplinary enterprise at the turn of the twentieth century. It is no coincidence that many of characters who play important roles in this text went through periods of indecision at the inception of their careers and turned to aesthetics as a means of resolving their disciplinary dilemmas. Endell studied mathematics and philosophy before becoming a designer; Obrist gave up his medical studies and a formal art education on the eve of turning to Kunstgewerbe; Wölfflin similarly wavered between cultural history and philosophy before he settled on a particular kind of art history that was informed by aesthetic questions. This was a period when the boundaries of disciplines were being intensely debated and re-negotiated. As Endell's efforts to invent a science of emotions as a new footing for the humanities will make clear, the discourse of the new aesthetics was devised to surpass existing structures of knowledge. Hence the appeals that aesthetics made to psychology at the end of the nineteenth century: psychology was seen at this historical moment not only as an increasingly autonomous discipline with unique methods and techniques but also as a potential propædeutic science (*Vorwissenschaft*), which would resolve the alarming gap between the natural sciences

¹⁷ Such intertextuality and interdisciplinarity are already hinted in the dated yet important essay by Ernst K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 17.3 (1959): 287-310. Works by three scholars have convincingly illustrated the necessity to situate late nineteenth-century debates about the body within larger questions of modernity. These texts remind us that a solid understanding of this history can be attained only by attending to the intricate links between an array of overlapping discourses in the nineteenth century. See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990) and *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); and Mark Jarzombek, "De-scribing the Language of Looking : Wölfflin and the History of Aesthetic Experientialism," *Assemblage* 23 (April 1994): 28-69 and *The Psychologizing of Modernity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). The term "aesthetic experientialism," has been used by Jarzombek.

(*Naturwissenschaften*) and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) by anchoring both in lived experience.¹⁸

This re-orientation in Germany toward an aesthetics of embodied experience was a subsection of a much larger modernist fascination with bodily movement in the West. A wide array of theories and practices at the turn of the twentieth century revealed a new-found obsession with the body's capacity to move: the modern dances of Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller, the bicycle craze, the anti-corset movement, modern theater's infatuation with pantomime, and the popular pastime of graphology among many others signaled a new corporeality. Friedrich Nietzsche's well-known essay *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (1874, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*) could be read as an eloquent elucidation of this cultural phenomenon: relentlessly critiquing modern man for his passivity, Nietzsche called for a culture of life that would serve as the antidote to nineteenth-century historicism.¹⁹ As historians have demonstrated recently, this modernist occupation with corporeality signaled a disenchantment with the rationalist ideals of the Enlightenment and a profound suspicion of the nineteenth century's intellectualism.²⁰ In an attempt to critique the epistemological

¹⁸ For a history of psychological knowledge, see the somewhat dated but still useful E. G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1950). More recent critical accounts are: Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Kurt Danziger, *Naming the Mind: How Psychology Found Its Language* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997); Mitchell G. Ash, *Gestalt Psychology in German Culture, 1890-1967. Holism and the Quest for Objectivity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Martin Kusch, *Psychological Knowledge: A Social History and Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); and Martin Kusch, *Psychologism: A Case Study in the Sociology of Philosophical Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen. Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1874). Translated by Peter Preuss as *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1980).

²⁰ See Harold B. Segel, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Mark Jarzombek, "The Body Ethos" in *The Psychologizing Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History*, cited above, 37-72; and Hillel Schwartz, "Torque: The New Kinaesthetic of the Twentieth Century" in *Incorporations*, eds. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone Books, 1992): 70-127. Martin Jay's account of the Western disenchantment with vision is also relevant in this history. See particularly the chapter "The Crisis of the Ancien Scopic Régime: From the Impressionists to Bergson" in *Downcast Eyes: the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993). For other accounts of the turn-of-the-century fascination with corporeality during this period, see Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1978); Stephen Kern, *Anatomy and Destiny: A Cultural History of the Human Body* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975); and Wolfgang Eichel, ed, *Geschichte der Körperkultur in Deutschland, 1789-1918* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1973).

authority of thought and language, many intellectuals turned to non-verbal forms of expression offered by the body. Facial expression, gestures, postures, and any movement of the body came to be understood at this historical moment as the source of an alternative kind of knowledge.²¹

What set the German aesthetic discourse that I am examining in this dissertation apart from the general European fascination with bodily movement at the turn of the century was an unmistakable pedagogical concern. As the aforementioned essay by Nietzsche made clear, the problem of a new corporeality in Imperial Germany was inextricably linked to issues of education and knowledge. The didactic possibilities of lived experience were brought up not only in the context of primary and secondary education, but also at the university and at specialized in art schools. This was a historical moment when the likes of the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952) and the Italian educator Maria Montessori (1870-1952) were laying the foundations of the so-called “progressive education movement,” which came to be known in Germany under the rubric of *neue Pädagogik* or *Reformpädagogik*.²² The movement took on different social meanings in different national settings, but its proponents everywhere would argue that lived experience was more effective pedagogically than rote learning. It is no wonder that kinaesthetic models of experience frequently coalesced with the theories and practices of the *neue Pädagogik* in Imperial Germany.

The nineteenth-century neo-humanistic conceptions of *Bildung* consistently served as the foil to the new aesthetics. The institutions of *Bildung*, the *Gymnasium* and the university, had been designed in the early nineteenth century to groom an elite, whose self-cultivation through scholarly immersion in classical texts was ultimately intended to produce dutiful civil servants. By contrast, advocates of the new aesthetics and the new

²¹ For an eloquent essay on how non-verbal expression was interpreted as language, see Felicia McCarren, “The ‘Symptomatic Act’ Circa 1900: Hysteria, Hypnosis, Electricity, Dance,” *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Summer 1995): 748-74.

²² See the volumes Detlef K. Müller, Fritz Ringer, and Brian Simon, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Educational System: Structural Change and Social Reproduction, 1870-1920* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Hermann Röhrs and Volker Lenhart, eds. *Die Reformpädagogik auf den Kontinenten. Ein Handbuch, Heidelberger Studien zur Erziehungswissenschaft*, v. 43 (Frankfurt am Main and New York: P. Lang, 1994). For an account of these ideas in art education, see Karl Kreuzer, *Jugendstil and Reformpädagogik* (Munich: Profil, 1988).



Fig. 1.8: Adolf Oberländer, "Understood" from *Fliegende Blätter* 89.2246 (1888) 58.

pedagogy frequently claimed that their efforts were for the benefit of the *Volk*. This, however, was an elusive idea: what was meant by *Volk* was not only the lower middle classes or the rapidly growing urban proletariat but rather anyone who did not belong to the circles of the *Bürgertum*.²³

The ideal subjects of these theories, as we will see, were the poor, the uneducated, children, women, and Catholics, to whom, it was assumed, kinaesthetic response came more naturally than to a Protestant middle-class man, whose attention and will had been reinforced by a solid neo-humanistic education.²⁴ Compare two cartoons

published in the popular magazine *Fliegende Blätter* on the occasion of the International Art Exhibition in Munich in 1888. (Figs. 1.8 and 1.9) The first one shows an upper-middle-class public exercising their faculty of judgment by examining the artworks with upright postures and serious expressions on their faces. (Fig. 1.8) The second one, by contrast, shows an imaginary cattle-farmer by the name of Sepp, who is overwhelmed by the impressions that he receives at the same exhibition. (Fig. 1.9) Unlike his bourgeois counterparts, who exercise a carefully cultivated detached attitude vis-à-vis the artworks, Sepp wants to touch the sculptures, derives pleasure from the sight of bulls, is emotionally affected by the artworks, and ultimately leaves the exhibition with his imagination having been thoroughly inundated by the impressions imprinted upon him.

This dissertation, then, is also the history of how the educated elites of Imperial Germany invented and employed an aesthetic discourse to shape what they perceived to be the 'vulgar experience' of the masses.²⁵ On the one hand, this project had an undeniably

²³ The language of class was consistently avoided by liberals for fear of being associated with Socialism.

²⁴ The Protestantism of the educated middle classes at this historical moment should be understood as *Kulturprotestantismus*, that is, a secularized version of Protestantism.

²⁵ How that "experience" might be construed from the perspective of the masses is a question that could be the topic of another dissertation. Such a perspective can be found in the book by Lynn Abrams, *Workers'*

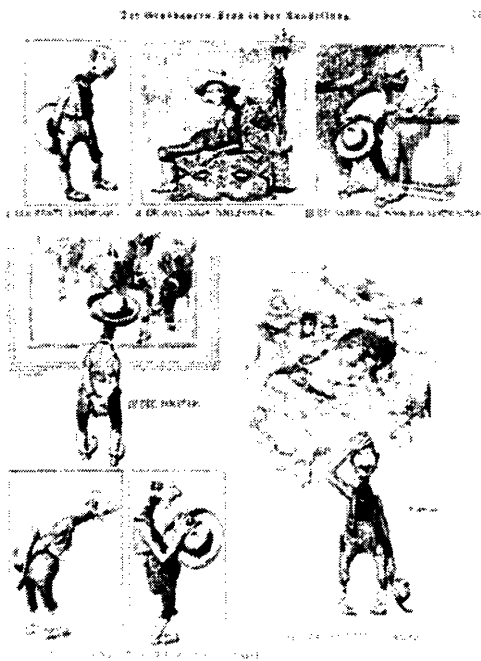


Fig. 1.9: Franz Stuck, “The Cattle-Farmer Sepp in the Art Exhibition” from *Fliegende Blätter* 89.2247 (1888) 71.

emancipatory side. Just as new fashions liberated women from the corset and modern dance freed the body from the predetermined positions of ballet, an aesthetics whose main concern was corporeal pleasure liberated its subjects from the strictures of an attentive beholding that was prescribed by idealist aesthetics. This meant that the ‘uncultured,’ previously not deemed capable of appreciating art, could now be allowed—at least in theory—to join the ranks of the educated middle-class public, who enjoyed the privileges of traveling to Italy, visiting museums, and buying reproductions of art.²⁶ On the other hand, as we

will see, this liberation would be accompanied by a new regime of discipline and new protocols for

producing and beholding art. The “aesthetics from below,” in other words, did not so much disregard the authority of the “aesthetics from above” of Idealism as do away with the question of authority altogether. This was the ingenuity of the kinaesthetic model of experience: theories and practices could be effortlessly ‘naturalized’ when every question could be referred to the physiology of the human body instead of being mediated by normative criteria.

Needless to say, the much theorized kinaesthetic response did not come about naturally but had to be meticulously constructed. Consider the elaborate setup in Schulze’s experiment that made the girls’ aesthetic experience possible. A complex arrangement of spectatorship was at work here: the girls undoubtedly enacted the expected responses not only for the benefit of their teachers and the camera but also for each other and for a crowd that gradually gathered outside the courtyard—as Schulze noted, a crowd with

Culture in Imperial Germany. Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

²⁶ For an account of the “simultaneous emergence of a new art and a new art-viewing public” in Imperial Germany, see Beth Irwin Lewis, *Art For All?* cited above.

characters of the kind found in every large city. This blatant theatricality was passed over quietly in the text, but what Schulze described as an immediate, corporeal, and private response to art could just as easily be characterized as a public performance. Given the pedagogical aspirations of Schulze and his colleagues, this performance was also a rehearsal for new teaching methods. Viewed as such, kinaesthetic response was undistinguishable from acquired habit. Note the children's restrained postures and repressed hand movements: if conventional education was predicated on the idea that discipline could be attained by the threat of punishment, the new pedagogy would choose to indoctrinate its subjects by the promise of sensual gratification.

Questions of Historiography:

Bourgeoisie, Politics, and Reform in Imperial Germany

What was the larger social context of these efforts to shape aesthetic experience at the turn of the twentieth century? Critical for this history was the politics of the nineteenth-century German bourgeoisie. Since the unification of a number of smaller German states under the leadership of the Prussian monarch in 1871, Germany experienced a remarkably rapid industrialization and urbanization, which soon enabled German capitalism to compete in international markets. Parallel to this unprecedented economic growth was a significant expansion of the middle classes—both of the so-called *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* of merchants, industrialists, bankers, managers, entrepreneurs, and capitalists and of the *Bildungsbürgertum* of academics, teachers, ministers, doctors, lawyers, state officials, and intellectuals, who prided themselves on their humanistic education. Liberalism had been an inseparable part of bourgeois identity since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the concept changed considerably in the course of the century. At its inception in the *Vormärz* days, bourgeois liberalism was mixed with nationalistic fervor; even though these liberals might reject universal suffrage, they argued passionately for constitutionalism and for terminating feudal privileges—if not the monarchical system. A more radical strain of liberalism supported by the lower classes

emerged during and after the revolutions of 1848/49, but on the eve of the German unification liberalism had already split into nationalistic and left-wing branches.²⁷

What the ever-expanding German middle classes did with the liberal virtues of reason, autonomy, freedom, and *Bildung* in the period after 1871 has been the topic of much debate among historians of modern Germany. Evidence for the relative liberalism or illiberalism of the middle classes in Imperial Germany has been marshaled to make arguments for and against the so-called *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis. According to this theory of German exceptionalism, Wilhelmine Germany's authoritarian statism, the unprecedented speed at which it was industrialized, its colossal bureaucracy, and—despite all its modernity—its desire to adhere to a pre-industrial, organic, and inherently German *Kultur* (as opposed to a *Zivilisation* that was deemed to be mechanical, alienating, and foreign) put it on a historical trajectory that could only end in the catastrophe of the Third Reich. The middle classes which laid claim to the legacy of the Enlightenment, according to a variation of the *Sonderweg* theory, did little to resist the authority of the Kaiser. The *Sonderweg* thesis has thus haunted the historiography of Imperial Germany since the 1960s, making the period between 1871 and 1918 a mere precursor to the rise of fascism in the 1930s.

The first theories of German exceptionalism were proposed during the Wilhelmine period by proud German nationalists and unsympathetic foreign observers. However, two world wars and a holocaust later when another generation of historians revisited the history of Imperial Germany, this original *Sonderweg* thesis had to be turned on its head. In the 1960s émigré intellectuals such as Fritz Stern (b. 1926) and George Mosse (1918-1999), motivated by a desire to explain why National Socialism had arisen in Germany and not in England and France, identified the ideological roots of the “Final Solution” in the Wilhelmine “politics of cultural despair.”²⁸ One could then construct an arc leading from

²⁷ A reliable history of Imperial Germany is the survey by David Blackbourn, *History of Germany, 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, [1997] 2003).

²⁸ For influential accounts by German émigré historians, see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California: 1961) and George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964). An article recently appeared in the *London Review of Books*, the latter part of which discusses the differences between the German émigré historians in the United States. See Thomas Laqueur, “Lectures

Bismarck to Hitler and from the authoritarianism of Imperial Germany to the fascism of National Socialism. Stern and Mosse were soon joined by their colleagues in West Germany, where the legacy of National Socialism was becoming part of a public debate for the first time since the end of the war. Equipped with Max Weber's theory about the "feudalization of bourgeoisie," these German historians elaborated a 'critical' version of the *Sonderweg* thesis.²⁹ Despite the significant differences between their positions, they ultimately helped create what was soon to become the standard explanation of the emergence of National Socialism. Germany was a "*verspätete Nation*," which arrived on the scene of modernity too late: not only did it become a nation-state much later than its European counterparts, according to this account, but it also stubbornly retained elements from its pre-industrial past, all the while undergoing a rapid industrialization.³⁰

National Socialism, in other words, was assumed to have been caused by the asynchronism of political, economic, and cultural spheres in the period leading to 1933. The co-existence of backward feudal elements with progressive modern ones, many historians of the *Sonderweg* thesis agreed, created tensions which stood in the way of a liberal democracy. Others with faith in liberal economics considered it problematic that the state rather than the bourgeoisie had laid the foundations of modern capitalism in Imperial Germany. By this account, the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie failed for several reasons: by not having carried out a successful bourgeois revolution as in France, by submitting to an authoritarian state too easily, and by trying to mimic a declining aristocracy instead of understanding and embracing their own middle-class values—in short for not adhering to liberal Enlightenment values. There was, of course, no shortage of historical evidence for the middle classes' complicity with the Prussian state. In

about Heaven" [Review of Fritz Stern's *Five Germanys I Have Known*] *London Review of Books* 29.11 (June 7, 2007): 3-8.

²⁹ Influential theorists of the *Sonderweg* thesis in Germany were Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation. Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973); Hans Rosenberg, "Die Pseudodemokratisierung der Rittergutsbesitzerklass" in *Machteliten und Wirtschaftskonjunktoren. Studien zur neueren deutschen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978): 83-101; and Fritz Fischer, *Bündnis der Eliten. Zur Kontinuität der Machtstrukturen in Deutschland 1871-1945* (Düsseldorf, Droste, 1979).

³⁰ For a good summary of the *Sonderweg* debate, see Jürgen Kocka, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*," *History and Theory* 38.1 (February 1999): 40-50.

1870s, for example, the liberal bourgeoisie unconditionally threw their support behind the *Kulturkampf* of the chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who had never hidden his scorn for parliamentary democracy. It was with the middle classes' approval and under the banner of progress and national unity, it has been pointed out, that Bismarck waged war first against the Catholic minority of the country and then, in the 1880s, turned his attacks toward the Socialists. Wilhelmine liberalism remained weak and prone to the onslaught of authoritarianism, so the *Sonderweg* argument went, because the bourgeoisie who was supposed to propagate it could not understand their own modernity.

It was not until the 1980s—when economic liberalism held sway in many Western countries—that historians started challenging the teleology of German exceptionalism. However, this first required severing the assumed ties between liberal capitalism and bourgeois democracy. The German historian Thomas Nipperdey and the British historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley argued that the German bourgeoisie at the turn of the twentieth century were no less powerful than their European counterparts and were also not unique in their complicity with an essentially undemocratic state.³¹ Over against the *Sonderweg* historians for whom the absence of a bourgeois revolution placed German history on a special path to fascism, Blackbourn and Eley argued that Germany in fact experienced a “silent bourgeois revolution” in the nineteenth century, a revolution that manifested itself not in the bourgeoisie's participation in the highest levels of politics but rather in their activities in civic life, voluntary societies, and local politics.³² The implication was that if there were any connections between National Socialism and the Wilhelmine era, they would have to be traced back to a tradition of bourgeois liberalism and not explained away as illiberalism. This was a critical turn in the scholarship of

³¹ Historians who challenged the *Sonderweg* thesis were as follows: Thomas Nipperdey, “Wehlers ‘Kaiserreich’. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung” in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976): 360-389; Thomas Nipperdey, “1933 und die Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 227 (1978): 86-111; David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1980), revised and translated as *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University, 1984); Geoff Eley, “Is There a History of the *Kaiserreich*?” in *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); and Geoff Eley and James Retallack, eds., *Wilhelminism and its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

³² Blackbourn and Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History*, cited above, 176-205.

Imperial Germany and unleashed a new interest in the nineteenth-century German bourgeoisie.³³ By the time the *Sonderweg* debate was over in the 1990s, a new kind of scholarship on Imperial Germany had emerged: a young generation of scholars painted a more complex picture of what was previously seen as the monolith of Imperial Germany by raising issues of gender, religion, ethnicity, locality and by tackling hitherto unknown aspects of the social life of the period.³⁴

Particularly important in these re-evaluations of Imperial Germany was the role that liberal reform played at the turn of the century. Several historians have called attention to how an authoritarian state with a colossal bureaucracy coexisted with numerous reform movements in Imperial Germany.³⁵ These reform movements rarely proposed to change Germany's political and social system in any radical way, but often promised an elusive "third way" outside of capitalism and Marxism. Usually originating from Protestant, urban, and bourgeois circles (and rarely from the marginalized Catholic or Social Democratic sub-cultures), Wilhelmine reformers sought to promote a much hyperbolized idea of 'life.' From the physical environment (*Heimatschutz* or *Denkmalpflege*) to self-grooming (*Kleidungsreformbewegung*), from women's rights (*Frauenbewegung*) to

³³ See, for example, the results of the Bielefeld *Bürgertum* research project under Jürgen Kocka in Werner Conze and Jürgen Kocka, eds. *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985-1992). Also see David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans, eds. *The German Bourgeoisie: Essay on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

³⁴ A few examples of the more recent scholarship can be listed as follows: Andrew Bonnell, *The People's Stage in Imperial Germany: Social Democracy and Culture 1890-1914* (London and New York: Academic Studies, 2005); Dorothy Rowe, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); Andrew Lees, *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002); Derek S. Linton, *Who has the Youth has the Future: The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³⁵ See Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen* (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1998). For the concept of reform in the German context, see Martin Greiffenhagen, ed., *Zur Theorie der Reform. Entwürfe und Strategien* (Heidelberg and Karlsruhe: C. F. Müller, 1978) and especially the essay in this volume by Greiffenhagen, "Überlegungen zum Reformbegriff," 7-34. Also see Thomas Nipperdey, "War die Wilhelminische Gesellschaft eine Untertanen-Gesellschaft?" in *Nachdenken über die deutsche Geschichte: Essays* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988); Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Bürgerliche Sozialreform im deutschen Kaiserreich," in *Weder Kommunismus noch Kapitalismus: Bürgerliche Sozialreform in Deutschland vom Vormärz bis zur Ära Adenauer*, ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1985): 61-179; and Andrew Lees, "State and Society" in *Imperial Germany: A Historiographical Companion*, ed. Roger Chickering (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996): 215-237.

education (*Kunsterziehungsbewegung*, *Volksbildungsbewegung*), from art (*Dürerbund*, *Kunstgewerbebewegung*) to housing (*Gartenstadtbewegung*, *Siedlungsbewegung*) there was no aspect of society that escaped the reformers' attention. However, the implications of 'reform' should not mislead us about the underlying ideology of these endeavors: if the social criticism exercised by liberalism challenged the conservative political climate of Wilhelmine Germany, it also helped to sustain it.³⁶ As historians who have challenged the *Sonderweg* theory have demonstrated, studying Prussian militarism, state authoritarianism, and other illiberal 'Wilhelminisms' are not enough to address the political climate of Imperial Germany; it is necessary to turn to its more 'liberal' aspects—its seeming commitment to the Enlightenment values of reason, autonomy, and equality—to understand the full extent of its uniquely conservative political project.³⁷

This dissertation hopes to contribute to the recent scholarship on modern Germany by tackling the central questions of liberalism, reform, and bourgeois politics but from an unlikely point of view: that of 'aesthetic experience.'³⁸ The political ambition underlying

³⁶ Reform was a strategy approved by the institutions of the State. It needs to be remembered that many welfare measures were introduced by Bismarck.

³⁷ This conclusion should have been particularly relevant to art historians and cultural historians, but two decades after the *Sonderweg* debate has been laid to rest in the discipline of history, the specter of the 'asynchronism theory' still haunts cultural history. Consider the recent book by Beth Irwin Lewis, *Art for All? The Collision of Modern Art and the Public in Late-Nineteenth Century Germany*, cited above. Richly illustrated and elegantly argued, the book portrays the complexity of the artistic landscape of Imperial Germany by examining the art market, exhibitions, critics, and the "shadowy presence" of the public. However, Lewis's desire to understand the Wilhelmine educated middle classes' increasing disillusionment with the public as a rehearsal of the purported alienation of the modernist artist from an uncomprehending public in the twentieth century only rehearses the worn-out dichotomy between "tradition and modernity." According to Lewis, the modernist "collision" in the title of the book was essentially between a public, which refused to understand its modernity, and a modernist (understood abstract) art, which was snubbed precisely because it understood the modern condition too well. In Lewis's account modern art eventually triumphs, but Germany's failure to synchronize its modernism to its modernity has dire consequences: what was seemingly an undercurrent of xenophobia in the Wilhelmine period, Lewis argues, was transformed into a venomous rhetoric of full-fledged anti-Semitism in the subsequent decades, paving the way for National Socialism.

³⁸ The orthodox historiography of the art and architecture of Imperial Germany can be said to have followed the *Sonderweg* theory. The Marxist historians Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, for example, have argued that the aesthetic culture of this period was complicit with Germany's growing industrial capitalism. However, in doing this, they choose to dismiss Art Nouveau and Jugendstil as a "negative prologue" to modern architecture and instead turn their attention to the German Werkbund, whose explicitly nationalistic rhetoric makes it an easy target. See Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, "Introduction," *Modern Architecture*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (Milano and New York: Electa and Rizzoli, [1976] 1986), 7-8 and Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thought: German Architecture Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Rizzoli, [1982] 1990). A similar emphasis on architectural culture's relationship to nationalism and imperialism is the main thrust in Mitchell Schwarzer, *German*

the seemingly apolitical project of shaping aesthetic experience at the turn of the twentieth century should not be underestimated. I will argue that by concocting a new aesthetic discourse that was centered on bodily experience and inventing techniques and practices to accompany it, Wilhelmine educated elites sought to re-configure the dominant nineteenth-century model of the self and its capacity for experience. This understanding of the self, which I will describe at length in the next section, had been theorized by Idealism and Romanticism and preserved by the elitist institutions of *Bildung* throughout the nineteenth century. It was not only the basis of the identity and subjectivity of the *Bildungsbürgertum*—ideally, an educated, middle-class, Protestant male—but also the blueprint for education, citizenship, and even private life. When the political pressure of the masses—a growing urban proletariat, women becoming more visible in the workforce, lower middle classes gaining access to higher education, new forms of mass consumption and entertainment—became a tangible force at the end of the century, the model of the self generated by *Bildung* failed to accommodate those groups and ultimately proved inadequate to the task of shaping modern society. The task of developing alternatives was carried out not by state institutions, which, as the case of Kaiser Wilhelm II amply illustrates, stubbornly held on to obsolete cultural ideals, but rather from the liberal-minded bourgeoisie of Imperial Germany. The kinaesthetic model of experience that I will be examining here was one of the ways in which the educated elites developed new models for a modern self and the kinds of experience that it would make possible. Just as the neo-classicist aesthetics of Winckelmann had been used to indoctrinate generations of young men in *Bürgertum* in the nineteenth century, the new aesthetics of kinaesthesia would become a training ground for modern selfhood at the turn of the twentieth century.

Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). A more subtle account that anchors the artistic culture of the period in the institutions of Imperial Germany is to be found in the recent book by John V. Maciuika, Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890-1919 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). While I admire these accounts of the aesthetic culture of Imperial Germany and have benefited greatly from them, I am convinced that it is also necessary to turn to more ‘liberal’ discourses such as aesthetic experientialism to understand the full political project of Wilhelmine aesthetics and to grasp its particular kind of conservatism.

Self and Experience as Historical Objects

In her fascinating study of how a “unitary” model of the self was adopted in post-revolutionary France to replace the “flimsy and fragmented self of sensationalism,” the historian Jan Goldstein recounts an unusual confrontation between French and German philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁹ In 1798 Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), linguist, philosopher, and future Prussian minister of education, was invited by the sensationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1767-1836) to visit Paris. After spending a day at a symposium on metaphysics with a group of French philosophers, Humboldt was frustrated: he and his French colleagues had simply failed to understand each other, he complained in a letter to his friend Friedrich Schiller. “[The French] have no idea, not even the slightest inkling of anything other than appearance,” Humboldt wrote, “pure volition, the true good, the *moi*, pure self-consciousness—all this is totally incomprehensible to them.”⁴⁰ For Humboldt, it was only logical that the self be at the center of philosophy: “German metaphysics is nothing but a perfect development of the actions of what we call our *moi*,” he explained.⁴¹ However, his French colleagues, entrenched in the sensationalistic philosophy of Condillac, simply rejected Humboldt’s self-centered view of the world, insisting instead on the “total passivity of the mind in the production of representations.”⁴²

What makes Goldstein’s study compelling is that she demonstrates how concepts as elusive as ‘self’ and ‘experience’ can be made into salient objects of historical study.⁴³

³⁹ Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Similar arguments can be found in Jan Goldstein, “Mutations of the Self in Old Regime and Postrevolutionary France” in *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, ed. Lorraine Daston (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 86-116; and Jan Goldstein, “Foucault and the Post-Revolutionary Self: The Uses of Cousinian Pedagogy in Nineteenth-Century France” in *Foucault and the Writing of History*, ed. Jan Goldstein (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999): 99-115. I am also much indebted to colloquium discussions at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin for my understanding of different models of self. Particularly insightful was Lorraine Daston’s presentation of her forthcoming book: Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

⁴⁰ Humboldt cited in Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self*, cited above, 127.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ An important account of “subject” and “person” is offered in the famous lecture by Marcel Mauss, “A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person; the Notion of Self” [1938], trans. W. D. Halls in *The Category of the Person. Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, eds. Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and

The dramatic encounter between a philosopher of German idealism and a philosopher of French sensationalism is relevant here for two reasons. First of all, it provides us a glimpse into the workings of the nineteenth-century self, which the Prussian state constructed through the institutions of *Bildung*. Humboldt, after all, was directly involved with the institutionalization of this particular model of the self: between 1809-1810, during his short tenure at the Prussian ministry of interior, Humboldt not only reshaped elementary and secondary education in Germany but also established the University of Berlin as an exemplary institution of higher learning that combined research and teaching.⁴⁴ Secondly, Goldstein's analysis shows that theories of the self were not abstract problems, whose relevancy was confined to rarefied intellectual discourses, but served as tangible models for shaping society. As the rest of Goldstein's book makes clear, the *moi*, whose philosophical importance Humboldt failed to explain to his sensationalist colleagues in 1798, had already acquired a central position in French educational institutions by the 1830s. Blaming the failures of the revolution on Condillac's philosophy, a group of French intellectuals—most importantly Victor Cousin, who would exercise much influence over French education in the nineteenth century—would import ideas from German idealist philosophy and implant them in their policies in France. This new *moi*—a robust, unitary, and active self—would lay the foundations of what Goldstein calls the post-revolutionary bourgeois order.

What was the “unitary model of the self,” which had such a successful life at both French and German educational institutions in the nineteenth century, and why was it seen to be

Steven Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 1-25. Also see Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self” and “The Political Technology of Individuals” in Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988): 16-49, 145-162; Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress,” in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 340-372; and philosopher Pierre Hadot's response to Foucault's take on the techniques of the self in Pierre Hadot, “Reflections on the Idea of the ‘Cultivation of the Self,’” in Philosophy as a Way of Life, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995): 206-213. For other histories of the self see Charles Taylor, Sources of Self: The Making of the Modern Identity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) and the recent and very useful Jerrold E. Seigel, The Idea of Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴⁴ On Humboldt's influence on German education and *Bildung*, see David Sorkin, “Wilhelm von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (*Bildung*), 1791-1810,” Journal of the History of

so different from its eighteenth-century counterparts?⁴⁵ The unitary self, according to Goldstein, avoided a problem that was inherent in Locke's empiricism and became only more pronounced in Condillac's sensationalism: lack of coherence and continuity. The empiricist tradition envisioned the mental faculties as a loose bundle held together by memory and association. Experience, according to empiricism, was the indiscriminate registering of discrete sensory impressions as if on a wax tablet. Without the linkage of memory, Condillac reasoned, "I would so to speak begin a new life each day, and no one could convince me that today's *moi* was the *moi* of the day before."⁴⁶ This passive and fragmented self, Goldstein argues, became problematic in the chaotic political environment of early nineteenth century: if there was nothing guaranteeing the persistence of the self through time and space, ideas such as private property and moral responsibility, essential to the functioning of a bourgeois society, became questionable. It was feared that the empiricist self, constantly made and re-made through arbitrarily received sensations, would result in an anarchical, lawless, and atheist society. Contrast the empiricist self with that described by the experimental psychologist Wilhelm Wundt in 1863:

...we tend to include under the term 'self' the *whole circle of effects* which have their causes in former experiences. The 'self' is regarded as a *total force*, which determines particular events as they happen, unless of course, they are occasioned by the action of external impressions or of those internal processes which we experience just as passively as we do the external. And since the principal effect of the preconditions of consciousness is the determination of the appearance and degree of clearness of ideas, we further bring the 'self' into the very closest connection with the process of apperception. The self is the subject which we supply for the apperceptive activity.... The self is both the cause and the effect.... the self is a product of two things—external perception and

Ideas 44.1 (Jan. 1983): 55-73 and Clemens Menze, Die Bildungsreform Wilhelm von Humboldts (Hanover: Schroedel, 1975).

⁴⁵ Compare this transformation to the one described by the literary critic M. H. Abrams. In the influential book The Mirror and the Lamp, Abrams argued that the transition to Romanticism was marked by a change from imitation to expression as ideals in art. This, according to Abrams, corresponded to the models of the mirror and the fountain—and eventually the lamp. Romanticism began to imagine the mind as "projecting" things as opposed to "reflecting" them. This projective self resembles the unitary self that I discuss here. See M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953).

⁴⁶ Condillac cited in Goldstein, "Mutations of the Self," cited above, 95.

internal experience; it is the body, together with the mental processes connected with it. Later on reflection destroys this unity; but even then there remains some faint trace of that object-idea which attached to the self of sense. And where the current view of life is the practical one, with its naïve sense-reference, the body takes its place unquestioned as an inexpugnable constituent of the self.⁴⁷

The self described by Wundt had a very particularly architectonic: an inner nucleus of consciousness surrounded by rings of increasingly less conscious—but not unconscious—sensations. Will and attention had crucial roles to play in this model; the subject selectively brought the raw data of the world from the darker outer rings into the illuminated center of consciousness. “Notice that the relation of clear to obscure ideas,” Wundt wrote “furnishes an obvious analogy to that of objects distinctly or indistinctly seen in the field of vision.”⁴⁸ This process, which was manifested most clearly in the workings of human vision, was called apperception. The self theorized by Wundt, then, was fundamentally a knowing subject, and apperception was essential to the construction of his knowledge. In this model, experience was not just any sensation striking the sense organs, but those apperceived by a conscious mind and filtered through the Kantian a priori categories of time, space, and causality. The post-Kantian self, in short, was active, unitary, indivisible, and possessed a strong will, which manifested itself, above all, in the subject’s ability to focus his attention.⁴⁹ This self had already reached its apogee in German Idealism and Romanticism. According to Fichte, for instance, the ego was a

⁴⁷ Wilhelm Wundt, Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology, trans. J. E. Creighton and E. B. Titchener (London and New York: Swan Sonnenschein and Macmillan, [1863] 1907) 250-51.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁴⁹ The relationship between Protestantism and the nineteenth-century unitary self also needs to be taken into account here. Idealism’s links to theology have been well established. Historians have also made the argument that the particular kind of Bible-reading encouraged by Lutheranism resulted in the ‘inwardness’ that was frequently identified with a particularly German understanding of the self. See Seigel, The Idea of Self, cited above, 301. According to Edward Reed, “...psychology succeeded in becoming a science in large part because of its defense of a theological conception of human nature typically associated with liberal Protestant theology. In this conception of human nature, genuine evil and irrationality are considered to be external to the core self. Within science the defense of this position involved a strategic retreat: the earlier Galenic concept of the soul as a balance of the attributes of personality was abandoned, to be replaced not by Descartes’s opposition between mind and body, but by a new dualism consisting of conscious mind (the true self) and unconscious mind (affected by forces ‘outside’ the soul, including the body).” Edward S. Reed, From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology from Erasmus Darwin to William James (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) 7. On the relationship between the university and Protestant theology, see the recent study by Thomas Albert Howard, Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University (Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

self-constitutive principle which did not only posit itself but then proceeded to posit the non-ego—that is, the world—opposed to itself. The ego, in other words, was the means through which the whole world was apprehended.⁵⁰

It was this particular model of the self which was challenged on several fronts at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵¹ On the eve of Freud's theorization of the unconscious, the new aesthetic discourse analyzed here participated in the project of dismantling the unitary self of *Bildung* by bringing the 'unconscious' capacities of the body to the foreground. The unconscious in all its permutations—dreams, hallucinations, somnambulism, hypnosis, etc.—had occupied an uneasy position both in eighteenth and nineteenth-century models of the self. Accepting the unconscious as an integral part of the workings of the mind would be paramount to questioning the sovereignty of an active, unitary, and will-centered self. Wundt, as we have seen above, deferred the problem by defining the unconscious as that which had not yet been made conscious. Hence, the unconscious was frequently pathologized, marginalized, and used to portray women or the mentally ill.⁵²

It is no coincidence that the kinaesthetic model of experience was theorized at first as the experience of a similarly marginalized group: as the chapter on Obrist should make clear, it was assumed that women, children, Catholics, or those in a state of hypnotism or trance demonstrated an instinctual and corporeal sensitivity to forms, of which a male member of the educated middle class would be incapable. Obrist himself presented a particularly interesting case, which I will explain in terms of the contemporaneous theory of double-consciousness (*doppel-Ich*). Coming from an aristocratic family and having grown up in Weimar, the "cultural capital" of Germany, surrounded by literature, music, and the sciences, Obrist was intimately familiar with the values of nineteenth-century *Bildung*.

⁵⁰ On the self theorized by Fichte, see the chapter "The Ego and the World: Fichte, Novalis, and Schelling" in Seigel, *The Idea of Self*, cited above, 361-390.

⁵¹ This is not to say that this model was never challenged or rivaled by others before: the materialism debate at mid-century, the efforts of the so-called "reductionists", including Emil du Bois-Reymond, Rudolf Virchow, and Hermann von Helmholtz to graft a kind of empiricism onto German idealism, or the attempts within the incipient discipline of psychology to define introspection and self-observation can all be read as endeavors in that direction. I will discuss these in more detail in the next chapter.

⁵² See, for example, Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

Yet it was an equally important part of his carefully constructed identity as an artist and a pedagogue that he had never received any formal education. He was, in other words, simultaneously an insider and an outsider to the self of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a position which must have facilitated his aspirations to found a school that would challenge conventional forms of education.

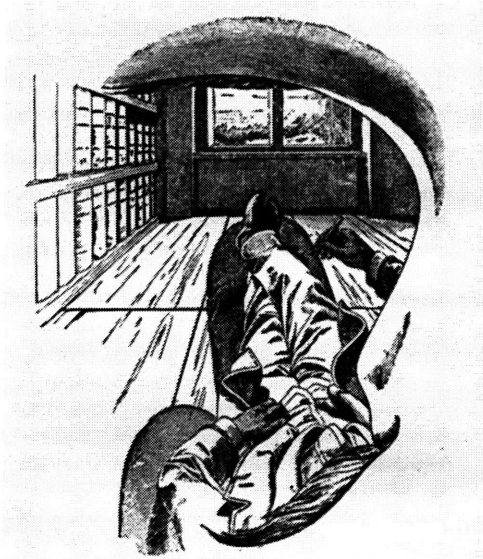


Fig. 1.10: Drawing from Ernst Mach, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen*, 1886.

Some of the characteristics of the eighteenth-century empiricist self reappeared at the turn of the twentieth century. One obvious instance was the notion of the “unsalvageable ego,” developed by the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach. In his influential book *Die Analyse der Empfindungen* (1886, *Analysis of Sensations*), Mach described a self which possessed no special apparatus for apperceiving the random sensations that crowded upon the perceiver.⁵³ The world, according to Mach, was made up of elementary sensations of colors, forms, and sounds floating freely within time and space; relatively coherent constellations of these sensations presented themselves as

permanent objects. The self was equally ephemeral: “The apparent permanency of the ego consists chiefly in the fact of its *continuity* and in the slowness of its changes,” Mach wrote.⁵⁴ Just as in empiricist and sensationalist precedents, the illusion of continuity was created for Mach by memory and habits. Only in dreams where “the ego can be very indistinct, doubled, or entirely wanting,” could one catch a glimpse of the protean nature of one’s existence.⁵⁵ Mach also provided a provocative drawing of this unsalvageable

⁵³ Ernst Mach, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (Jena: G. Fischer, 1886), translated by C. M. Williams as *Contributions to The Analysis of the Sensations* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1897).

⁵⁴ Mach, *The Analysis of the Sensations*, cited above, 3n1. According to Judith Ryan, the Machian model proved to be extremely influential in modern literature. See Judith Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁵⁵ Mach, *The Analysis of the Sensations*, cited above, 4n1. Consider the fascinating passages in this footnote: “Once, when a young man, I espied in the street the profile of a face that was very displeasing and

self. (Fig. 1.10) Drawn from the hypothetical perspective of his left eye and framed by his nose and moustache, the image showed the rest of Mach's body reclining on a chair in his office with a pencil in hand. The customary separation between the subject and the world was absent here: there was a continuum not only between the self and the room but also between the room and the rest of the world seen through the window. Mach explained this modern self as follows:

The ego can be so extended as ultimately to embrace the entire world. The ego is not sharply marked off, its limits are very indefinite and arbitrarily displaceable. Only by failing to observe this fact, and by unconsciously narrowing those limits, while at the same time, we enlarge them, arise, in the conflict of points of view, the metaphysical difficulties met with in this connexion.⁵⁶

The terminology of the kinaesthetic model of experience revealed a similar empiricist bias: sensations (*Empfindungen*), feelings (*Gefühle*), impressions (*Eindrücke*), dispositions (*Stimmungen*), and, above all, effects (*Wirkungen*) permeated this discourse. These effects were not processed by an unitary, indivisible, and will-centered self but were imagined to imprint themselves immediately on the recipient's body. Given that the subject in question was assumed to be without the requisite *Bildung*, theorists of kinaesthesia insisted on the immediacy of kinaesthetic response: there was no longer any trace of the 'reflection' or 'association' found in empiricist theories. As we will see, experience in the discourse of kinaesthesia was neither an indiscriminate registering nor a careful filtering of sensations; instead experience was theorized as the 'enjoyment' (*Genuß*) of the immediate effect felt in the body's musculature—as varying degrees of pleasure or displeasure, strain or relaxation, and stimulation or lack thereof. Kinaesthesia, understood as a uniquely corporeal self-consciousness of the body's sensations, was the only kind of reflection possible in this model of experience. As Endell's case will make clear, the idea of impressing the beholder with effects—as in the

repulsive to me. I was not a little taken aback when a moment afterwards I found that it was my own, which, in passing by a place where mirrors were sold, I had perceived reflected from two mirrors that were inclined at the proper angle to each other.... Not long ago, after a trying railway journey by night, and much fatigued, I got into an omnibus, just as another gentleman appeared at the other end. 'What degenerate pedagogue is that that has just entered,' I thought. It was myself: opposite me hung a large mirror. The physiognomy of my class, accordingly, was better known to me than my own."

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

proverbial wax tablet—assumed tangible form in the so-called relief-ornament favored by many Jugendstil artists.

Perhaps more important for our understanding of the history of modernism is how the new discourse of kinaesthesia started defining a self that was no longer autonomous and indivisible but was amenable to the influence of its environment. Imagine Fichte's ego: such mutability was alien to the nineteenth-century unitary self, which purported to construct not only itself but also the whole universe from its immutable core. By contrast, the self inherent in the new aesthetics of kinaesthesia was repeatedly constructed and re-constructed by the sensations received from the world. Hence the fascination in this discourse with space, atmosphere, and aura—terms which will recur throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, the source of these sensations and impressions—whether a painting, sculpture, a building, or a slide—acquired exalted powers in the kinaesthetic model of experience. In Obrist's pedagogy, the idea of *Gestaltung* (design) endowed objects with talismanic powers; Endell saw forms emanating a magnetic field that put a spell on their recipients; in the art history lecture the same result was achieved by the auratic appeal of lantern slides. Coalescing with other nineteenth-century intellectual currents such as Darwinism and neo-Lamarckianism, the mutable self became a powerful idea. If the new self could internalize the imprint of the environment and transform it into new habits, then there was reason to believe that social change could be effected on the body through the agency of aesthetics. The mutability of the modern self, forged within late-nineteenth-century discourses, would become both a utopian promise and a dystopian threat in twentieth-century modernism.

CHAPTER 1:

KINAESTHETIC IMPULSES: THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXT AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The New Aesthetics: Enjoyment Replaces Judgment

I hope that modern German aesthetics, which has been steering into overly historical, ethical, and ethnological waters... will be guided back into that course which will allow artists, connoisseurs, and the public to really sense (*empfinden*) and feel (*fühlen*) when confronted with an artwork. That is certainly the object of scientific aesthetics (*wissenschaftliche Ästhetik*). The aesthetics of the future will be sensualistic (*sensualistisch*)... or it will remain as unscientific and hazy as before.¹

So announced the German physician Hans Kurella the mission of a “new aesthetics” in his introduction to the book *Sinnesgenüsse und Kunstgenuss* (1903, Pleasures of the Senses and Art Enjoyment) written by the Danish pathologist Carl Georg Lange. Lange’s book was devoted to analyzing aesthetic experience from a purely physiological point of view—by examining how muscles and blood vessels contracted and dilated while undergoing joy, anger, ecstasy, admiration, etc.—so as to contribute to a “sensualistic theory of art” (*sensualistische Kunstlehre*). “As I leafed through the manuscript,” Lange wrote in the conclusion, “I realized that although it was not done intentionally, the word ‘beautiful’ was not mentioned even once in the book.”² The omission was not

¹ Carl Georg Lange, *Sinnesgenüsse und Kunstgenüsse. Beiträge zu einer sensualistischen Kunstlehre*, introd. Hans Kurella (Wiesbaden: J. F. Bergmann, 1903) viii. For a critical review of the book, see Konrad Lange, “Eine sensualistische Kunstlehre,” *Die Kunst* 11 (1905): 37-46. C. G. Lange is remembered today mostly for his contribution to what is called the James-Lange theory of emotions, according to which bodily changes precede mental ones during the experiencing of an emotion. See C. G. Lange, *Über Gemütsbewegungen. Eine psycho-physiologische Studie* (Leipzig: T. Thomas, 1887), translated into English as “The Emotions,” *The Emotions by Carl Georg Lange and William James* (New York: Hafner, 1922). The work was first published in Danish in 1885, but it became influential when it was translated into German in 1887.

² Lange, *Sinnesgenüsse und Kunstgenüsse*, cited above, 98.

completely unintentional either: associating the concept of beauty with an obsolete speculative philosophy, Lange defined it as nothing more than “the impression that we receive from certain effects (*Einwirkungen*), which our organism experiences.”³ If aesthetics was to set for itself the task of analyzing the beautiful, Lange concluded, it had to turn its attention away from vague conceptualizations that had plagued it for so long and commit to an empirical understanding of aesthetic effects experienced by the flesh and the bones of the human body.⁴

Such disillusionment with metaphysics had been common among Western intellectuals since the middle of the nineteenth century when liberal hopes were crushed in the aborted 1848/49 revolutions. The German novelist Theodor Fontane’s complaint that the world was experiencing speculation-fatigue or the American philosopher William James’s declaration that the prestige of the absolute had crumbled were not unusual.⁵ It was with a similar distaste for Idealism that many members of the educated middle classes in Imperial Germany turned to a “new aesthetics” at the end of the century. This was a class that had been raised with the principles of a humanistic *Bildung*; the neo-classicist aesthetics that they had been taught at the *Gymnasium* and the university dictated a disinterested contemplation of the beautiful. In a move that was seemingly at odds with their own identity as *Bildungsbürgertum*, members of the educated elite now wanted to replace what they perceived to be the abstract, speculative aesthetics of Idealism by a “new aesthetics” described alternately as “scientific” (*wissenschaftlich*), “practical” (*praktisch*), and almost always as “psychological” (*psychologisch*).⁶ In the eyes of many German intellectuals at the end of the century, aesthetics was a powerful weapon against

³ Ibid., 100.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Theodor Fontane, “Unsere lyrische und epische Poesie seit 1848,” [1853] in *Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Munich; Nympherburger, 1963) 7-8 and William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1908] 1977) 63.

⁶ It is necessary to be careful with the term “scientific” (*wissenschaftlich*). It does not mean that the new aesthetics was trying to become a natural science; the term should be taken to signify scholarly rigor rather than any specific research method. As the historian J. T. Merz argues, *Wissenschaft* in German had a much broader meaning than the word *science* in German or French in the nineteenth century. It denoted “a moral as much as an intellectual ideal, which it was the duty of the German university to uphold and to realize.” J. T. Merz, “The Scientific Spirit in Germany,” *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover, [1904-1912] 1965) 172ff.

Hegelian absolutism—but only an aesthetics whose ties with the cognitive matrix of thought and language had been severed and which was anchored in bodily sensations (*Empfindungen*), feelings (*Gefühle*), dispositions (*Stimmungen*), and effects (*Wirkungen*).⁷ The new aesthetics, in other words, was to be an aesthetics of concrete, embodied experience.

Theoretical support for the new aesthetics came from a variety of figures starting in the 1880s. In his *Aufgaben der Kunstphysiologie* (1891, *Tasks of the Physiology of Art*), for example, the influential publisher Georg Hirth (1841-1916) urged that the “plant of prejudice,” which had for too long grown in the German soil, saturated with “philosophical manure,” be uprooted before it poisoned the education of entire the nation.⁸ Both the enjoyment and the production of art were based on the psychophysical structure of the viewer, Hirth insisted, and it was this structure that determined perception just as a printing press produced prints.⁹ Hugo Eckener (1868-1954), a student of the experimental psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, similarly denounced the old speculative aesthetics, whose “oracular profoundness and unfruitful conceptual fissures” gave his contemporaries an upset stomach. Eckener called for artworks which could be judged “factually,” that is according to the sensations (*Empfindungen*) and feelings (*Gefühle*) that they would arouse.¹⁰ In a similar vein, the architectural theorist Richard Streiter (1864-1912) pointed out that at a time when systematic and dialectical thinking of idealism were seen as suspect, “philosophy was dethroned,” and the inductive methods of the natural sciences had proven to be extraordinarily successful, philosophical aesthetics had lost all credibility.¹¹ Reporting from Germany, the American psychologist G. S. Hall

⁷ In this context of opposing Hegelian philosophy to concrete experience, it also needs to be remembered that Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) was developed as “a science of the experience (*Erfahrung*) of consciousness (*Bewußtsein*) on the way to absolute knowing.”

⁸ Georg Hirth, *Aufgaben der Kunstphysiologie* (Munich and Leipzig: G. Hirth, [1891] 1897) 1. In 1896 Hirth started the Munich journal *Jugend. Wochenzeitschrift für Kunst und Leben*, which gave the artistic movement Jugendstil its name.

⁹ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹⁰ Dr. Hugo Eckener, “Das ‘Wie’ und das ‘Was’ in der Kunst,” *Die Kunst für Alle* 19 (1904) 41, 48, 59.

¹¹ Richard Streiter, “Architektur und Kunstphilosophie,” *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 50 (December 12, 1896) 550-551. For similar arguments, see Streiter, “Raumästhetik und geometrisch-optische

(1844-1924) expressed skepticism about the prospects of a much touted “scientific aesthetics,” but he still found it “more meaty than the inane speculations about the nature of the Beautiful and Sublime which [filled] so many pages of text-books on aesthetics.”¹²

Given the diversity of its participants, the new aesthetics was an amorphous discourse with boundaries that seemed unclear at times. In his 1914 book *Die deutsche Ästhetik der Gegenwart* (Contemporary German Aesthetics), Paul Moos enumerated several versions of the new aesthetics: Karl Groos and Richard Müller-Freienfels’s biological-sensualistic aesthetics, Oswald Külpe’s association aesthetics, Stefan Witasek’s abstract psychologism, Theodor Lipps’s empathy aesthetics, Max Dessoir’s aesthetic skepticism, and Konrad Lange’s illusion aesthetics.¹³ Moos’s account favored the academics among the educated middle classes—a group dubbed “mandarins” since then—but not every contribution to the new aesthetics was a hefty treatise written by a reputable professor.¹⁴ In fact, the majority of those who theorized about the new aesthetics did so using the more modest format of cultural criticism on the pages of a growing number of journals ranging from *Dekorative Kunst* to *Kunstwart*, from *Kunst für Alle* to *Pan* and *Jugend*.¹⁵ Critics such as Karl Scheffler and Julius Meier-Graefe contributed to this discourse as much as the publishers Georg Hirth and Alexander Koch; artists and architects such as August Endell, Hermann Obrist, and Henry van de Velde expressed as much opinion as

Täuschungen,” [1898, Review of Theodor Lipps’s “Raumästhetik und geometrisch-optische Täuschungen] and “Illusions-Ästhetik” [1902, Review of Konrad Lange’s work] in *Ausgewählte Schriften zur Ästhetik und Kunstgeschichte* (Munich: Delphin, 1913): 43-46 and 224-259.

¹² G. S. Hall, “Is Aesthetics a Science?” *Aspects of German Culture* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1881) 105.

¹³ Paul Moos, *Die deutsche Ästhetik der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, [1914] 1919). Karl Groos (1861-1946) was a German psychologist who theorized the role of play in education; Richard Müller-Freienfels (1882-1949) was a German psychologist; Oswald Külpe (1862-1915) was the psychologist who theorized the idea of “imageless thought”; Stefan Witasek (1870-1915) was an Austrian Gestalt psychologist; Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) was a philosopher who taught at the University of Munich and was famous for his empathy theory; Max Dessoir (1867-1947) taught aesthetics at the University of Berlin, edited the influential *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, and wrote on occultism; and Konrad Lange (1855-1921) taught aesthetics in Tübingen and was famous for his “illusion theory.”

¹⁴ The term “mandarin” was used by the historian Fritz Ringer to describe university professors, a group that was even more elitist than the already exclusive *Bildungsbürgertum* in Imperial Germany. Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).

¹⁵ For a history of these journals, see Maria Rennhofer, *Kunstzeitschriften der Jahrhundertwende in Deutschland und Österreich 1895-1914* (Vienna and Munich: Christian Brandstaetter, 1987).

the museum directors Alfred Lichtwark and Paul Jessen; what the art historians Heinrich Wölfflin, August Schmarsow, and Hermann Grimm wrote became as much part of the new aesthetics as the teachings of the pedagogues Wilhelm von Debschitz, Lothar von Kunowski, or Paul Schultze-Naumburg. The new aesthetics frequently overlapped with other discourses, which were equally informed by the liberal ideology of reform: the so-called reform pedagogy, the *Kunstgewerbe* movement, the art education movement, the film censorship movement, and even the anti-corset movement.

Despite political and disciplinary differences, the advocates of the new aesthetics shared a commitment to the cultural importance of aesthetics, on the one hand, and the necessity of basing the new aesthetics on the empirical, inductive bedrock of lived experience, on the other. Furthermore, they unanimously believed that psychology would provide guidance in their struggles.¹⁶ Psychology—understood in this German, pre-Freudian context as a science of experience—was expected to help the new aesthetics purge itself from concepts and metaphysics and commit its energy to investigating sensations (*Empfindungen*), feelings (*Gefühle*), and, above all, aesthetic effects (*ästhetische Wirkungen*).¹⁷ If the new aesthetics were to set for itself the goal of establishing laws about aesthetic experience, it was assumed, it would have to turn away from its dependence on the nineteenth-century tradition of neo-humanistic *Bildung* and toward the inductive methods of the natural sciences—without, however, becoming a natural science itself. In their theorizations, the advocates of the movement frequently invoked the name of Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887), the idiosyncratic inventor of psychophysics. Almost two decades after Fechner had written the unusual treatise *Vorschule der Ästhetik*

¹⁶ For the history of psychological aesthetics in Imperial Germany, see Christian G. Allesch, *Einführung in die psychologische Ästhetik* (Vienna: WUV, 2006); Christian G. Allesch, *Geschichte der psychologischen Ästhetik. Untersuchung zur historischen Entwicklung eines psychologischen Verständnisses ästhetischer Phänomene* (Göttingen, Toronto, and Zurich: C. J. Hogrefe, 1987); Hermann Drüe, “Die psychologische Ästhetik im deutschen Kaiserreich” in *Ideengeschichte und Kunstwissenschaft. Philosophie und die bildende Kunst im Kaiserreich*, E. Mai, S. Waetzoldt, and G. Wollandt, eds. (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1983): 71-98. In English this discourse has been critically discussed only by Mark Jarzombek, “The Body Ethos” in *The Psychologizing of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and “De-Scribing the Language of Looking: Wölfflin and the History of Aesthetic Experientialism,” *Assemblage* 23 (Summer 1994): 28-69.

¹⁷ As already mentioned in the introduction, many disciplines viewed psychology not just as another discipline but one which would serve as a potential propædeutic science (*Vorwissenschaft*) at this historical moment, precisely because psychology could anchor knowledge in experience.

(1876, Introduction to Aesthetics), his call for an “aesthetics from below” (*Ästhetik von unten*) was ubiquitously taken up as a battle cry by those who wanted to bury “the aesthetics from above” (*Ästhetik von oben*).

The reversal of hierarchy which Fechner’s book seemed to imply excited some whose affinities lay with a left-wing version of liberal politics and with realism and naturalism in the arts. For these few, the new aesthetic discourse was a descendant of the spirit of the 1848 revolutions. When Conrad Alberti (1862-1918), an advocate of realist theater, declared that the old aesthetics with its philosophical speculations, its metaphysical ideals, its obsession with “absolute beauty,” and its dictum of “disinterested pleasure” was bankrupt, he did so by comparing it to monarchy and theism.¹⁸ “The kingdom of absolutism has ended in philosophy as in politics,” he wrote.¹⁹ The new aesthetics was to proceed from things rather than from concepts; it was to be practical, empirical, and comparative rather than deductive and speculative.²⁰ In a lecture discussing the relationship between art and science a decade later, Wilhelm Ostwald (1853-1932), who would win a Nobel prize for chemistry in 1909, argued that “aesthetics from above” was always marked by coercion and hierarchy.²¹ The new “aesthetics from below,” according to Ostwald, defied authority by concerning itself not with concepts but with experience, feelings, and effects. This necessitated a closer relationship between art and psychology, according to Ostwald, because it was the latter that systematically studied the nature and intensity of these feelings.²² Challenging the ascendancy of neo-humanism in German intellectual life, Ostwald argued that only an aesthetics which aligned itself with the natural sciences could participate in a progressive trajectory for society.

However, most other members of the educated middle classes, who subscribed to a much less radical version of liberalism and were reluctant to part with the principles of their

¹⁸ Conrad Alberti, *Natur und Kunst. Beiträge zur Untersuchung ihres gegenseitigen Verhältnisses* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1890) 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

²¹ Wilhelm Ostwald, *Kunst und Wissenschaft. Vortrag gehalten zu Wien am 27. November 1904* (Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1905) 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 25.

neo-humanistic training entirely, were not as interested in the potentially subversive political implications of an “aesthetics from below.” They understood the new aesthetics not so much as a revolution as a strategic move necessitated by a new kind of relationship between the educated classes and the rest of society. Consider the art history professor Adelbert Matthaei’s (1859-1924) account of the new aesthetics. As the tendency to generalize and to systematize fell into disrepute, Matthaei wrote in an essay in 1901, a wedge had been driven between the world of the learned and that of the layman.²³ While some scholars responded to this situation by withdrawing further into the obscurity of their scholarship, he lamented, others indulged in frivolous and irresponsible forms of criticism in the popular press. In a line of thinking that was typical of liberal reformers at the end of the nineteenth century, Matthaei insisted that the only way to repair the split between the educated and the uneducated was a “third way.” This entailed giving up hope that the lower echelons of society could use the faculty of judgment (*Beurteilen*)—which had such a central position in the German Enlightenment tradition—and replace it with the faculty of enjoyment (*Genuss*).²⁴

Since no other art had as unmediated an effect on the layman, Matthaei continued, architecture was to play a central role in this new culture of enjoyment. He urged the reader to remember how, especially in childhood, one’s “soul became spacious upon entering a dignified cathedral... the heart beat faster when viewing a Gothic spire” or “one shivered in a modern school or court building.”²⁵ A corporeal response to art already existed instinctually in every human. A new kind of art which carefully choreographed effects (*Wirkungen*)—and in the case of architecture a sense of space (*Raumsinn*) and a sensitivity to dispositions (*Stimmungen*)—would therefore be fertile ground for cultivating the aesthetic sensibilities of common folk.²⁶ Matthaei noted that

²³ Adelbert Matthaei, “Der aesthetische Genuss am Bauwerk,” *Die Kunst für Alle* 16 (December 1900) 105.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁶ *Stimmung* was a term repeatedly used in the discourse of the new aesthetics. The word can perhaps be said to approach the words “disposition,” “milieu,” or “ambience” in meaning. In *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony*, Leo Spitzer traces the many-layered history of the word and relates it to the revival of Platonism and the Pythagorean concept of world harmony in modern times. He defines the word as follows: “For a German, *Stimmung* is fused with the landscape, which in turn is animated by the feeling of man—it is an indissoluble unit into which man and nature are integrated.... German has at his disposal

practices of looking that prioritized corporeal enjoyment over intellectual judgment had already been proposed by the likes of the museum director Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914), the sculptor and theorist Adolf Hildebrand (1847-1921), and the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945).²⁷ It was now up to the educated classes to promote the new aesthetics of enjoyment. As Lichtwark argued, this project of replacing judgment with enjoyment was also important for preparing German consumers for the future of capitalistic struggle:

...we now stand in front of a great economic struggle. The future of our industry will depend on whether we are determined and capable of granting to the next generation a thorough artistic education of the eye and of sensation (*Empfindung*). So far we have only cared for the schooling of artists. That we were thereby able to neither achieve nor claim a first place in the world markets is all too obvious now, and we see in the education of a domestic consumer, who makes the highest demands, one of the most important life-tasks. The important instrument of schooling which we find in our hands must be made to serve this purpose so that the aesthetic function be cultivated in every profession that allows it.²⁸

Reforming the Declining *Bildung*

The rise of the new aesthetics, then, was closely related to what the educated elites of Imperial Germany perceived to be a general crisis of education and knowledge.²⁹ University professors in particular were concerned that the venerable concept of *Bildung* had been undergoing a rapid deterioration since the middle of the nineteenth century.³⁰

both ‘the *Stimmung* of the landscape’ and ‘my *Stimmung*.’” Leo Spitzer, Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: a Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word “Stimmung.” (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963) 5. For a turn-of-the-century perspective on *Stimmung*, see Alois Riegl, “Die Stimmung als Inhalt der modernen Kunst” [1899] in Gesammelte Aufsätze (Augsburg and Vienna: B. Filzer, 1929): 28-42.

²⁷ Matthaei, “Der ästhetische Genuss am Bauwerk,” cited above, 106.

²⁸ Alfred Lichtwark, Übungen im Betrachten von Kunstwerken (Berlin: Cassirer, [1897] 1914) 18. Also see Irene Below, “Probleme der ‘Werkbetrachtung’—Lichtwark und die Folgen” in Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung (Gießen: Anabas, 1975): 83-136.

²⁹ See G. S. Hall, “Are the German Universities Declining?” in Aspects of German Culture, cited above, 114-120; David Blackbourn, History of Germany, 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century (Malden, MA: Blackwell, [1997] 2003) 297-98; and the classic study by Fritz K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins, cited above and a re-evaluation of it by James C. Albisetti, “The Decline of the German Mandarins After Twenty-Five Years,” History of Education Quarterly 34.4 (Winter 1994): 453-465.

³⁰ On education in Imperial Germany, see Thomas A. Howard, Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Hartmut Boockmann,

Many Wilhelmine academics complained that “the masses were invading the sanctuaries of higher learning.”³¹ Although it was true that enrollment at the university increased dramatically after 1871—from 23,000 in 1875 to 72,000 in 1912—this still constituted a minuscule percentage of the population. In 1910, almost four decades after the universities had begun expanding, no more than 1.3% of Germany had access to university education.³² The problem, according to the academic elites, was not only that institutions of higher learning were increasingly overrun by the lower middle classes but that many students were now arriving at the university without the requisite neo-humanistic education of the *Gymnasium*. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the university had been seen as the natural extension of education at the *Gymnasium*. By the end of the century almost half of the university students were coming from non-classical secondary schools, the *Realgymnasien* or the *Oberrealschulen*, where the curriculum focused less on humanistic training and more on the natural sciences. Although the achievements of the German natural sciences were considered a source of national pride, their addition to the secondary school curriculum had been a controversial issue.³³ The inductive methods of the natural sciences frequently came into conflict with the philological, text-based education at the *Gymnasien*, weakening, in the eyes of some, the foundations of a humanistic *Bildung*. There was a general perception that the *Bildungsbürgertum*, which distinguished itself from other classes through its education, would soon be deprived of *Bildung*.

If the problem within academic circles was seen as the so-called ‘mass university,’ according to the historian David Blackbourn, within the society at large ‘mass culture’

Wissen und Widerstand. Geschichte der deutschen Universität (Berlin: Siedler, 1999); Charles E. McClelland, State, Society and University in Germany, 1700-1914 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); James Albisetti, Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and James Albisetti, Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

³¹ Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins, cited above, 58.

³² See Volker Rolf Berghahn, Imperial Germany, 1871-1918: Economy, Society, Culture and Politics (New York: Berghahn, 2005) 85-86.

³³ This is known as the debate between the *Realisten* and the *Humanisten*. See Andreas Daum, “Humanisten und Realisten” in Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit, 1848-1914 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998): 51-64.

took the blame.³⁴ This perception was not unique to the educated middle classes either: the Social Democratic Party (SPD), for example, was equally alarmed that the working classes might be contaminated by pulp literature, mass-circulation newspapers, vaudevilles, dancehalls, festivals, circuses, panoramas, cinema, spectator sports, etc.³⁵ These new forms of mass entertainment had to do with the emergence of ‘leisure’ in industrial societies: the time that a waged laborer spent outside of measured and disciplined work.³⁶ During the rapid industrialization following the unification, the relations between the bourgeoisie and a growing urban proletariat became strained. New forms of mass entertainment, which had been designed primarily—but not exclusively—for this proletariat, caused the bourgeoisie much anxiety, despite the fact that leisure activities were rarely politicized. The vulgarity and cruelty of mass entertainment was frequently cited as an affront to morality and public order.³⁷ Given the growing participation of women and young people in these activities, bourgeois observers noted, the social danger was even greater: new forms of entertainment were seen to be inseparable from drinking, gambling, prostitution, and even murder.³⁸

However, at stake for the *Bildungsbürgertum* was not only a self-interested desire to safeguard their exclusivity and to keep the threat of the proletariat at bay, but also the loss of a certain type of ‘self’ and the techniques of self-cultivation that produced it. In the Introduction, I have examined the self inherent in the nineteenth-century conception of *Bildung*: a will-centered and indivisible core was imagined to order the random sensations received from the world into structured experience. This model of the self was inextricably tied to the institutions of neo-humanistic learning, was the basis of the identity of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, and was ultimately intended to be a blueprint for civil

³⁴ Blackbourn, *History of Germany*, cited above, 297.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

³⁶ On mass culture in Imperial Germany, see Kaspar Maase, “Einleitung: Schund und Schönheit. Ordnungen des Vergnügens um 1900” in *Schund und Schönheit. Populäre Kultur um 1900*, eds. Kaspar Maase and Wolfgang Kaschuba (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001): 9-28; Kaspar Maase, *Grenzenloses Vergnügen: Der Aufstieg der Massenkultur 1850-1970* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1997); and Lynn Abrams, *Workers’ Culture in Imperial Germany. Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

³⁷ Abrams, *Workers’ Culture in Imperial Germany*, cited above, 94-95.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

servants and citizens. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, many members of the educated elite sensed that the sustained, attentive intellectual activity that characterized this self was no longer tenable in the age of mass education and mass culture.



Fig. 2.1: Edmund Harbürger, “The Public Prosecutor at the Art Exhibition” from *Fliegende Blätter* 109.2785 (1898) 243.

Consider these two cartoons from the late 1880s, published in the popular humor magazine *Fliegende Blätter*. The first cartoon focuses on a single individual, a public prosecutor, as the title tells us, examining what appears to be a Jugendstil painting. (Fig. 2.1) This figure is the embodiment of the nineteenth-century model of the self—an old, wise, upper-middle class man, who, we can assume, has undertaken years of neo-humanistic training and is now in the service of the state. It is no coincidence that a prosecutor is cast in this role: the faculty of judgment—whether of the legal or the aesthetic kind—and sustained attention are distinguishing marks of his class.

But the unusual modern painting seems to be inscrutable to the prosecutor’s attentive gaze. “That picture is supposed to present a landscape?!!” the prosecutor exclaims, according to the caption, “the man should really be indicted ‘on the charge of *false pretenses*’!”³⁹

The second cartoon, titled “The Modern Enjoyment of Art,” shows a middle-class public made up of men, women, and children at an art exhibition. (Fig. 2.2) The joke is that no one depicted in the cartoon is paying attention to the artworks. The women are talking among themselves; a man is dozing off while reading his paper; a second one with a slack posture seems engaged in an unrelated conversation; the children are distracted; and even

³⁹ Cartoon by Edmund Harbürger from *Fliegende Blätter* 109.2785 (1898) 243, reprinted in Beth Irwin Lewis, *Art For All? The Collision of Modern Art and the Public in Late-Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003) 173.



Fig. 2.2: Adolf Oberländer, “The Modern Enjoyment of Art” from *Fliegende Blätter* 91.2312 (1889).

the older, respectable-looking men—presumably similar in social standing to the prosecutor—seem more interested in socializing than in considering the artworks. Distraction is presented here as a pathology of the will. The caption declares in witty language that the “contemplation” of artworks is obsolete in the modern age. In both cartoons the faculty of judgment and the protocols of beholding that were developed by *Bildungsbürgertum* in the course of the nineteenth century seem inadequate to the conditions of modernity. The aesthetic theorist Konrad

Fiedler’s distinction between “contemplation” and “capacity for pleasure” in aesthetic experience seems relevant here:

The common man, although he meets with works of art everywhere, is not inclined to make art a subject of special *contemplation* (*Nachdenken*). He turns to works of art with whatever capacity for *aesthetic pleasure* (*Genußfähigkeit*) he may possess. This capacity is highly diversified. There are innumerable gradations between an uncultivated man’s pleasure in observing the crude product of an undeveloped or degenerated artistic activity and a trained person’s sensitivity as he beholds the beauty of perfect works of art.⁴⁰

Consider how these anxieties about mass culture and declining intellectual faculties were aired in a debate concerning cinema at the turn of the century. Starting in 1895, cinema—first in its itinerant versions and only later in theaters—became an important form of urban entertainment in Germany, attracting as many as one million people a day at the turn of the century. Many of those who regularly frequented cinemas were women and children from both lower-middle and working-class families.⁴¹ The educated

⁴⁰ Konrad Fiedler, *Über die Beurtheilung von Werken der bildenden Kunst* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1876) 5. Translated by Henry Schaefer-Simmern and Fulmer Mood as *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1949) 5 (Emphasis added).

⁴¹ See Martin Loiperdinger, “Kaiser’s Cinema: An Archeology of Attitudes and Audiences” in *A Second Life: German Cinema’s First Decades*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996): 41-50. Loiperdinger explains that the common wisdom about Wilhelmine cinema used to be that it was frequented by the urban proletariat. More recent research indicates, however, that children,

bourgeoisie did not hide their disdain for what they perceived to be a crude form of entertainment. Some educators, bureaucrats, and professors started a *Kinoreformbewegung* (Film reform movement) and went so far as to spearhead censorship laws (1906-1918), which they hoped would counteract the negative influence of films on the uneducated public's morals.⁴² These laws were not only geared towards eliminating content that was deemed inappropriate for the moral education of the youth but also targeted the films' effects (*Wirkungen*). The jurist Albert Hellwig, an active voice in the movement, made a legal distinction between the censorship of content (*Inhaltszensur*) and the censorship of effect (*Wirkungszensur*) with the purpose of identifying which films had the power to directly impact the psyche of the spectators. It was argued that this impact could be so immediate that it could prompt the cinema spectator to commit murder, suicide, adultery, and a host of other crimes only hours after leaving the theater.⁴³

Effect (*Wirkung*), in other words, was not a term confined to the rarefied discourse of academic aesthetics but was frequently called upon in public debates. It was used to signal a new kind of self, which, unlike the nineteenth-century unitary and will-centered self, was open to the impressions received from the world. Konrad Lange (1855-1921), a professor of aesthetics in Tübingen, was an important theorist of *Wirkung* and an advocate of *Kinoreform*. He provocatively declared himself to be an enemy of the current cinema but a friend of its future potentials. Defining art as "conscious self-illusion," Lange actively supported the efforts of Jugendstil artists and particularly the

adolescents of both sexes, and women from both working and middle classes constituted the majority of the spectators. What made cinemas suspect places, according to Loiperdinger, was that they were socially "gray zones" where different social classes and genders were juxtaposed. Also see Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel, *Kino der Kaiserzeit: Zwischen Tradition und Moderne* (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2002) and Corinna Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie. Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen 1907-1912* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992).

⁴² Thomas Schorr, "Die Film- und Kinoreformbewegung und die deutsche Filmwirtschaft. Eine Analyse des Fachblatts 'Der Kinematograph' (1907-1935) unter pädagogischen und publizistischen Aspekten," Diss., Bundeswehr University in Munich, 1989; Gabriele Kilchenstein, *Frühe Filmzensur in Deutschland. Eine vergleichende Studie zur Prüfungspraxis in Berlin und München* (Munich: Diskurs-Film, Schaudig und Ledig, 1997); and Corinna Müller, "Der frühe Film, das frühe Kino und seine Gegner und Befürworter" in *Schund und Schönheit. Populäre Kultur um 1900*, cited above, 62-91.

⁴³ Albert Hellwig, *Die Filmzensur: eine rechtsdogmatische und rechtspolitische Erörterung* (Berlin: Frankenstein, 1914).

work of Bernhard Pankok, who designed a house for him in Tübingen.⁴⁴ Although Lange's entire theory of art was predicated on the centrality of illusion in aesthetic perception and the importance of distinguishing an art of content (*Inhalt*) from an art of effect (*Wirkung*), he remained unconvinced by Hellwig's distinction between *Wirkungszensur* and *Inhaltszensur*. Lange argued that it was, above all, the uneducated masses who were vulnerable to the impact (*Einwirkung*) of films, precisely because their wills, not fortified by a proper education, failed them when they were presented with the temptations of the moving image.⁴⁵ That the silent film made its impact primarily through the powerful means of facial and bodily expression seemed to make matters worse. Lange cited the physiologist Professor Robert Gaupp at length on the effects of the cinema on the mental constitution of a spectator:

When a child goes to the cinema once or twice or three times a week, he will be psychically destroyed by the manner in which images are presented, regardless of the film's content. Even if the cinema may be a respectable one showing a well censored program, being habituated to the scurrying, twitching, dithering pictures on the flickering screen slowly and surely disintegrates his mental and his moral solidity. First of all, one gets used to abruptly jumping from one image to another; one loses the slow steadiness of sequential presentation (*Vorstellung*) or the ability of cohesion, which is the prerequisite of all sound judgment. Secondly, one gets used to pursuing the arbitrary grouping of images and to following them submissively (*willenlos*); one can no longer follow the logical sequence of a continuous thought, which binds individual presentations together... The mere absorption of pictorial presentations, which are only arbitrary and do not logically or psychologically adhere together out of necessity (as in a real drama, story, or a scientific argument) amounts to the surrendering of the soul. Only an active thinking for oneself (*mitdenken*), the ability to retrieve connections indicates psychic autonomy. Without this autonomy one never becomes the master of things (*Herr der Dinge*) but at best becomes stuck in the turbid enjoyment of affects. This is how cinema leads to mental waning. Thirdly, as a result of the fast scurrying of images, one becomes accustomed to taking

⁴⁴ For Lange's aesthetic theories, see the treatise by Konrad Lange, *Das Wesen der Kunst. Grundzüge einer realistischen Kunstlehre* (Berlin: G. Grote, 1901) as well as the shorter essays such as "Was ist Kunst?" *Die Kunst* 5 (1902): 54-64; "Die Illusionsästhetik und ihre Gegner," *Kunstwart* 16, 19, 20, 21 (1903): 232-239, 255-259, 352-59, 403-411; "Bernhard Pankok," *Die Kunst* 12 (1905): 129-60; "Das Gesetz des Stilwechsels in der Kunst," *Die Kunst* 17 (1908): 279-84, 298-305; and "Die Drei Aufgaben des Künstlers," *Die Kunst* 25 (1912): 37-45, 63-69.

⁴⁵ Konrad Lange, *Das Kino in Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1920) 164-165. Also see Lange, *Nationale Kinoreform* (Mönchengladbach: Volksverein, 1918).

in an approximation of an impression; the images in their singularity are not made clear and conscious.... The regular cinema viewer thinks only in crude, approximate presentations. Whatever image lights up his mind's eye absorbs his entire attention, he does not review or rethink it any more... When the presentation is crude and the emphasis is on affects, he has already declined beyond rescue.⁴⁶



Fig. 2.3: Franz Stuck, "Punishment Intensification" from *Fliegende Blätter* 109.2784 (1898) 236.

"degeneration" (*Entartung*).⁴⁷ According to Nordau, one of the most prominent diagnostic signs of the "moral sea-sickness" of *fin-de-siècle* was intellectual deterioration, which, he argued, could only be cured by a new order of morality and mental hygiene. As was illustrated in a contemporary cartoon of prisoners whose sentences were intensified by the "effect" of modern paintings hung in their cell, a parallel was theorized between modernity and criminality. (Fig. 2.3) For Nordau, an immediate emotional response to artworks was an unmistakable sign of degeneration:

[The degenerate] laughs while he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion; a commonplace line of poetry or of prose sends a shudder down his back; he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and music especially, even the most insipid and least commendable arouses in him the most vehement emotions (*Gemüthsbewegung*). He is quite proud of being so vibrant a musical instrument (*schwingendes Tonwerkzeug*) and boasts that where the

⁴⁶ Gaupp cited in Lange, *Das Kino in Gegenwart und Zukunft*, 52. In May 1912 Gaupp and Lange together gave a lecture titled "Der Kinematograph vom ethischen und ästhetischen Standpunkt" (Cinema from an Ethical and Aesthetic Point of View) in Tübingen.

⁴⁷ Max Nordau, *Entartung*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Duncker, 1892-93). Translated into English by George L. Mosse, *Degeneration* (New York: H. Fertig, 1968).

Philistine remains completely cold, he feels his inner self confounded, the depths of his being broken up and the bliss of the Beautiful possessing him to the tip of his finger. His excitability appears to him a mark of superiority; he believes himself to be possessed by a peculiar insight lacking in other mortals and he is fain to despise the vulgar herd for the dullness and narrowness of their minds.⁴⁸

The autonomous, will-centered, indivisible self which had been the earmark of German Idealism and neo-humanistic learning seemed to thus face extinction at the end of the nineteenth century. The post-Kantian subject could not turn the raw data of the world into structured experience when the subject's capacity for synthesis was declining rapidly. Particularly troublesome for the educated middle classes was the passivity of the new self and its inability to fix its attention, a problem seemingly exacerbated by new technologies such as the moving pictures.⁴⁹ It is in this context that contemporaneous discussions about the aesthetics of "pure visibility" (*reine Sichtbarkeit*) should be understood: the sculptor Adolf Hildebrand's (1847-1921) call for perceptual clarity and relief sculpture as well as his theorist friend Konrad Fiedler's (1841-1895) intellectualist art theory had much to do with a desire to shape an aesthetic experience that was no longer under the control of an unitary self.⁵⁰ It was feared that without such control, the sensuality and crude gratification found in popular entertainment would soon overwhelm the subject who could no longer differentiate between true art and its cheap reproductions.⁵¹ Heinrich Wolgast, the rector of the Hamburg *Volksschulen* and an advocate of children's literature, described this dangerous substitution as follows:

⁴⁸ Nordau, *Entartung*, 32-33; *Degeneration*, 19.

⁴⁹ For the problem of attention in modernity, see Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999) and the earlier *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

⁵⁰ Adolf Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strassburg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1893). Translated into English as *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. Max Meyer and Robert Morris Ogden (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1907) and "The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts," *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-93*, introd. and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994): 227-79 and Konrad Fiedler, *Über die Beurtheilung von Werken der bildenden Kunst*, cited above.

⁵¹ Kaspar Maase, "Einleitung: Schund und Schönheit," in *Schund und Schönheit. Populäre Kultur um 1900*, cited above, 18.

If you go to the dancehalls and music halls, to the theaters and museums, you will see for yourself the home and the clothing of the poor, and you will find everywhere an irresistible urge to gratification (*Freude*) announced. If we examine this gratification, we find, often to our horror, an enjoyment of art. But in what distorted form! The glitter of dresses, the cheerless prints on the wall, the music of the beer hall, the honky-tonk entertainment, the thriller drama and the trashy novel—the majority of German people feel all this as art! What we feel as revulsion is perceived as pleasure (*Lust*). This difference in sensation divides our nation into two parts, which will never understand the other.⁵²

How do we understand the rise of the new aesthetics in the context of these anxieties—an aesthetics which hoped to replace the faculty of judgment and disinterested pleasure with effects, sensations, and enjoyment? How did *Bildungsbürgertum*'s growing concerns about the corporeal pleasures of mass entertainment and the possibility that they may usurp 'true' aesthetic experience transform themselves into a new aesthetics based on sensual pleasure? The answer lies in the entwinement of the new aesthetics with the liberal ideology of reform, which I have already elaborated in the Introduction. This new aesthetic discourse should be understood as a preventive measure devised by the educated elites to counteract the damage that they imagined was being done to the intellectual and, more alarmingly, to the moral constitution of the uneducated classes by modernity. Like its sibling reform movements, the new aesthetics also offered a "third way": the proponents of the new aesthetics endorsed neither the Kaiser's heavy-handed cultural policies, which insisted on providing moral education through the ideals of *Bildung* and neo-classicism, nor what they saw as the crude and depraved gratification of the senses found in modern mass culture. Instead reformers took a little dose of each with the hope that society may be inoculated against both. The sensual gratification promised by commercial entertainment was sanitized of its erotic and violent elements and re-packaged as the aesthetic education of the *Volk*. As such, the new aesthetics always carried within it a pedagogical agenda, which manifested itself in myriad ways—in the efforts to restructure drawing classes in secondary schools, in museum programs which promised to teach new ways of seeing, or in private art schools which sprouted all over the country at the turn of the century.

⁵² Heinrich Wolgast, *Die Bedeutung der Kunst für die Erziehung* (Leipzig: Wunderlich, 1903) 4.

Paradoxically, however, despite its deeply moralizing pedagogical agenda, the new aesthetics emptied art of its explicitly ethical role. The Swedish writer and outspoken suffrage activist Ellen Key's (1849-1926) characterization of the new aesthetics is revealing in this respect. In an essay that she wrote in 1907, Key traced the origins of the new aesthetics to scientific and evolutionary perspectives, which avoided metaphysics and universal laws for the sake of particulars and inductive reasoning.⁵³ The old aesthetics, she wrote, was inextricably connected to Idealism, which imagined the soul as an unitary, indivisible, and immortal substance, from which all sensations, feelings, and thoughts emanated outwards. The new aesthetics, by contrast, was interested in how an essentially dynamic world interacted with this soul and refused to find beauty in the "quintessential expression of an eternal idea" but instead looked for it in worldly experience.⁵⁴ According to Key the two kinds of aesthetics also corresponded to radically different ethical agendas. The older version moralized aesthetics by demanding that the artwork and the artist display a moral character in accordance with social codes. The new aesthetics, by contrast, aestheticized ethics (Flaubert's realism was Key's example) in that it was indifferent to such moral codes but instead insisted on a consistent and powerful character in the artwork, regardless of its moral implications.⁵⁵ Beauty no longer had to do with the truthful and the good, she claimed, but with experience and particularly the experience of self-enjoyment.⁵⁶

When bodily experience began to acquire a central position in aesthetic discourses, the ethical project of art was gradually evacuated in favor of a physiological one. Consider the debates surrounding the question of proportions at the turn of the twentieth century. The artist and pedagogue Lothar von Kunowski, for example, called for an end to teaching abstract, mathematical proportions in art schools and argued that the body's feeling of rhythm could be a much better guide when learning to draw.⁵⁷ With a similar

⁵³ Ellen Key, "Vom Sittengesetz der Schönheit," *Kunst und Künstler* 5 (1907) 187.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵⁷ Lothar von Kunowski, *Rhythmus und Bilderbogen. Grundsätze meiner Zeichenschule, Durch Kunst Zum Leben* Series (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903) 11.

trust in the body, the empathy theorist Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) elaborated on the virtues of an intuitive visual measuring (*Augenmaß*) as opposed to intellectual, mathematical measuring.⁵⁸ The art historian Heinrich Wölfflin anticipated this ethical perspective in his seminal dissertation “*Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur*” (1886, *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture*): all aesthetic questions were now to be referred to the human body. It was just as futile to understand architectural orders in terms of mathematical proportions, Wölfflin wrote, as it was to approach ornament in terms of its historical origins. The body—understood not as an abstract system of proportions but as a living entity, whose breathing, circulation, movements, and postures enabled the judgment of the world—had always been the constant denominator in art.⁵⁹

This signaled an important change in art’s ethical function. Artistic questions would no longer be deferred to rules, laws, or codes (about proportions, character, convenance, etc.) but would now have to be determined by the physiological mandates of the human body. However, this change could not be realized without difficulties. As we have seen, the new aesthetics from its inception had to do with questions of education and knowledge. But when the new aesthetic discourse stripped the self of its capacity for generalizing and for abstract thought, the self’s epistemological hold on the world became unreliable. As the advocates of the new aesthetics began to define an unmediated relationship between forms and the human body, they had to rethink this ‘liberated’ body’s relationship to knowledge.

⁵⁸ Theodor Lipps, “Die empirische Täuschung des Augenmasses” in *Zur Einfühlung* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1913): 359-79.

⁵⁹ Heinrich Wölfflin, “Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur,” [1886; Inaugural Dissertation der hohen philosophischen Fakultät der Universität München] in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Joseph Gartner (Basle: Benno, Schwabe & Co., 1946): 13-47. Translated as “Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture” in *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-93*, cited above, 149-91. I will elaborate more on this text in the final chapter. Also see Heinrich Wölfflin, “Zur Lehre von den Proportionen,” *Deutsche Bauzeitung* 23 (1889): 278.

The Prehistory of the New Aesthetics: Psychophysics and *Telos* in the Body

The language of *Wirkung* that permeated the discourse of the new aesthetics had been developed by psychophysics, a field of research established in the 1850s in order to quantitatively correlate stimuli in the physical world to sensations felt by the subject. It was no coincidence that almost every theorist of the new aesthetics acknowledged their intellectual debt to the physicist and psychologist Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887).⁶⁰ Fechner was not only given credit as the founder of psychophysics (and by extension experimental psychology), but his research in this field also became the basis for the so-called “experimental aesthetics.” Fechner’s interest in aesthetics started with an analysis of the golden section and what he called the association principle in aesthetic perception, and it culminated in the already mentioned *Vorschule der Ästhetik* whose title

⁶⁰ The oldest secondary source on Fechner is the lively account written by the popular science-fiction writer Kurd Lasswitz, *Gustav Theodor Fechner* (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommanns (E. Hauff), 1896). Other ones relevant here are Wilhelm Bölsche, “Fechner, Ein Charakterbild,” *Deutsche Rundschau* 23.12 (1897): 344-69; Theodor Ribot, “Fechner and Psychophysics” in *German Psychology to-Day, The Empirical School* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899): 134-87; G. F. Lipps, “Bericht über das Fechner-Archiv” in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlichen sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Math.-Phys. Klasse* (Leipzig: 1905): 247-312; Karl von Hollander, *Bedeutung von Fechners “Nanna” für die Gegenwart* [Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der hohen philosophischen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität Zu Göttingen] (Göttingen: W, Fr, Kaestner, 1908); Wilhelm Wundt, “Die Einheit des Seins” in *Sinnliche und Übersinnliche Welt* (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1914); William R. Woodward, “Fechner's Panpsychism: A Scientific Solution to the Mind-Body Problem,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 8.4 (1972): 367-86; Marilyn E. Marshall, “William James, Gustav Fechner, and the Question of Dogs and Cats in the Library,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 10 (1974): 304-12; Marilyn E. Marshall, “G, T, Fechner: Premises toward a General Theory of Organisms (1823),” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 10 (1974): 438-47; Rudolf Arnheim “The Other Gustav Theodor Fechner” in *New Essays on the Psychology of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986): 39-49; Josef Brožek and Horst Gundlach, eds., *G. T. Fechner and Psychology. International Gustav Theodor Fechner Symposium Passau 12 to 14 June 1987* (Passau: Passavia Universitätsverlag, 1988); Michael Heidelberger, “The Unity of Nature and Mind: Gustav Theodor Fechner's Non-Reductive Materialism” in *Romanticism in Science: Science in Europe, 1790-1840*, eds. Stefano Poggi and Maurizio Bossi (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer, 1994); Petra Lennig, *Von der Metaphysik zur Psychophysik, Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887), eine ergobiographische Studie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994); Karl Clausberg, “Schillernde Blasen der Phantasie aus reiner Wissenschaft—Fechners erheiternde Anatomie der Engel” in *Natur Der Aesthetik—Aesthetik Der Natur*, ed. Olaf Breidbach (Vienna and New York: Springer, 1997): 189-95; Ulla Fix and Irene Altmann, eds., *Fechner und die Folgen außerhalb der Naturwissenschaften. Interdisziplinäres Kolloquium zum 200. Geburtstag Gustav Theodor Fechners* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003); and finally the definitive study by Michael Heidelberger, *Die innere Seite der Natur: Gustav Theodor Fechners wissenschaftlich-philosophische Weltauffassung* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1993). Translated into English by Cynthia Klohr as *Nature from Within: Gustav Theodor Fechner and His Psychophysical Worldview* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

was borrowed from Jean Paul's unorthodox 1804 treatise on aesthetics.⁶¹ It was in *Vorschule der Ästhetik* that an "aesthetics from below" was opposed to an "aesthetics from above." Here Fechner posited what he called the "eudemonistic principle," (*eudämonistisches Prinzip*), which stated—over against Kant's anti-eudemonistic stance in the *Anthropologie*—that human existence was ultimately determined by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.

Fechner was an unusual scholar by any standard. He started his academic career in medicine and physiology but was attracted to other fields of research and in 1834 became a professor of physics at the University of Leipzig. His most influential work proved to be the two-volume *Elemente der Psychophysik* (1860, *Elements of Psychophysics*), in which he devised "an exact theory that set up a relationship of functional dependence between the mind and the body and between the physical and the psychological," based primarily on a formula devised by the physiologist E. H. Weber (1795-1878).⁶² Fechner also conducted research in physics, physiology, and chemistry, but at least as important were his theorizations on a dizzying array of topics such as the anatomy of angels, life after death, or the soul life of plants, frequently written as satirical works under the pseudonym Dr. Mises.⁶³ Fechner's career was interrupted by years of blindness that resulted from experimenting with after images. When his vision finally returned, the mystical side of his work became only stronger.

At a moment when materialism and the mechanistic theories underlying it were very much debated, Fechner's work was colored by the panpsychic belief that the entire universe, including its inanimate components, was endowed with soul. Fechner called this the "day-view" as opposed to the "night-view" of mechanistic theories, which in their most extreme version understood the cosmos as nothing more than a complex chain of

⁶¹ The novelist and satirist Jean Paul tried to incorporate the idea of the comical into aesthetics in Jean Paul [Johann Paul Friedrich Richter], *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1804).

⁶² G. T. Fechner, "Begriff und Aufgabe der Psychophysik, in *Elemente der Psychophysik*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, [1860] 1889) 8.

⁶³ These include: *Beweis dass der Mond aus Jodine besteht* (1821), *Stapelia mixta* (1824), *Vergleichende Anatomie der Engel. Eine Skizze* (1825), *Das Büchlein vom Leben nach dem Tode* (1836), *Vier Paradoxa* (1846), *Ueber das höchste Gut* (1846), *Nanna oder Ueber das Seelenleben der Pflanzen* (1848), *Zend-Avesta oder Ueber die Dinge des Himmels und des Jenseits* (1851), *Die drei Motive und Gründe des Glaubens* (1863), and *Die Tagesansicht gegenüber der Nachtansicht* (1879).

cause and effect.⁶⁴ By accounting for every aspect of the universe by the laws of physics, mechanistic explanations in their various guises attempted to eliminate all purpose and finality—regardless of whether the purpose manifested itself transcendently (as with God) or immanently (as in natural philosophy). The appeal of Fechner’s psychophysics, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century (that is, after the aborted 1848/49 revolutions), was that it claimed to reconcile such mechanistic conceptions of the universe with the idea of teleology.⁶⁵

Although the teleology debate had never been absent from Western intellectual life, it assumed new form and urgency around the middle of the nineteenth century when the so-called materialism controversy (*Materialismusstreit*) broke out in 1854. The controversy began with the lecture “Über Menschenschöpfung und Seelensubstanz” (1854, On the Creation of Man and Substance of the Soul) delivered by the Göttingen physiologist Rudolf Wagner (1805-1864). Pointing to the moral dangers of eliminating purpose from conceptions of the universe, Wagner defended the soul, Creation, and free will against the attacks of materialists such as Carl Vogt (1817-1895).⁶⁶ The anti-idealistic and atheistic *Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft* (1855, Blind Belief and Science) that Vogt penned in response became widely read and even more widely disputed. This particular kind of materialism (dubbed “scientific materialism” to distinguish it from Feuerbach’s philosophical and Marx’s dialectical materialism as well as their eighteenth-century French relatives) employed the recent findings of the natural sciences to support a particular brand of mechanistic explanation.⁶⁷ Especially important was Hermann von Helmholtz’s discovery in 1847 of the law of Conservation of Energy, which proved that

⁶⁴ Fechner, *Die Tagesansicht gegenüber der Nachtansicht* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1879).

⁶⁵ It is for this reason that historians have called Fechner “teleomechanist” or “non-reductive materialist,” meaning that he worked out a what was essentially a teleological program mechanically using the language of the natural sciences. See Heidelberger, *Nature from Within*, cited above, 73-115.

⁶⁶ Rudolf Wagner, *Menschenschöpfung und Seelensubstanz: ein anthropologischer Vortrag gehalten in der ersten öffentlichen Sitzung der 31. Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte zu Göttingen am 18. September 1854* (Göttingen: Wigand, 1854). Similar arguments were made in Rudolf Wagner, *Der Kampf um die Seele vom Standpunkt der Wissenschaft* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1857).

⁶⁷ Carl Vogt, *Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft. Eine Streitschrift gegen Hofrath Rudolph Wagner in Göttingen* (Gießen: Ricker, 1855).

energy could be converted from one form to another but was never entirely lost.⁶⁸ As notorious and controversial as Vogt's *Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft* were two works by fellow materialists: Ludwig Büchner's (1824-1899) *Kraft und Stoff* (1855, Force and Matter) and Jacob Moleschott's (1822-1893) *Die Physiologie der Nahrungsmittel* (1850, Physiology of Nourishment).⁶⁹ Positioning themselves over against the idealism of Hegel and the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling, scientific materialists not only rejected a human soul that existed independently of the human body but also denied the existence of any nonmaterial entities, including that of God. For scientific materialists the mind did not exist in the abstract: Vogt controversially argued that "thoughts stood in the same relationship to the brain as bile to the liver and urine to the kidneys."⁷⁰

It is no wonder that scientific materialism instigated much anxiety at mid-century. Especially after the failed 1848/49 revolutions, mechanistic explanations were dreaded for their determinism, their elimination of the concept of free will and consciousness, and, not infrequently, for implicitly defying the existing social order and endorsing anarchism.⁷¹ Although these fears existed before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 and translation to German in 1863, the book accelerated them by giving materialists a powerful weapon.⁷² The historian Frederick Gregory counts among materialism's enemies the following: members of the educated class who were raised with Idealism, orthodox theologians who found the atheism of materialists dangerous, and laymen who were afraid of mechanistic theories' political implications.⁷³ Perhaps

⁶⁸ Hermann von Helmholtz, "Ueber die Erhaltung der Kraft" [1847] in Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen vol. 1 (Leipzig: Barth 1882): 12-75.

⁶⁹ Ludwig Büchner, Kraft und Stoff. Empirisch-Naturphilosophische Studien in allgemein-verständlicher Darstellung (Frankfurt am Main: Meidinger, 1855) and Jakob Moleschott, Die Physiologie der Nahrungsmittel. Ein Handbuch der Diätetik (Darmstadt, 1850).

⁷⁰ Carl Vogt, Physiologische Briefe für Gebildete aller Stände (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'scher, 1847) 206.

⁷¹ According to the historian Frederick Gregory, materialists varied in their political affiliations. Czolbe eventually defended bourgeois capitalism, Vogt initially endorsed anarchism only to favor traditional liberalism later in life, while Moleschott argued that the future belonged to Socialism. Frederick Gregory, Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth-Century Germany (Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel, 1977) 189-196.

⁷² As the historian Bernhard Kleeberg pointed out during a discussion at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, one crucial sentence of The Origin of Species was excluded from the German translation: "Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history."

⁷³ Gregory, Scientific Materialism, cited above, 28. The most sophisticated criticism of materialism came from the neo-Kantian Friedrich Albert Lange, Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung

most paradoxical was the relationship of materialism to the natural sciences: although the research in the natural sciences was frequently marshaled to support the materialist cause, academic scientists usually refrained from fully supporting mechanistic explanations, at least in their most extreme versions. Ultimately, what seemed most threatened by materialism was the nineteenth-century understanding of the self as an autonomous, will-centered entity whose consciousness ordered the world. Consider how the psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909) described the perceived dangers of a psychology predicated on mechanistic explanations:

King Frederick William I was not the only person who could be persuaded of the danger of the doctrine that every mental condition is governed by a fixed law, and that in consequence all of our actions are fully determined—a doctrine fundamental to serious psychological research. He believed that such a teaching undermined the foundations of order in state and army, and that according to it he would no longer be justified in punishing deserters from his tall grenadiers. There are even to-day numerous thinkers who brand such a doctrine dangerous. They believe that it destroys all possibility of punishment and reward, makes all education, admonition, and advice meaningless, paralyzes our action, and must because of all these consequences be rejected.⁷⁴

Many intellectuals responded by assigning mechanistic and teleological theories to separate categories of thought. Historians have demonstrated, for example, how Protestant theologians reacted to the pressure of mechanistic theories—even before Darwin's *Origin of Species*—by gradually withdrawing their claims about nature in the course of the nineteenth century and ultimately leaving causal explanation entirely to the natural sciences.⁷⁵ While some conservative theologians denied the possibility of reconciling mechanistic explanations with Christianity altogether, others, especially liberal followers of Schleiermacher, alluded to the aesthetics of nature borrowed from Idealism and *Naturphilosophie* as proof that every particular conformed to an universal

in der Gegenwart (Iserlohn: Baedeker, 1866). Translated into English by Ernest Chester Thomas as The History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance, introd. Bertrand Russell (London and New York: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. and Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925).

⁷⁴ Hermann Ebbinghaus, Psychology. An Elementary Text-Book (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., [1902] 1908) 5.

⁷⁵ Frederick Gregory, Nature Lost? Natural Science and the German Theological Traditions of the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

teleology. An aesthetic and intuitive perception of nature's beauty and harmony was considered an alternative to natural sciences' attempt to understand natural phenomena by means of cause and effect.⁷⁶ An influential distinction was made by Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773-1843) between two kinds of cognition (*Erkenntnis*): drawing from Kantian aesthetics, Fries distinguished *Wissen* (knowledge) and *Glaube* (belief), the jurisdiction of the natural sciences and theology respectively, from *Ahnung* (divination), a feeling that the infinite God was reflected in the finite.⁷⁷ It was, above all, in feelings of the beautiful and the sublime that one could feel *Ahnung* and a union of the real and the ideal.⁷⁸

Of all the strategies employed to neutralize the intensity of the confrontation between teleological and mechanistic explanations of the universe, appealing to aesthetics proved to be the most viable in the nineteenth century. The reconciliatory role of aesthetics was certainly not new—especially since Kant used it in the third critique, arguably the most foundational text of Western aesthetics, to complement the architectonic of the first two critiques.⁷⁹ By the end of the century, monists such as Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919)

⁷⁶ Compare this with the Natural theology movement in England. In the early nineteenth century, the work of William Paley (1743-1805) was the best known theorization of this movement. Natural theology was the English clergymen's response to mechanistic explanations of the universe. The underlying assumption of the movement was that a scientific understanding of nature would support the existence and authorship of God. By studying intricate structures—the hand, in the case of Charles Bell—a naturalist could appreciate God's benevolent design. See William Paley, *Natural Theology. With Illustrative Notes by Henry Lord Brougham and Charles Bell. To which are Added Supplementary Dissertations by Charles Bell with Numerous Woodcuts* (London and New York: C. Knight and W. Jackson, 1836).

⁷⁷ Jakob Friedrich Fries, *Wissen, Glauben und Ahndung* (Jena: J.C.G. Göpferdt, 1805). Translated into English by Kent Richter, *Knowledge, Belief, and Aesthetic Sense* (Cologne: J. Dinter, 1989). *Ahnung*, (spelled in an antiquated way as *Ahndung* in Fries's title) was defined in Friedrich Kirchner's dictionary of philosophical terms as “the presentiment of a future event or thing on dark or unconscious ground. It originates either from an involuntary inference by analogy or from a disposition.” Kirchner added that Fries defined this term (over against conceptual knowing) as a conviction that stemmed from feelings. Friedrich Kirchner, “Ahnung,” *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Grundbegriffe* (Leipzig: Dürr., 1907).

⁷⁸ This “uneasy truce” also signaled a change in biblical hermeneutics: although David Friedrich Strauß's historical analysis of Jesus' life had been controversial in 1835, by the end of the century, Protestant theologians—conservatives and liberals alike—agreed on the dismissal of literal interpretations of the Bible.

⁷⁹ In reading the third critique, historians of art and architecture rarely pay attention to the second part on teleology, which is essential to understanding the role of aesthetics in Kantian philosophy. Kant found the way out of the antinomy presented by natural teleology by appealing to aesthetics. (Hence, “purposefulness without a purpose” and “as if.”) Kant understood that teleological thinking was circular and unlike mechanical thinking. He therefore separated them in the third critique: teleology and mechanism were regulative and constitutive principles respectively.

reconciled Darwinian ideas with the notion of *telos* in an aesthetics of nature.⁸⁰ According to Haeckel, Darwin's work did not spell out the end of teleology; as he endeavored to illustrate in his popular books at the turn of the century, it was the beauty of nature that bore witness to the existence of an overall 'design.'⁸¹ It should not come as a surprise that in the aftermath of the *Kulturkampf* aesthetics once again became an excuse to make a secularized "argument from design." In the 1870s, as most liberals supported *Kulturkampf*, Bismarck's campaign of secularization (which was in fact intended to eliminate the opposition from the country's Catholic minority), it had become difficult to make an argument for teleology using the terminology of theology.⁸² Although the *Kulturkampf* was mostly over by the 1880s, liberals still readily reverted to the age-old strategy of appealing to the seemingly secular language of aesthetics to provide evidence for *telos*.

It was in this context that Fechner came up with the psychophysical parallelism of mind and body, a model which would ultimately also appeal to the reconciliatory role of aesthetics. Notwithstanding occasional attacks, psychophysical parallelism proved to be very influential in the German-speaking world in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸³ As already mentioned, the ingenuity of Fechner's psychophysics was that he

⁸⁰ Particularly popular was Ernst Haeckel's *Kunstformen der Natur* (Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1899-1904).

⁸¹ Haeckel had a point: Darwin was connected to a tradition of natural theology in his home country, which made its argument for the existence of God through nature. For natural theology, see footnote 76. Also see Harold Vanderpool, ed, *Darwin and Darwinism: Revolutionary Insights Concerning Man, Nature, Religion, and Society* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1973); David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Alan Olding, *Modern Biology and Natural Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Stephen G. Alter, *Darwinism and the Linguistic Image: Language, Race, and Natural Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); and Francisco J. Ayala, "Teleological Explanations in Evolutionary Biology," *Philosophy of Science* 37.1 (March 1970): 1-15.

⁸² For recent histories of the *Kulturkampf*, see Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Roisin Healy, *The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2003); Rudolf Lill, ed., *Der Kulturkampf* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997); Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); and finally the fascinating study by David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in a Nineteenth-Century German Village* (New York: Random House, 1995).

⁸³ According to Heidelberger, neo-Kantians were skeptical of Fechner's psychophysical parallelism. Heinrich Rickert argued, for example, that the mind-body question was a pseudo-problem created by disciplinary differences. Dilthey considered psychophysical parallelism the worst of all metaphysical

reasoned in an entirely non-metaphysical manner with inductive and empirical methods borrowed from the natural sciences—but also without giving up teleology. This necessitated, first of all, making teleology immanent rather than transcendent. (This was also the strategy of natural theology and of Haeckel’s monism.) Secondly, Fechner theorized the physical and the psychic to be interdependent but not causally related. That meant that if there was causality in the universe, it had to remain confined to either side of the mind/body dichotomy, instead of claiming to be an overarching principle.

Fechner’s psychophysics was merely a *description*, albeit a functional one, of how the mind operated parallel to the body. It set up a mathematical relationship between stimulus and sensation but refused to explain the deeper reasons behind phenomena by recourse to either metaphysics or mechanical cause and effect.⁸⁴ The attempt to completely bridge the gap from mechanism to teleology was ludicrous, as Fechner illustrated sardonically in a short piece in which he purported to undertake a comparative anatomy of angels.⁸⁵ Take a typical psychophysical experiment regarding the perception of weights: all that psychophysics hoped to determine was the point, at which a subject could tell the difference between two masses. The difference in sensation was then correlated to the change in the weights and converted into a set of coefficients. Given the notorious difficulty of quantifying introspective experience, psychophysics inevitably depended on such conceptual devices as “just noticeable difference,” “absolute threshold,” and “difference threshold.” If there was a *telos* in the universe, it was to be sought not in metaphysics but in the mundane workings of the body.

Fechner called psychophysics the “identity view” of body and soul and used Leibniz’s analogy of two clocks, representing mind and body and working in perfect harmony, to

hypotheses. Dilthey also argued that psychophysics was the foundation of experimental psychology, against which he proposed a descriptive and analytic psychology. Heidelberger, Nature from Within, cited above, 179-181.

⁸⁴ Wundt’s experimental psychology, which was indebted to Fechner’s psychophysics, distinguished psychical causality from physical causality. See Wilhelm Wundt, Grundriss der Psychologie (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1896). For Wundt on Fechner, see Wilhelm Wundt, Zur Erinnerung an Gustav Theodor Fechner. Worte Gesprochen an seinem Sarge am 21. November 1887 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1887) and Gustav Theodore Fechner. Rede zur Feier seines hundertjährigen Geburtstages (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1901).

⁸⁵ Dr. Mises (Fechner), Vergleichende Anatomie der Engel (Leipzig: Industrie-Comptoir, 1825).

explain his idiosyncratic position on the matter.⁸⁶ According to the theory of occasionalism defended by some theologians, Fechner wrote, God was responsible for every cause, which meant that He constantly moved the hands of the two clocks simultaneously.⁸⁷ By contrast, Cartesian dualism imagined a point of contact between the two clocks, mechanically making sure that they kept time at the same pace. Leibniz's theory of pre-existing harmony provided a solution in between: the clocks synchronized perfectly, according to Leibniz, because they had been created from the beginning to keep perfect time. Fechner refuted all these positions and insisted that the question was much simpler: there was in fact only one clock. What appeared to the external observer to be a mechanical contraption with wheels and levers was to the hypothetical "mind of the clock" a consciousness with feelings, drives, and thoughts. In other words, Fechner converted the problem into one of perspective. Just as a circle was seen as concave from inside and convex from outside, the seeming antinomies of the mind and body problem stemmed from irreconcilable differences in point of view. This corresponded to a fundamental rift between disciplinary perspectives: "The natural sciences consistently use the external standpoint in their consideration of things," Fechner wrote" while the humanities use the internal."⁸⁸ As we will see, this disciplinary distinction would continue to be an important issue in German intellectual life in the subsequent decades.

Vorschule der Ästhetik: Ethics of Eudemonism

Psychophysics was essentially a theory of correspondence: it correlated the physical attributes of objects in the world of extension (such as weight, shape, proportions, etc.) to subjective sensations (*Empfindungen*), that is, elementary psychical elements before they were processed by anything resembling apperception. The avoidance—if not the full

⁸⁶ Fechner, "Allgemeine Betrachtung über die Beziehung von Leib und Seele," Elemente der Psychophysik, vol. 1, cited above, 5-6.

⁸⁷ Occasionalism (*causae occasionales*) is a metaphysical solution to the mind-body problem. It maintains that all singular causes are occasions on which God, the only real, active, and effective cause in the universe, exercises his will. In other words, every physical act of an organism gives God the opportunity to evoke an appropriate psychic response. In this model, mind and body do not affect each other, but rather God causes bodily movement to occur 'on the occasion of' appropriate mental states. Rudolf Eisler, "Okkasionalismus," Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1904).

⁸⁸ Fechner, "Allgemeine Betrachtung über die Beziehung von Leib und Seele," Elemente der Psychophysik, vol. 1, cited above, 6.

denial—of apperception put psychophysics at odds with the unitary self advocated by *Bildung*. Psychophysics imagined a body which was susceptible to the sensations received from the world without the intervention of a conscious mind. However, despite its insistence that these sensations remain ‘unprocessed’ for the simplicity of analysis, the fact remained that introspective observation and measurement, which were already problematic categories, became even more questionable in the presumed absence of apperception. For this reason, using the mechanistic language of cause and effect, psychophysics devised something called aesthetic effect (*ästhetische Wirkung*), a shorthand for elusive subjective experience. The main occupation of psychophysics was these aesthetic effects: how they worked, interacted, reinforced or weakened each other. Because it was almost impossible to grasp these effects otherwise, they would usually have to be read off the surfaces of the body—from facial or bodily expressions or from the muscular reaction of the body to a stimulus. In the unitary self of *Bildung* what mattered the most was the immutable core of consciousness; psychophysics, by contrast, began shifting the emphasis to the external surfaces of the body.

Viewed as such, the body imagined by psychophysics was a body of *aesthesia*, understood as a surface upon which sensations—whether visual, auditory, tactile, or olfactory—coalesced.⁸⁹ It is no wonder, then, that Fechner took up aesthetics after he published *Elemente der Psychophysik*. Already in 1839 he had participated in a debate concerning idealism versus realism in Leipzig and had supported the realist side. Fechner’s first project on aesthetics after the publication of *Elemente der Psychophysik* was a study of the golden section, which he published in 1865. This analysis signaled a significant turn in aesthetics from a philosophical discussion of the beautiful and the sublime to an examination of the conditions under which one experienced “pleasure” (*Wohlgefälligkeit*). Fechner stated his goal to be simply to determine—without the aid of

⁸⁹ The Austrian scientist and philosopher Ernst Mach had a similar understanding of sensations in his, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (Jena: G. Fischer, 1886), translated by C. M. Williams as *Contributions to The Analysis of the Sensations* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1897). Also see E. B. Titchener, “Mach’s ‘Lectures on Psychophysics,’” *The American Journal of Psychology* 33.2 (April 1922): 213-222. For the intellectual links between Fechner and Mach, see Gereon Wolters, “Verschmähete Liebe. Mach, Fechner und die Psychophysik” in *G. T. Fechner and Psychology. International Gustav Theodor Fechner Symposium Passau 12 to 14 June 1987*, cited above, 103-116.

theoretical preconceptions—what the most pleasant proportions were. In *Zur experimentellen Ästhetik* dated 1871, Fechner elaborated on three methods that were to be used by experimental aesthetics.⁹⁰ The first one, method of choice, entailed asking subjects to choose between forms and colors. In one case, Fechner asked several subjects to tell him which of the ten rectangles with different proportions pleased them the most. The second one, method of production, made the subjects actively draw the forms that they found most pleasurable.⁹¹ Finally, the method of use involved measuring the proportions of existing objects: in one experiment Fechner measured the frames of thousands of paintings and in another examined the proportions of “writing paper or note paper, sales slips, greeting cards, photo postcards, purses, slates, chocolates, stock cubes, gingerbread, toilet bags, snuff-boxes, bricks, etc.”⁹² If the first two methods were precursors for turn-of-the-century attempts to correlate form to kinaesthetic response, the final anticipated the *Kunstgewerbe* movement’s indifference to the distinction between fine and applied arts, on the one hand, and to the differences of medium, on the other.

Although the body theorized in psychophysics was a thoroughly aesthetic body, Fechner did not explicitly theorize about aesthetics until he started working on *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1876). When Fechner opposed a philosophical “aesthetics from above” (by which he meant, as he explained in the introduction, the aesthetics of Schelling, Hegel, and Kant) to an empirical “aesthetics from below” that was inspired by British empiricism, he did not suggest tearing down the edifice of aesthetics altogether, but argued that without the preparation of the latter the former would never be established on a solid foundation. The work was presented in two volumes. In the first volume, Fechner elaborated on the building blocks of an “aesthetics from below”: pleasure (*Gefallen*), displeasure (*Missfallen*), arousal (*Lust*), and lack of arousal (*Unlust*), all of which could be observed on the musculature of the body. He then enumerated a number

⁹⁰ Fechner, *Zur experimentellen Ästhetik, Abhandlungen der mathematisch-physischen Classe der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, vol. 9 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1871) 602-604.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 602.

⁹² Fechner, “Anhangsabschnitt über die gesetzlichen Maßverhältnisse der Galeriebilder,” vol. 2 and “Verschiedene Versuche, eine Grundform der Schönheit aufzustellen. Experimentale Ästhetik. Goldner Schnitt und Quadrat,” vol. 1, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1876).

of laws under which pleasure or displeasure took place.⁹³ The rest of the two volumes was dedicated to the consideration of some well known aesthetic questions—such as the golden section, taste, realism versus idealism, form versus content, the sublime, landscape, the problem of polychromy in sculpture and architecture—but always from the empirical perspective of pleasure and displeasure. “Aesthetics from above” always operated with concepts, Fechner argued, with the result that the clarification of these concepts and their categorization and systemization became its whole content. But the task of aesthetics was not exhausted by this goal:

With everything that aesthetically concerns us, the question will not only be: under which concepts is it arranged? Where is it placed in the system of our concepts?... But the most interesting and important question will always be: why does this please or displease me? And to what extent does it have the right (*Recht*) to please or displease? Here the question is answered only with laws of pleasure and displeasure in consultation with laws of ought (*Sollen*). This is similar to the following: the questions, why does a body move and why do we move it, cannot be answered with the concept and classification of the various kinds of movements but only with the laws of movement and with a consideration of the purpose that is aimed. And so long as the conceptual explanations of aesthetics is not accomplished with an explanation of its laws, it remains a hollow enterprise.⁹⁴

What was striking in Fechner’s explanation of the task of an “aesthetics from below” was not only its empiricism—its emphasis on pleasure, displeasure, and experience in general—but the entwinement of the pleasurable with the ethical. But in doing this, Fechner departed from the Kantian dictum “the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good” (*das Schöne ist das Symbol des sittlich Guten*); for Fechner what was felt as pleasurable was not only good for the individual but also for the well-being of humanity in general. Fechner explained this principle in the *Vorschule* as the “eudemonistic principle,” according to which the attainment of happiness was a moral obligation.⁹⁵ However, once again, this position needed to be defended against Kant’s dismissal of

⁹³ Fechner enumerated a series of conditions which had to be fulfilled for pleasure or displeasure to take place: the impressions needed to be above an aesthetic threshold, they had to reinforce each other so that their manifold could be weaved into a unity, and finally the overall impression had to be one of clarity.

⁹⁴ Fechner, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, cited above, 5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

eudemonism on the grounds that it tried to make morality into something empirical. In his earlier work *Über das höchste Gut* (1846, *On the greatest good*), in which Fechner elaborated his ethics in more detail, he had argued that eudemonism responded to the essentially empiricist nature of humans and things. “How can a theory of action which is to prove itself empirically, itself be independent of the empirical?” he asked, “that would be as if physics were to be abstracted from the empirical nature of bodies and movement, or if it were developed only in the mind—something that has been attempted but without success.”⁹⁶ What Fechner proposed was to accept Kant’s categorical imperative and its refusal to resort to metaphysics as such but to fill it with what he called “real content” (*realer Inhalt*).⁹⁷ Fechner justified eudemonism as follows:

If we want to confirm this theory [of eudemonism], let us look at the world order created by God. Isn’t the striving after pleasure implanted in all beings everywhere? How could God have contradicted himself by creating a striving, which he would then condemn? Each individual wants pleasure, and out of the drive of the individual we see everywhere institutions grow, also to unite their powers for the promotion of the pleasure of all, in State, Church, family, law, and as lever of these powers punishment and reward, threat and promise, warning and indoctrination acting steadily and constantly in the same direction. God allows the evil to be devoured by its consequences and the good to multiply by means of its seeds. He built the sky with the stars above us, an endless outlook for endless hopefulness about the good, but he also ignited an agonizing fire in the breast of sinners, a spark of the erstwhile hell, which warns us already now of the real.⁹⁸

William James would extol this as the “thickness” of Fechner’s essentially absolutist philosophy, “a refreshing contrast to the thin, abstract, indigent, and threadbare appearance” of Idealism.⁹⁹ Pleasure, according to Fechner, was not an egoistical urge, which drove the individual to his happiness at the expense of the happiness of others, but was an immanent principle implanted in each organism to guarantee the ultimate happiness of all. Even worldly institutions such as the State and the Church (and

⁹⁶ Fechner, *Über das höchste Gut* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1846).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ William James, “Concerning Fechner” in *A Pluralistic Universe*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1908] 1977) 68.

otherworldly ones such as Hell) with their regimes of discipline and punishment, were gleefully integrated by Fechner into a cosmos which was designed by God for multiplying the overall pleasure and happiness in the universe. Fechner thus attempted to strike a precarious balance between the particular and the universal without feeling the need to complete the connections in between. This meant that an “aesthetics from below” could be worked out through the mechanics of pleasure and displeasure without resorting to metaphysics but also without denying the existence of a thoroughly teleological world order.

The new aesthetics would adopt this Fechnerian ethical re-orientation at the turn of the twentieth century. With pleasure as the guiding principle in Fechner’s eudemonistic psychophysics, the body and its sensations became the ultimate arbiter of moral action. Psychophysics suggested that what was morally right and wrong did not have to be determined normatively by reference to rules, codes, and ultimately to “the universal law of reason,” as theorized by Kant, but could be decided aesthetically, that is, according to the physiological responses of the body. It is easy to see, then, how the body theorized thus by psychophysics proved amenable to reformers’ pedagogical agenda at the end of the nineteenth century. Fechner’s use of aesthetics to naturalize ethics gave liberal reformers proof that social change could be effected in small doses—that is, without revolutionary measures that would completely uproot institutions such as the State, Church, Law, etc.—simply by inventing a new set of bodily techniques. Attempts to improve society through the management of the body and its experience remained a constant refrain in these reform movements: not only in variations of *Lebensreform* (life reform) such as vegetarianism, homeopathy, and numerous health fads that manifestly concerned the body but also in the *Kunstgewerbe*, *neue Pädagogik*, and countless other reform movements which did their work on the body in more discreet ways. If the body thus seemed to be liberated from the constraints of codes, rules, and laws, it was only so that novel and more insidious regimes of discipline could be inflicted upon it.

The Holbein Controversy: Connoisseurship of the Body

This ingenious conflation of aesthetics and ethics in the body presented a new set of problems. If the body in question made its decisions regarding action based only on the principle of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain without resorting to reason, what happened to its epistemological grasp on the world? This question became manifestly problematic in Fechner's intense involvement in an art historical controversy beginning in the 1860s. The controversy concerned the authenticity of two Madonna paintings, one in Darmstadt and one in Fechner's hometown of Dresden, both of which were attributed to Hans Holbein, the Younger.¹⁰⁰ Although Northern painting had been universally considered to be inferior to its Italian counterparts at the turn of the nineteenth century, Holbein acquired considerable prominence in intellectual circles in the atmosphere of German nationalism that preceded the Unification. By 1855 the artist's work had grown enough in importance for Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, the director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, to proudly hang what he thought was the authentic Holbein Madonna next to the venerated Sistine Madonna by Raphael in the main space of the museum.¹⁰¹ It had been noted since 1830 that the Dresden painting was strikingly similar to the Darmstadt Madonna (which was then in Berlin), but it was not until the 1860s that the originality of the two paintings was questioned. The controversy finally reached such proportions that it was decided that the Darmstadt painting would be brought to Dresden while a council of fourteen prominent art historians would make a final decision regarding the paintings' authenticity.¹⁰² During the exhibition in Dresden in 1871, the Darmstadt Madonna was hung next to the nearly identical Dresden Madonna, attracting much attention from the public and from the art world. (Figs. 2.4 and 2.5)

¹⁰⁰ Fechner started working on the Holbein Madonna in 1866 and wrote several short pieces on the question of authenticity. But his most comprehensive exposition on the subject was published as Ueber die Aechtheitsfrage der Holbein'schen Madonna. Discussion und Acten (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1871).

¹⁰¹ Oskar Batschmann, "Der Holbein-Streit: eine Krise der Kunstgeschichte," Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen 38 (1996): 87-100. I am indebted to this article for the primary sources on the Holbein controversy.

¹⁰² For a lucid summary of the arguments raised for and against the precedence and authenticity of the two paintings, see the booklet written by one of the jurors involved in the final decision: Adolph Bayersdorfer, Der Holbein-Streit. Geschichtliche Skizze der Madonnenfrage und kritische Begründung der auf dem Holbein-Congress in Dresden abgegebenen Erklärung der Kunstforscher (Munich and Berlin: F. Bruckmann, 1872).



Figs. 2.4 and 2.5: (Left) Hans Holbein the Younger, *Darmstadt Madonna* (Meyer Madonna), 1526. (Right) Bartholomäus Sarburgh, *Dresden Madonna* (copy of the Meyer Madonna), c. 16th century.

After an extended exercise in comparative looking, which anticipated the comparative method and the double-slide art history lecture that will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the experts decided that the Darmstadt Madonna (left) was the original and the Dresden Madonna (right) a “free

copy.”¹⁰³ However, the controversy did not end there. Shortly after the declaration, a group of Berlin and Leipzig artists, joined by the museum director Schnorr von Carolsfeld, published a counter-declaration which challenged the art historians’ conclusion and which argued that the Dresden Madonna was a copy realized by Holbein himself.¹⁰⁴ Although the Berlin museum director Wilhelm Bode was one of the undersigners of the original declaration, he and the art historian Hermann Grimm also took issue with the methods and conclusions of the council of art historians.¹⁰⁵ The conference and the exhibition, in other words, were not only remarkable for provoking a passionate public debate about art but also for creating an occasion for the discussion of what constituted ‘art historical evidence’ at a moment when independent art history

¹⁰³ “Erklärung,” [September 5, 1871] *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 6 (1871) 355. The declaration was signed by the following, all of whom were academics or curators: Alfred Woltmann, Moritz Thausing, Carl von Lütow, Adolph Bayersdorfer, Friedrich Lippmann, Wilhelm Lüpke, Bruno Meyer, Karl Woermann, G. Malss, Wilhelm Bode, S. Vögelin, Dr. Th. Gaedertz, Dr. W. Hensen, and Julius Meyer.

¹⁰⁴ Julius Hübner, et al., “Zur Holbeinfrage,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 7 (1872) 28.

¹⁰⁵ See Hermann Grimm, “Die Holbeinische Madonna,” *Preußische Jahrbücher* 28 (1871): 418-431 and Wilhelm Bode, “Zuschrift an Carl von Lütow vom 27.9.1871,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 7 (1872): 55-64.

departments were being established throughout the German-speaking world.¹⁰⁶ As art historians, connoisseurs, curators, critics, and artists contested their respective roles in this incipient *Kunstwissenschaft*, several kinds of methods based on different kinds of evidence were marshaled to determine authenticity: historical investigations of provenance, formal examinations of color, brush stroke, and proportions, chemical and physical analysis of *pentimenti*, retouching, and the deterioration of varnish as well as the Morellian method of examining the seemingly trivial details (*Kleinigkeiten*)—in this case, the extra finger which the child figure in the lower left corner of the Darmstadt Madonna had.¹⁰⁷

Fechner carefully considered all of the above-mentioned methods, which must have attracted his attention as he prepared *Zur experimentellen Ästhetik* and *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, because they approached aesthetic questions empirically rather than conceptually. In 1867 he even traveled to Basel to examine Holbein's preparatory studies for the painting. But he also employed a different method, which was quite unorthodox for connoisseurship. Between August 15th and October 15th, 1871, Fechner left a notebook in front of the controversial Madonna paintings, which were on display in the main gallery of Gemäldegalerie, and asked the visitors to express their opinion about the paintings' authenticity. Of the 11,842 visitors, only 113 answered Fechner's survey and of those only 34 guessed the original correctly.¹⁰⁸ This method of surveying would become crucial for Fechner's experimental aesthetics and would anticipate modern sampling techniques. Because the public opinion seemed to be overwhelmingly in favor of the Dresden Madonna—hardly a surprising result given that the event took place in Dresden—Fechner erroneously concluded that the Dresden Madonna was the original Holbein painting. This could be accounted for what Fechner described in the book that

¹⁰⁶ The inclusion of *Wissenschaft* in the phrase did not necessarily mean that the study of art was now a natural science but only denoted a commitment to rigorous scholarship. For the significance of the word *Wissenschaft*, see footnote 6 of this chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Ivan Lermolieff (Giovanni Morelli), *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden, und Berlin. Ein kritischer Versuch*, trans. Johannes Schwarze (Leipzig: Seemann, 1880). Also see the brilliant essays by Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of a Scientific Paradigm," *Theory and Society* 7.3 (May 1979): 273-288 and "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm" in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press [1986] 1989): 158-209.

¹⁰⁸ Lasswitz, *Gustav Theodor Fechner*, cited above, 97.

he published on the matter in 1871 as the “solidarity of the question of beauty (*Schönheitsfrage*) with [that] of authenticity (*Aechtheitsfrage*).”¹⁰⁹ Fechner’s eudemonistic principle played a crucial role in this conclusion: it was only to be expected, Fechner reasoned, that what immediately struck the average visitor (who, he assumed, had a medium or high level of education) as aesthetically pleasing would also be the original Holbein.¹¹⁰

Of all the different kinds of evidence brought in to bear on the controversy, Fechner’s experimental method was the only one that required neither expertise nor intellectual acumen in examining the artworks. If there was any kind of expertise involved in the experiment, it was employed in the design and interpretation of the survey; the laypeople who saw the paintings, it was assumed, could neither have knowledge about the historical origins of the works nor familiarity with Holbein’s brushstrokes nor could they be expected to afford the sustained attention to detail that the experts demonstrated. Fechner thus placed his trust in what could be called the ‘connoisseurship of the body’: he assumed that what was experienced by the layperson as corporeal pleasure could substitute the knowledge gained by authoritative experts through sophisticated methods. What made the technique reliable in Fechner’s eyes was that the survey measured an average response rather than a singular one. If the question of beauty was inseparable from the question of authenticity, as Fechner suggested, then the corporeal sensations of pleasure and displeasure should not only guide the subject in decisions regarding moral action but also provide reliable knowledge about the world. The problem was that pleasure and displeasure seemed to have no necessary connection to valid knowledge, at least in this particular case. Fechner had been simply wrong in declaring the Dresden Madonna as the original.

That Fechner’s psychophysics failed alarmingly in its epistemological claims did not seem to impair its popularity in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, Fechner was joined by an increasing number of intellectuals who

¹⁰⁹ Fechner, *Ueber die Aechtheitsfrage der Holbein’schen Madonna*, cited above, 19-20.

¹¹⁰ In the foreword to his final work *Kollektivmasslehre*, Fechner cited the Belgian statistician Quetelet, who had theorized *l’homme moyen*, the average man, to be used in statistical analysis. Fechner, *Kollektivmasslehre* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1897).

similarly prioritized corporeal pleasure over intellectual contemplation. Commenting on the Holbein controversy a decade later, the historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) would argue that it would be more correct to enjoy the ‘inauthentic’ Dresden painting in its own right than to resort to the scholarly research methods of art historians and connoisseurs. Burckhardt argued that the Dresden Madonna would eventually find its rightful place in the public opinion, regardless of the devaluation that it had endured. “Fortunately, the painting remains to us unwithered,” he said in a lecture in 1882, “it speaks for itself.”¹¹¹ The next generation of art historians, including Burckhardt’s student Heinrich Wölfflin, would have to undertake some theoretical maneuvering in order to find a place in art historical scholarship for the kind of aesthetic pleasure that Fechner had theorized.

Kinaesthesia and Constructing Bodily Knowledge

The psychophysical body appropriated by reformers for their program of a new aesthetics at the end of the nineteenth century, however, turned out to be not nearly as sensualistic as its advocates claimed. Liberal intellectuals in Imperial Germany could not abandon the opportunity to reform society through an understanding of the body that was made possible by psychophysics; nor could they realize their pedagogical aspirations with a conception of the body whose sensitivity to pleasure and displeasure was heightened at the expense of its intellectual capabilities. Given their anxieties about the declining of *Bildung* and the emergence of mass culture, they turned to ‘alternative’ kinds of knowledge which did not require the intellect but would be produced and interpreted by the body. What was imagined as the goal of the new aesthetics, then, was neither a desiring body nor a laboring body but one which always worked at converting its visceral sensations into knowledge, albeit of an unorthodox kind. One capability of the body came to the forefront in these theorizations: kinaesthesia, that is, the ability of the body to sense its own movements and use them to draw its own epistemological conclusions. Kinaesthesia was ratiocination by way of the body: it was the closest one could get to something resembling reflection without involving the mind. To this end, it was

¹¹¹ Jacob Burckhardt, “Über die Echtheit alter Bilder” [Lecture delivered on February 21, 1882] in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 14 *Vorträge* (Stuttgart, Berlin, and Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1933) 268.

necessary to turn to a mainly Anglo-Saxon empiricist tradition that theorized bodily movement as a source of knowledge.¹¹² Drawing from empiricism, Hermann von Helmholtz would provide the most compelling theory of the body as a site of knowledge in Germany.

Kinaesthesia had been studied before Helmholtz under a variety of other names, including “inner sense,” “organic” or “visceral sensibility”—all referring to those unclassifiable sensations which could not be traced accurately to one of the five known sense organs, but seemed to originate from the undifferentiated mass of the viscera.¹¹³ However, it was not until the early nineteenth century that “muscle sense” was officially declared a “sixth sense” in its own right. The credit for the invention of the muscle sense is usually given to two scientists: Charles Bell (1774-1842) and François Magendie (1783-1855), working in England and France respectively in the mid-1820s.¹¹⁴ Bell and Magendie independently discovered that the nerves carrying sensory impulses and those carrying motor impulses were attached to different parts of the spinal cord. Their

¹¹² The literature on the muscle sense is vast. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, see Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Psychology (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855); Alexander Bain, The Senses and the Intellect (London: J. W. Parker, 1855); H. Charlton Bastian, “On the ‘Muscular Sense’ and on the Physiology of Thinking,” The British Medical Journal (May 1, 1869): 394-396; George Henry Lewes, “Motor-Feelings and the Muscular Sense,” Brain 1 (London) (1878): 14-28; G. Stanley Hall, “Laura Bridgman,” Mind 4.14 (April 1879): 149-172; Charlton Bastian, The Brain as an Organ of the Mind (New York: Appleton, 1880): 691-700; Burtis Burr Breese, “On Inhibition,” Psychological Monograph 3.1 (1899): 18-21, 44-48, 59-60; William James, Principles of Psychology, vol. 2 (New York: H. Holt, 1890): 492-522; W. B. Pillsbury, “Does the Sensation of Movement Originate in the Joint?” The American Journal of Psychology 12.3 (April 1901): 346-353; Charles H. Judd, “Movement and Consciousness,” Psychological Review 7 Monograph supp. 9 (1905); W. B. Pillsbury, “The Place of Movement in Consciousness,” Psychological Review 18 (1911): 83-99.

¹¹³ See M. F. X. Bichat, Anatomie générale appliquée à la physiologie et à la médecine (Paris: Brosson, Gabon, 1801); J. G. Steinbuch, Beytrag zur Physiologie der Sinne (Nuremberg: Schrag, 1811); and Thomas Brown, “Muscular Sensations” in Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind (Edinburgh: W. & C. Tait, 1820).

¹¹⁴ For the first mention of the muscle sense in 1826, see Bell, “On the Nervous Circle which Connects the Voluntary Muscles with the Brain,” Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London 116 (1826): 163-173. Bell’s Nervous System of the Human Body (1830) and Idea of a New Anatomy of the Brain (1811) are considered the ‘Magna Carta’ of neurology. It was here that Bell published the difference between sensory and motor nerves and discussed the muscle sense. In 1822, François Magendie in Bordeaux published similar but significantly better demonstrated results. To this day, there remains some controversy as to which man made the discovery first; for that reason, the discovery is often referred to as the Bell-Magendie law. The differentiation of the nervous traffic is considered the first important step toward an investigation of the activity of the nerves. This is also considered the starting point for Charles Sherrington’s theory of reflex action. See Paul E. Cranefield, The Way In and the Way Out: François Magendie, Charles Bell, and the Roots of Spinal Nerves, History of Medicine Series, vol. 41 (Mount Kisco, NY: Futura, 1974).

findings suggested that if muscles were capable of receiving sensations as well as carrying out movements, they might have a sentience comparable to that of the eye or the ear. Bell described the muscle sense as follows:

When a blind man or a man blindfolded stands upright, neither leaning upon nor touching aught, by what means does he maintain his erect position? The symmetry of his body is not the cause. A statue of the finest proportion must be soldered to its pedestal, or the wind will cast it down.... It is obvious that he has a sense by which he knows the inclination of his body; and that he has a ready aptitude to adjust the parts of it, so as to correct any deviation from the perpendicular. What sense then is this? For he touches nothing, and sees nothing; there is no organ of sense hitherto observed which can serve him, or in any degree aid him.... It can only be by the adjustment of the muscles that the limbs are stiffened, the body firmly balanced and kept erect.... It must be a property internal to the frame by which this position of the members of our body: and what can this be but a consciousness of the degree of action and the adjustment of the muscles?¹¹⁵

The conclusions drawn from this discovery were crucial but also somewhat contradictory. First of all, it was agreed that the muscle sense was a reliable source of knowledge: Bell argued that much of the knowledge and enjoyment which were usually attributed to the other senses in fact came from the newly inaugurated muscle sense.¹¹⁶ Kinaesthesia thus seemed to promise a satisfactory answer to the troubling problem first posed by the Irish philosopher William Molyneux in the seventeenth century: can a man born blind tell the difference between a cube and a globe that he has known only by touch, when he suddenly gains his sight later in life?¹¹⁷ Despite the variety of answers to this puzzle in existing epistemologies, the divide between the five known senses—particularly between

¹¹⁵ Charles Bell, The Hand, Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design (New York: Harper and Brothers, [1833] 1855) 149. In this fascinating little book, Bell defined the muscle sense as the consciousness of muscular exertion. The book was published as part of the Bridgewater Treatises, a series of publications made possible by an endowment established in 1829 for the purpose of publicizing works that would support the “argument from design.”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹¹⁷ William Molyneux posed the following question to Locke in a letter written on July 7, 1688: “A Man, being born blind, and having a Globe and a Cube, nigh of the same bigness, committed into his Hands, and being taught or Told, which is Called the Globe, and which the Cube, so as easily to distinguish them by his Touch or Feeling; Then both being taken from Him, and Laid on a Table, let us suppose his Sight Restored to Him; Whether he Could, by his sight, and before he touch them, know which is the Globe and which the Cube? Or Whether he could know by his sight, before he stretched out his Hand, whether he Could not Reach them, tho they were Removed 20 or 1000 feet from him.”

sight and touch—remained unaccounted for. The muscle sense was thus not only a source of knowledge in itself, but because it was unique in being at once the object and subject of perception, it firmly anchored the other senses in the world, thereby inserting the subject into a world of ‘real’ relationships.¹¹⁸ However, kinaesthesia also posed critical questions about the sovereignty of this subject. On the one hand, the muscle sense finalized the demise of the already obsolete theory of “sympathies” by proving once and for all that every nervous path had to make recourse to a center, such as the spinal cord.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, the separation of the nerve traffic also meant that muscles, equipped with sensory and motor nerves and responsible for the organism’s motility, could now be understood as self-governing entities on the peripheries of the body. This meant that the sovereignty of the unitary self of the nineteenth century was no longer certain. Furthermore, kinaesthesia complicated definitions of voluntary and involuntary action—a dichotomy that would be challenged in various other ways throughout the nineteenth century: should human actions, such as the reflex, now be understood to be determined by an immutable central core or by the monad-like components that were dispersed throughout the body?¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ The American psychologist G. S. Hall wrote: “Muscular sense is thus absolutely unique in that the incommensurability between the form of external excitation and subjective sensation found in every other sense does not exist here. It is the motion of the limb, the muscle, the nerve-end itself, which responds by the feeling not of heat, light or sound, but of motion again. This sense is not a mere sign of some unknown *Ding an sich*. Movement, as perceived directly by consciousness, is not even found heterogeneous in quality when perceived indirectly by the special senses of sight and touch. No degree of subjective or objective analysis, though it may simplify and intercalate any number of forms, can change its essential character as motion. This, together with its entoperipheral nature, gives it a high degree of non-inferential immediacy, a priori to the action of any special sense. We can thus strictly say of muscular activity, what Schopenhauer asserted of our knowledge of the whole body, though in a much stricter sense than this.” G. S. Hall, “The Muscular Perception of Space,” *Mind* 3.12 (1878) 441-442.

¹¹⁹ According to the theory of “sympathies” or “consensus,” different parts of the body communicated with each other without the intervention of the centers of the nervous system. Reflex, by contrast, signified a reflection from a center and back to the peripheries. For a history of the reflex, see Georges Canguilhem, “The Concept of Reflex” in *A Vital Rationalist: Selected Writings*, ed. François Delaporte (New York: Zone Books, 1994): 179-202; and Edwin Clarke and L. S. Jacyna, *Nineteenth-Century Origins of Neuroscientific Concepts* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987). Marshall Hall talked of a “reflex arc,” which would be the basis of Dewey’s reflex arc concept. In contrast, Bell talked of the “reflex circle,” which granted muscles sensory capabilities. John Dewey, “The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology,” *Psychological Review* 3 (1896): 357-70.

¹²⁰ The collapse of the distinction between voluntary and involuntary action (and to a certain extent between the conscious and the unconscious) took place over a long period in the course of the nineteenth century. The discussions surrounding reflex action and the rise of spiritualism in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for example, are chapters in this history. It is also important to keep in mind that the

It was Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894), the revered physicist and physiologist, who theorized kinaesthesia in a manner which would prove to be amenable to the advocates of the new aesthetics at the end of the century.¹²¹ In many ways, Helmholtz's theorization of the muscle sense as an alternative form of knowledge was a response to the mechanism versus teleology controversy, which has already been discussed in the previous sections, but Helmholtz's position in these debates was radically different from Fechner's. Helmholtz had attracted much attention in the scientific world by publishing a momentous paper on the conservation of energy, which was formulated to eliminate theories of *Lebenskraft* (vital force) from the universe.¹²² It is for this reason that historians have labeled Helmholtz—along with his fellow colleagues Emil du Bois-Reymond, Carl Ludwig, and Rudolf Virchow—"reductionists": although these liberal-minded scientists were reluctant to take their arguments to the political extremes that the materialists did, they wanted to understand all phenomena, including organisms, in terms of physical laws.

We have already seen several nineteenth-century attempts to neutralize the teleology debate: Protestant theology's division of knowledge into *Wissen*, *Glaube*, and *Ahnung*, Fechner's psychophysical parallelism, and Haeckel's aesthetic "argument from design." Helmholtz too would appeal to aesthetics, but in doing so he would invent an ingenious connection between aesthetics and knowledge. Drawing from Kant's assignment of mechanistic and teleological explanations to different categories of thought, Helmholtz proposed dealing with the mechanism versus teleology debate by driving a wedge between the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and the human sciences

terms of the debate were different before Freud gave these concepts a hierarchical structure and linked them to culture and society in an unprecedented way.

¹²¹ The bibliography on Helmholtz is too vast to be listed here. For a very thorough list of Helmholtz's own writings see the bibliography published in Russell Kahl, ed., *Selected Writings of Hermann von Helmholtz* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971). For writings on Helmholtz, see the bibliography in David Cahan, ed., *Hermann von Helmholtz and the Foundations of Nineteenth-Century Science* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California, 1993).

¹²² Hermann von Helmholtz, "Ueber die Erhaltung der Kraft," cited above. Also see Helmholtz, "The Application of the Law of the Conservation of Force to Organic Nature," *Proceedings of the Royal Institute* 3 (1861): 347-357 and in Russell Kahl, ed., *Selected Writings of Hermann Helmholtz* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971): 109-121. For Helmholtz's political inclinations, see Timothy Lenoir, "The Politics of Vision: Optics, Painting, and Ideology in Germany 1845-1880," *Stanford Humanities Review* 2.2-3, Special Issue "Encoding the Eye" (Spring 1992): 71-86.

(*Geisteswissenschaften*).¹²³ In a lecture delivered in 1862, he explained how Hegelian teleological thinking had proven to be incompatible with the heap of empirical evidence accumulated in the natural sciences.¹²⁴ Idealist philosophy had certainly made matters worse, Helmholtz argued, but the debate had its foundation in the nature of things: the human sciences required memory, an intuitive approach, and psychological insight whereas the natural sciences proceeded inductively in order to understand cause and effect and to discover general laws.¹²⁵ In other words, at stake was not only disciplinary approaches and methods of explanation but also different modes of knowledge appropriate for each side of the disciplinary divide. Helmholtz decided for this reason that the natural sciences used “logical induction,” while the human sciences employed what he curiously called “aesthetic induction.”¹²⁶ In a lecture that he delivered in 1868, Helmholtz elaborated on this difference as one between two different kinds of knowing, *Wissen* and *Kennen*:

Besides the knowledge (*Wissen*) which has to do with Notions, and is, therefore, capable of expression in words, there is another department of our mental operations, which may be described as knowledge of the relations of those impressions on the senses which are not capable of direct verbal expression. For instance, when we say that we “know” (*kennen*) a man, a road, a fruit, a perfume, we mean that we have seen, or tasted, or smelt these objects.... And yet it is certain that this kind of knowledge (*Kennen*) may attain the highest possible degree of precision and certainty, and is so far not inferior to any knowledge (*Wissen*) which can be expressed in words.... It is an important part of the former kind of

¹²³ See M. Norton Wise, “On the Relation of Physical Science to History in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in *Functions and Uses of Disciplinary Histories*, vol. 7, eds. Loren Graham, Wolf Lepenies, and Peter Weingart (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983): 3-34.

¹²⁴ Helmholtz, “Ueber das Verhältniss der Naturwissenschaften zur Gesammtheit der Wissenschaften,” [1862] in *Vorträge und Reden* vol. 1 (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1903). Translated as “On the Relation of Natural Science to Science in General” in *Science and Culture: Popular and Philosophical Essays*, ed., David Cahan (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 76-95. I will be citing the English translation.

¹²⁵ Helmholtz, “On the Relation of Natural Science to Science in General,” cited above, 81-85.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 85. Helmholtz also used a similar distinction to account for Goethe’s refusal to accept Newton’s color theory in the earlier lecture “Ueber Goethes naturwissenschaftliche Arbeiten” [1853] in *Vorträge und Reden*, vol. 1, cited above, 23-47. Translated as “On Goethe’s Scientific Researches” in *Science and Culture*, cited above, 1-17. For a longer explication of “unconscious inference,” also see “Die Thatsachen in der Wahrnehmung” [1878] in *Vorträge und Reden*, vol. 2, cited above, 213-247, 387-406. Translated into English as “Facts of Perception” in *Selected Writings of Hermann von Helmholtz*, cited above, 366-408.

knowledge to be acquainted with the particular innervation of muscles, which is necessary in order to produce any effect we intend by moving our limbs.... It is important to notice that this “knowledge” of the effort of the will to be exerted must attain the highest possible degree of certainty, accuracy, and precision, for us to be able to maintain so artificial a balance as is necessary for walking on stilts or for skating, for the singer to know how to strike a note with his voice, or the violin-player with his finger, so exactly that its vibration shall not be out by a hundredth part.¹²⁷

Wissen was conventional knowledge associated with conscious cognition and concepts. It proceeded from the particular to the universal in the same way that a logician arrived at an inference from major and minor premisses. Because *Wissen* allowed itself to be expressed in language, it was in this form of knowledge that thousands of years of human civilization had accumulated and been preserved.¹²⁸ *Kennen*, on the other hand, was a mere familiarity with phenomena. Although it had been discussed before under such names as “intuition,” “unconscious ratiocination,” or “sensible intelligibility,” Helmholtz noted, its exact mechanism and potential had not been fully recognized.¹²⁹ If *Wissen* operated with logical induction, *Kennen* depended on aesthetic induction. The latter was akin to the process used by sense organs to draw “unconscious inferences” (*unbewusste Schlüsse*) from the sensations that they received. In other words, according to Helmholtz, apperception, the basis of consciousness, was paradoxically realized through unconscious activity.

Helmholtz demonstrated this in vision. Advocates of immanent teleology had traditionally made their “argument from design” using the example of the eye, whose perfection, it was argued, proved beyond any doubt the existence of a Creator. Helmholtz stressed, over against such teleological arguments, that the eye had several physiological flaws—such as chromatic and spherical aberration or imperfect transparency—which made it prey to numerous visual illusions.¹³⁰ What ultimately

¹²⁷ Helmholtz, “Die neueren Fortschritte in der Theorie des Sehens” [1868] in *Vorträge und Reden*, vol. 2, cited above, 265-365. Translated as “The Recent Progress of the Theory of Vision” in *Science and Culture*, cited above, 127-203 (here pp. 198-199). I will be citing the English translation.

¹²⁸ Helmholtz, “The Recent Progress of the Theory of Vision,” cited above, 200.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 145-147. Darwin was probably not aware of Helmholtz’s argument about the imperfection of the eye before the first edition of *The Origin of the Species*, but by the time of the ‘definitive’ sixth edition, the

allowed one to have a correct perception of the world, then, was neither a well-designed physiology nor an innate ability to reason. Rather, the work of correcting illusions and anchoring the subject in a world of ‘real’ relationships was done exclusively by muscles—in this case, by the eye muscles which overcame the inherent defects of the organ by constantly aligning and re-aligning themselves.¹³¹ The functioning of muscles was comparable to the operations of logic: muscles were able to draw valid conclusions from the major and minor premisses of sense impressions. *Kennen*, then, was ratiocination by way of muscles. That it was realized unconsciously on the peripheries of the body rather than by a conscious mind, Helmholtz suggested, did not detract from *Kennen*’s precision and reliability. The future held much promise for *Kennen*:

The elementary signs of language are only twenty-six letters, and yet what wonderfully varied meanings can we express and communicate by their combination! Consider, in comparison with this, the enormous number of elementary signs with which the machinery of sight is provided. We may take the number of fibers in the optic nerves as two hundred and fifty thousand.... No wonder, then, if our senses speak to us in language which can express far more delicate distinctions and richer varieties than can be conveyed by words.¹³²

There was one realm where the muscular, non-verbal *Kennen* had already reached a high level of sophistication, from which vantage point it could challenge conventional knowledge: aesthetics. It was for this reason that Helmholtz dubbed the type of ratiocination that was performed by muscles “aesthetic induction”—elegant, well-

following passage was added: “Helmholtz, whose judgment no one will dispute, after describing in the strongest terms the wonderful power of the human eye, adds these remarkable words: ‘That which we have discovered in the way of inexactness and imperfection in the optical machine and in the image on the retina, is as nothing in comparison with the incongruities which we have just come across in the domain of the sensations. One might say that nature has taken delight in accumulating contradictions in order to remove all foundations from the theory of a pre-existing harmony between the external and the internal.’ If our reason leads us to admire with enthusiasm a multitude of inimitable contrivances in nature, this same reason tells us, through we may easily err on both sides, that some other contrivances are less perfect.” Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, Sixth Edition with Additions and Corrections (London: John Murray, [1859] 1872) 214. This observation was made by Gillian Beer, “‘Authentic Tidings of Invisible Things’: Vision and the Invisible in the Later Nineteenth Century” in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, eds. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York and London: Routledge, 1996) 90.

¹³¹ For Helmholtz’s definition of “the real” (*das Wirkliche*), “the actual” (*das Reelle*), “the essential” (*das Sachliche*), and “the objective,” (*das Objective*), see “The Facts of Perception,” cited above, 388.

¹³² Helmholtz, “The Recent Progress of the Theory of Vision,” cited above, 202.

designed, visceral thought. Just as he anchored geometry and arithmetic in human experience, Helmholtz put the human body in the foreground of all kinds of cognition. Kinaesthesia, in other words, was not just any bodily movement; in Helmholtz's theorization it now denoted competences of the body that could readily be converted into knowledge. It is easy to see how Helmholtz's "representational theory of perception" lent itself to reformist thinking. Helmholtz suggested that insisting on the representational accuracy of sensory experience in depicting things-in-themselves amounted to nothing less than assuming a pre-established harmony between the world and the mind. According to Helmholtz, this was the fatal mistake of German Idealism. Even spatial representations, which seemed to promise accurate images of the world, were only signs; they did not show the actual properties of things *in* themselves but only served to guide the actions of the perceiving subject in mastering the relations *between* things. As a result, the relation between sensation and perception could always be altered by learning to exert nerve force in a controlled fashion. This was ultimately the appeal of kinaesthesia for reformers: an environment consistently producing the same kind of sensation would install certain habits in the subject and vice versa.

This strand of thinking was pushed to its extremes not in Europe but in the United States. The so-called "motor theory" of consciousness, developed by the joint efforts of psychologists such as John Dewey, Hugo Münsterberg, Charles H. Judd, Margaret Washburn, and ultimately by the behaviorist John B. Watson in the early twentieth century, maintained that all consciousness was conditioned, or at least accompanied, by the activity of the musculature.¹³³ In his influential theory of the reflex arc, for example, Dewey argued that "the so-called response [was] not merely *to* the stimulus, it [was] *into* it."¹³⁴ This amounted to claiming that there could be no stimulus without response. The motor theory depicted perception as a circuit: consciousness did not lie in a mind located centrally between the efferent (incoming) and afferent (outgoing) nervous traffic but was located as much on the peripheries of the body. Innervation signified an exertion of the

¹³³ For critical reviews of the motor theory of consciousness, see H. C. Mc Comas, "Extravagances in the Motor Theories of Consciousness," *The Psychological Review* 23.5 (September 1916): 397-407 and Herbert S. Langfeld, "The Historical Development of Response Psychology," *Science* 77.1993 (March 10, 1933): 243-50.

¹³⁴ John Dewey, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," *The Psychological Review* 3 (1896): 357-370.

muscles even in the absence of movement; it was assumed that energy traveled in the nervous networks of the body even when this energy never resulted in actual movement. In its more radical versions, the motor activity of the muscles was imagined to initiate cognition rather than being its end product. This meant not only that the body had a unique intelligence in its own right but also that the mind, the self, and consciousness were not self-constitutive as in the German idealist tradition, but rather were determined by a dynamic relationship with external stimuli. This inevitably shifted the emphasis from an immutable core of consciousness to the environment surrounding the body.¹³⁵ William James declared, for example, that the body's "neural machinery [was] but a hyphen between determinate arrangements of matter outside the body and determinate impulses to inhibition or discharge within its organs."¹³⁶ It is no wonder, then, that the Russian psychologist I. P. Pavlov, having read Helmholtz's *Physiological Optics*, would claim in 1927 that Helmholtz's famous "unconscious inferences" were nothing but conditioned reflexes.¹³⁷

Kinaesthesia, then, offered aesthetics discipline in both senses of the word: it promised to make a coherent body of knowledge out of individual aesthetic inductions and it introduced concrete practices with which this knowledge could be turned into habits. As we will see in the cases that I will examine in the chapters that follow, the new aesthetic discourse abounded with such practices: from comparative looking to kinaesthetic sketching, from projecting slides to automatic writing the new aesthetics of corporeal experience became a theory of practice. These practices, converted into 'mindless habits' in pedagogy, would make their way into twentieth-century modernism. Kinaesthesia's seeming freedom from thought and language, however, brought back the old Molyneux

¹³⁵ The revival of Lamarck after the publication of *Origin of Species* is interesting in this regard. Neo-Lamarckianism emphasized the influence of the environment on the organism. See Richard von Wettstein, *Der Neo-Lamarckismus und seine Beziehungen zum Darwinismus* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1903) and Dr. Langfeldt, *Der Neo-Lamarckismus* (Munich: Otto Gmelin, 1910). Historians have made the argument that neo-Lamarckianism preserved natural theology's "argument from design" by pointing to the harmony between the organism and the environment. See David N. Livingstone, "Natural Theology and Neo-Lamarckism: The Changing Context of Nineteenth-Century Geography in the United States and Great Britain," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74.1 (March 1984): 9-28.

¹³⁶ William James, "What is an Emotion?" *Mind* 9.34 (April 1884) 190.

¹³⁷ I. P. Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes. An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex*, trans. G. V. Anrep (New York: Dover, [1927] 1960).

problem in new form. In the absence of an inter-subjective medium that could transfer one person's muscle sense to another individual, the inner experience would remain impossibly private and isolated. It is for this reason the new aesthetics fulfilled its promise most convincingly when it manifested itself as public performance: whether in the cultish opening ceremony of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony in 1901, in the coalescence of architecture and eurhythmics in the garden city of Hellerau, or in the art historian Wölfflin's performances in his well-attended double slide lectures.

CHAPTER 2:

HERMANN OBRIST'S KINAESTHETIC PRACTICES

An Aesthetic Conversion

If his apocryphal autobiography “Ein glückliches Leben” is to be believed, the Jugendstil artist Hermann Obrist (1863-1927) was born twice—once spiritually and once physically.¹ He experienced the spiritual birth, he claimed, through his mother when she visited Dresden with her family as an eight-year-old girl. Coming from a Puritan Scottish family, who had for generations occupied themselves with colonialist commerce and the natural sciences, according to the story, she had never seen a painting in her life or heard a note of music—until she attended service at the monumental Schloßkirche in Dresden:

The service took its course. All of a sudden, however, the organ began to exert its overwhelming contrabass with all its omnipotence, and the space of the church trembled with powerful vibrations. The child trembled as well, let out a hushed cry, and passed out. There was great agitation. She was brought outside, where she quickly recovered. The girl was now to go home, but she resisted and fought back with hands and feet. Back into the church, she said, back to hear more music. She finally escaped back

¹ The typewritten manuscript of “Ein glückliches Leben. Eine Biographie des Künstlers, Forschers und Alleingängers Hermann Obrist,” (A Felicitous Life: A Biography of the Artist, Researcher, and Loner Hermann Obrist) which can be dated to 1926, is in the Obrist Archive (Obrist-Nachlass) at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich. Parts of it have been cited in a pamphlet by Silvie Lampe-von Bennigsen, *Hermann Obrist. Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbert Post Presse, 1971), but the citations are frequently not consistent with the original text. Although the original manuscript almost always uses the third-person (except for a few lapses into the first-person plural), it reads as an autobiography either written or dictated by the artist himself, especially because it contains passages that describe at length private experiences such as the ones I cite above. For a reflection on the conundrum of the third-person autobiography, see Phillippe Lejeune, “Autobiography in the Third Person,” trans. Annette Tomarken and Edward Tomarken, *New Literary History* 9.1, Special issue “Self-Confrontation and Social Vision” (Autumn 1977): 27-50.

and listened with ecstasy to the music from the organ, to this revelation of God.²

If Obrist's mother owed her life-long fascination with music to an ecstatic epiphany in a Baroque church, Obrist's own transformation from a scientist into an artist was due to an experience that was reportedly no less overwhelming. According to the autobiography, curiously written from the third-person perspective, on May 5th 1886 the twenty-three-year-old Obrist, who was studying medicine in Heidelberg at the time, experienced a vision:

...deeply absorbed in thought, he went walking on a sunny hill far from the city. He had just picked up an example of the *Silene nutaus* [sic] species and was contemplating the underlying principle in the division of its blossom when he was overcome by a subtle feeling of faintness. He looked up and into the distance. At this moment he saw emerge in the distance before him, on the other side of the Neckar river, a *fata Morgana*, just like the ones in the desert. Only what he saw was not the reflection of a reality but rather a clear vision of a strange, unknown city, a city with towers, temple-like edifices, and other strange buildings, the likes of which he had never seen anywhere before—neither in reality nor in pictures. The city seemed to be half transparent. Everything moved, appeared, disappeared, and re-appeared. One could look into the wonderful, interior architecture of houses, an architecture that was without precedent. He saw a large square with a fountain whose roof rested on ruby-colored columns, entwined with exquisitely crafted wrought-iron.³

This vision seized Obrist's body, suspended his senses, and rendered him temporarily unconscious. When it gradually dissolved, according to the autobiography, the young man fell into a long, deep sleep under the blazing heat of the sun. The vision returned a few months later in the Tauber valley as Obrist was taking a walk along the river by moonlight. This time Obrist did not only see a strange city, made from wooden architecture and adorned with beautiful gardens and fountains, but he also heard an inner voice order him: "Leave all your studies, go and build this." Upon hearing these words, Obrist claimed, his overpowered hands starting producing quick, spontaneous sketches of unusual architectonic and decorative forms. Inspired by the second vision, Obrist traveled on foot to Rothenburg and to Nuremberg, where, in his own words, "the spirit of

² Obrist, "Ein glückliches Leben," cited above, 2-3.

³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

the Gothic was powerfully awakened in him” and where for the first time in his life he drew passionately.⁴ A year later when the voice repeated the same command on Pfaueninsel near Potsdam even more forcefully, Obrist not only sketched compulsively at its urging but also made a resolution to give up his medical education and become an artist instead.⁵ For Obrist, who had ostensibly never received any artistic training, this was nothing short of the miraculous birth of “a new, inscrutable person” within.⁶

According to other sources, after giving up his studies at the University of Heidelberg, Obrist enrolled first at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Karlsruhe and then at the Académie Julien in Paris.⁷ However, he was as dissatisfied with the art education at these schools as he had been at the university, so he decided to abandon formal education altogether and work for a local ceramics master in Thüringen. With the fortune that he inherited

⁴ Ibid., 20-21. The critic Karl Scheffler described Obrist as one of the rare modern artists who could redeem the Gothic and the Rococo for the present. Karl Scheffler, “Hermann Obrist,” Die Architektur der Großstadt (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1913) 185-186.

⁵ Obrist, “Ein glückliches Leben,” cited above, 21.

⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁷ For biographical information on Obrist, see “Ein glückliches Leben” and the family documents in the Obrist archive O5, 6, 7, and 8. The novel Frau Bürgelin und ihre Söhne (1899) by Gabriele Reuter is also said to be loosely based on Obrist’s family. For more on Obrist’s biography, see Silvie Lampe-von Bennigsen, Hermann Obrist. Erinnerungen, cited above; Harald Szemann, “Hermann Obrist,” Visionäre Schweiz (Aarau, Frankfurt am Main, Salzburg: Sauerländer, 1991): 51-52; “Hermann Obrist” in Künstlerlexikon der Schweiz XX. Jahrhundert (Frauenfeld: Huber & Co., 1963); and Dagmar Rinker, Der Münchner Jugendstilkünstler Hermann Obrist (1862-1927) (Munich: tuduv, 2001). Other secondary literature on Obrist includes Hans Curjel, “Konfrontationen. Formensprache um 1900 and Gestaltungsmethoden des 20. Jahrhunderts,” Das Werk. Die schweizerische Monatschrift für Architektur, Kunst, künstlerische Gewerbe 39 (1952): 382-92; Siegfried Wichmann, Hermann Obrist. Wegbereiter der Moderne, Catalogue of the exhibition at Villa Stuck in Munich in March 1968 (Munich: Villa Stuck, 1968); Nina G. Parris, “Van de Velde, Obrist, Hoelzel. The Development of the Basic Course” in The Turn of the Century. German Literature and Art, 1890-1915, eds. Gerald Chapple and Hans H. Schulte (Bonn: Bouvier, 1981): 327-346; Peg Weiss, “Hermann Obrist” in Die Meister des Münchner Jugendstils, ed. Kathryn Bloom Hiesinger, Catalogue of the exhibition “Art Nouveau in Munich: Masters of Jugendstil” at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at the Munich Stadtmuseum (Munich: Prestel, 1988): 53-62; Bernd Apke, “‘Gehe hin und bilde dieses!’ Die Bedeutung der Visionen Hermann Obrists für sein künstlerisches Werk” in Okkultismus und Avantgarde. Von Munch bis Mondrian 1900-1915, eds. Hellmut Seeman, Veit Loers, et. al. (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, 1995): 686-701; Reto Niggli, “Hermann Obrist: Spitzenwirbelspirale” in Wege in die Moderne. Münchner Jugendstil, eds. Hans Ottomeyer and Margot Brandlhuber (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1997): 23-52; and “Hermann Obrist” in Schönheit der Formen. Textilien des Münchner Jugendstils, eds. Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Wolfgang Till (Munich; Villa Stuck, 2004): 10-16. Much of the older secondary literature—and some of the more recent literature—in German suffers from a teleological account of modernism whose main thrust is an inevitable urge towards abstraction. According to this narrative, Obrist is an important figure because he paved the way for the abstraction of Kandinsky and the pedagogical program of the Bauhaus.



Fig. 3.1: Hermann Obrist, Embroidery known as *Peitschenhieb* (Whiplash) or *Alpenveilchen* (Cyclamen), c. 1895.

from his aristocratic mother, he settled for a few years in Florence where he set up sculpture and embroidery ateliers with the family friend Berthe Ruchet, who executed his designs with the help of local Italian women.⁸ (Fig. 3.1) When he returned to Germany in 1895, an exhibition of these embroideries with unusual forms was received with such intense enthusiasm in Munich that he was instantly declared to have found the “new modern style” that everyone was looking for.⁹ For the

⁸ Berthe Ruchet was close to Sophia Goudsikker and Anita Augspurg, owners of the Elvira Photography Studio designed by August Endell (See the next chapter). This was a circle of women who were active in the local organization “Verein für Fraueninteressen” (Association for Women’s Concerns), which was founded in 1894 to further the political rights and the professional training of women. For a history of this organization, see Renate Lindemann, *100 Jahre Verein für Fraueninteressen* (Munich: Verein für Fraueninteressen, 1994). Although Obrist often spoke for women’s rights and admitted many women into his school, he never acknowledged the role that women played in producing the embroideries, to which he owed his rise to fame. When his reviewers mentioned how Obrist took on what had hitherto been considered an exclusively domestic art, he was usually praised for reforming the idle, dilettantish, and even hysteric, tendencies of women. See for example, W. Fred, “A Chapter on German Arts and Crafts with Special Reference to the Work of Hermann Obrist,” *The Artist* (New York) 19 (1901): 22. “Obrist’s services to the art of embroidery cannot be overrated. He was the first artist in Germany to protest against a bad dilettantism that had been hallowed by decades of tradition. It is true that the mania of the German woman to waste her time with ugly and useless needlework, had for years formed a favourite subject for farce and comic paper, but the horrible patterns continued to hold their own, and women and girls kept on producing embroideries that were only judged by the difficulty of the stitch, or, worse still, by the duration of the labour.... The educational value of the artistic improvement of needle-work needs no explaining; it is the most natural artistic occupation of woman. But it must not become mechanical.... Individual selection of design and colour, mental contact between the worker and the designing artist, are necessary for the educational value of this occupation, and for a beneficial development for this branch of industrial art.”

⁹ Two articles published in an issue of the Jugendstil journal *Pan* played an important role in making Obrist’s reputation. Georg Fuchs, “Hermann Obrist,” *Pan* 1.5 (1895/96): 318-25 and Wilhelm Bode, “Hermann Obrist,” *Pan* 1.5 (1895/96): 326-28. In the subsequent years, Obrist’s work was reviewed frequently by critics and usually extravagantly praised: Mary Logan, “Hermann Obrist’s Embroidered Decorations,” *The Studio* 9.44 (1896/97): 98-105; Leopold Gmelin, “Die Stickereien von H. Obrist,” *Zeitschrift des Bayerischen Kunstgewerbevereins in München* 46.1 (1896): 74-75; Anon., “Hermann Obrist,” *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898): 139-139; Anon., “Zu den Arbeiten Obrist’s,” *Dekorative Kunst* 3.5 (1900): 196-198; W. Fred, “A Chapter on German Arts and Crafts with Special Reference to the Work of Hermann Obrist,” cited above, 17-26; Felix Popenberg, “Vom Leben und vom Tode,” *Kunstgewerbe für’s Haus* 4 (1902): 124-126; Lothar von Kunowski, “Hermann Obrist, ein Beginner,” *Durch Kunst zum Leben*, vol. 2. *Schöpferische Kunst* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1902): 221-244; Anon., “Hermann Obrist’s Grabdenkmäler,” *Dekorative Kunst* 6.6 (1903): 227; Karl Scheffler, “Hermann Obrist,” *Kunst und Künstler* 8 (1910): 555-559; E. W. Bredt, “Ein neues Grabmal von Hermann Obrist,” *Dekorative Kunst* 8 (1904/1905): 118-121; W. Frank, “Ein neues Grabmal von Hermann Obrist,” *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 15 (1904/1905): 15; Henry van de Velde, “Ein Brunnen von Hermann Obrist,” *Kunst und Künstler* 12 (1913/1914): 38-42; Karl Scheffler, “Hermann Obrist” in *Die Architektur der Großstadt*

rest of his life, Obrist lived and worked in Munich.¹⁰ Here he continued to produce artifacts which were often at the intersection of architecture, sculpture, and the applied arts. (Fig. 3.2) The sculpture depicted here, completed in 1895 and subsequently dubbed “Movement” by art historians, conveys Obrist’s unique sense of ornament: Obrist frequently arranged vaguely organic forms—usually borrowed from popular scientific texts—in spirals or diagonal formations to capture dynamic form three-dimensionally.



Fig. 3.2: Hermann Obrist, Plaster sculpture known as *Bewegung* (Movement), c. 1895.

Equally important was Obrist’s role as a pedagogue in Munich. He was a founding member of the “Vereinigten Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk” (United Workshops for Art in Handicraft), an organization, which was founded in 1898—that is, a decade before the German Werkbund—in order to bring together artists, artisans, and entrepreneurs under the rubric of good design and actively participated in the lively turn-of-the-century reform debates concerning the applied arts (*Kunstgewerbe*) and art education (*Kunsterziehung*). Obrist supported the incipient women’s movement as well: he was close to many women in the local organization

(Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1913): 181-186; E. W. Bredt, “Hermann Obrist 1862-1927,” *Dekorative Kunst* 29.1 (1927): 199-200; and Wolf Georg Jakob, “Erinnerungen an Hermann Obrist,” *Dekorative Kunst* (1928): 108,126.

¹⁰ Politically and economically overshadowed by Berlin, Munich emerged as a capital of the arts at the end of the nineteenth century. The Schwabing district of Munich in particular was seen to be center of “Kunststadt München”. The Munich Secession, founded in 1892 against the official Münchener Künstlergenossenschaft with its connections to the Royal Academy of the Fine Arts catalyzed artistic movements such as the Neu-Dachau (1894), Luitpoldgruppe (1896), Vereinigte Werkstätten für Kunst und Handwerk (1897). Munich would also be home to the expressionist Der Blaue Reiter in the following decades. Among the journals that were published in the city were *Jugend*, which gave Jugendstil its name, the satirical journal *Simplicissimus*, and *Dekorative Kunst*. The city also hosted the playwright Ibsen, the painter Kandinsky, and the poets of the Stefan George Circle. For a thorough account of the complicated history of groups of artists in Munich at this historical moment, see Maria Makela, *The Munich Secession: Art and Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Munich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990) and *Schwabing. Kunst und Leben um 1900*, 2 vols. (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1998).

“Verein für Fraueninteressen” (Association for Women’s Concerns).¹¹ His most important pedagogic endeavor, however, was a private art school, “Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst,” (Atelier for Teaching and Experimenting in Applied and Free Art; also known as the Debschitz School), which he co-founded along with the painter Wilhelm von Debschitz (1871-1948) in the bohemian Schwabing district of Munich. This school promised to challenge the training offered at both the Beaux-Art-style academies and the schools of applied arts (*Kunstgewerbeschulen*) by emphasizing practical, hands-on experimentation instead of theoretical instruction. Obrist claimed that the impulsive, free-hand sketches that he had produced during his initial occult encounters would be a constant source of inspiration in his career as one of the most prominent artists and pedagogues of the Munich Jugendstil at the turn of the twentieth century.¹²

Appealing to occult forces was by no means an unusual cultural practice at the turn of the century; we know that many intellectuals in Munich were members of the numerous occult clubs that dotted the city’s vibrant cultural landscape.¹³ According to Obrist’s own testimony, it was not as if he was unaccustomed to occult experiences either: his first vision came at the age of eleven, a few seconds before he was told about his brother’s

¹¹ Obrist wrote several essays on the role of the applied arts, the question of an art for the masses, luxury, and the politics of art in Munich. These include: “Hat das Publikum ein Interesse das Kunstgewerbe zu Heben?” [1897] *Kunstgewerbeblatt* N.F. 11.4 (1900): 62-73; “Volkskunst,” [1900] in *Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903): 84-89; “Luxuskunst oder Volkskunst?” *Dekorative Kunst* 5.3 (1901): 81-99; “Die Antwort durch die That,” *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* 213-214 (May 7-8, 1901): 2; “Zweckmäßig oder phantasievoll?” [1901] in *Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903): 117-130; “Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst” (1901) in *Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903): 131-168; “Götterdämmerung. Eine Betrachtung, nur für Nicht-Münchener geschrieben” in *Münchens “Niedergang als Kunststadt”* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1902): 29-38; “Briefe aus Süddeutschland,” *Die Werkkunst. Zeitschrift des Vereins für deutsches Kunstgewerbe in Berlin* 17, 18, 19, 20 (1906): 257-258, 277-278, 289-290, 309-311; and “Der ‘Fall Muthesius’ und die Künstler,” *Dekorative Kunst* 16 (1908): 42-44.

¹² Obrist fell out of favor in the art world at the end of his career. In his obituary, his friend the art historian E. W. Bredt wrote that Obrist had become surprisingly foreign to the changes in art in his final years. Bredt, “Hermann Obrist 1862-1927,” cited above, 200.

¹³ I am using the word “occult” not only because Obrist frequently used the word himself in the autobiography but also because historians nowadays describe a wide range of practices at the turn of the century as “occultism.” For an excellent account of occultism in Germany, see Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). According to Treitel, there were 27 occult clubs in Munich between 1869-1937. Treitel, cited above, 59. Although there is no evidence that Obrist was a member of one of these clubs, the list of the books at his library reveals a deep interest in occultism. Obrist Archive, O8.7.

death, and his last vision appeared in 1925. Despite his poor health, this last vision was followed by an extraordinary outburst of productivity.¹⁴ What was more peculiar, if Obrist's account is to be believed, was that up until that precipitous moment when Obrist started sketching instinctively, the young man had neither shown any interest in the visual arts nor received any training in them. As almost every account of Obrist's carefully controlled biography repeated, Obrist's inclinations as a young man had been unequivocally towards the natural sciences. There were unmistakable elements of neo-Romanticism in Obrist's reconstruction of his early education: he claimed to have spent his childhood hiking and collecting specimens of plants and fossils around the family house in Weimar, which, incidentally, was not far away from Goethe's legendary residence. As a child he spent much time reading philosophy and science: he claimed to have read Fechner, Schelling, Fichte, on the one hand, and Darwin and Haeckel, on the other.¹⁵ "He already knew about the ecstatic visions of some devout Catholics," according to the manuscript, "about the nature of hysteria... and the visions and hallucinations of Mohammed."¹⁶ What made the visions so extraordinary in Obrist's eyes, then, was not that they seemingly involved occult forces but that they triggered a dramatic transformation within him: "With one stroke a new, inscrutable person had grown within him; as if by magic talents, capacities, abilities, and imaginations sprang from within—realms, of which he had never heard of and which were not possible to explain through heredity."¹⁷ Although Obrist's story of conversion had many of the elements of the making of a Romantic artist, what emerged as a result of his occult encounters was not quite a "genius" who served as a divine instrument, but rather a much more modest "talent."

¹⁴ Obrist, "Ein glückliches Leben," cited above, 36. According to the manuscript, Obrist had heard about the "inner auditions" experienced by Beethoven, Wagner, Schumann, and Chopin. He later discovered the art of Gustav Doré. "Ein glückliches Leben," cited above, 20. "He was not as frightened by these events as others would have been. He had read an unusual amount for his age and not only books on the natural sciences but also on philosophy, history of theology, proverbs, legends, mythological works, lives of saints, mystics, seers, and prophets."

¹⁵ According to the text, Obrist had been disdainful both of physico-chemical explanations, which were increasingly dominating the experimental practices of institutionalized sciences in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and the teachings of Protestantism. He remained, in his own words, a "resolute vitalist and psychist." *Ibid.*, 15-16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

Furthermore, Obrist's transformation seemed to have manifested itself less through the workings of his conscious mind and more through the involuntary movements of his body. Both aesthetic conversions narrated in the text—Obrist's mother's and his own—described an aesthetic experience unlike the disinterested contemplation of artworks taught in neo-humanistic pedagogy. Aesthetic experience in these cases was a dramatic event akin to a religious epiphany. The bodies in question were shaken to their bones and stimulated through their muscles while their conscious minds passively looked on. These experiences, in other words, were first and foremost kinaesthetic. Just as the young girl's body unwillingly succumbed to musical vibrations, Obrist's sketches were seemingly guided less by a preconceived idea in his conscious mind and more by the involuntary muscular effort that he felt in his hands.

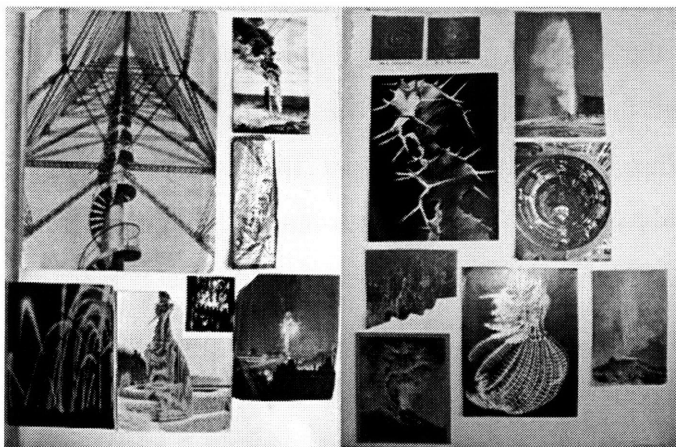


Fig. 3.3: Images that Obrist collected, Obrist Archive, O3.

As evidenced by the images that he collected throughout his life, Obrist had an understanding of the universe as a thoroughly animated whole, which often manifested itself in spiral forms: “Rhythms, oscillations, and vibrations are to be found everywhere,” Obrist wrote, “in the waves and clouds, in the change of days and seasons, in

the rustling of trees in the wind, in every waterfall, in every geyser, in every creeping plant, in every march, dance, and music.”¹⁸ “Everything spirals, moves radially, swirls, radiates, revolves in circle.”¹⁹ (Fig. 3.3) The artist's body, then, acted as a resonator that

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹ Obrist Archive, O1.27. Of the many books from which Obrist sketched, the following in particular elaborated on the motif of the spiral: J. Bell Pettigrew, Design in Nature. Illustrated by Spiral and Other Arrangements in the Inorganic and Organic Kingdoms as Exemplified in Matter, Force, Life, Growth, Rhythms, &c. Especially in Crystals, Plants, and Animals. With Examples Selected from the Reproductive, Alimentary, Respiratory, Circulatory, Nervous, Muscular, Osseous, Locomotoray, and Other Systems of Animals (London: Longman's Green, and Co, 1908). Pettigrew aestheticized nature to make an argument for teleology from design. He argued that especially the spiral motif, which could be found in living and

picked up the ubiquitous vibrations of a thoroughly ‘besouled’ universe.²⁰ The forms produced by the unconscious movements of the artist’s hand, in turn, were meant to resonate with the body of the beholder, who, à la St. Theresa, could be stimulated to the point of losing consciousness.²¹

These supernatural stories become more compelling when we notice that there was essentially little difference between how Obrist’s overwhelmed hands reportedly moved on the paper while he experienced visions and the spontaneous sketching exercises which the students at the Debschitz School were urged to do. There must have been a connection, then, between Obrist’s cosmic visions and his worldly activities as a teacher. I will argue that the stories about Obrist’s occult encounters hid within them a pedagogical agenda in which the involuntary movements of the body played a crucial role. It is no coincidence, in other words, that Obrist’s autobiography placed so much emphasis on the futility and tedium of conventional education—as much at secondary schools and universities as at the various types of art schools—while idealizing informal modes of learning. As I will illustrate, it was particularly within the framework of the *Elementarunterricht*, the elementary first-year design (*Gestaltung*) curriculum that all students at the Debschitz School followed regardless of their later specialization, that a

non-living matter alike, proved the presence of an original ‘Designer,’ by demonstrating the capacity of matter to grow from within rather than by means of external stimulation. Pettigrew, cited above, xxviii-xxix.

²⁰ Obrist Archive, O3.4.

²¹ For the feminization of Catholic passions, see David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon and Oxford University Press, 1993) and Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004). Gross argues that liberals’ understanding of Catholicism after 1870 was as a woman who resisted state authority. There is little mention of Catholicism in Obrist’s published writings, but it is safe to assume that like many from his social background—Protestant, liberal, urban *Bildungsbürgertum*—he saw Catholicism as the enemy of reason, individual autonomy, *Bildung*, and therefore an obstacle in Germany’s path of progress. However, there is also an unmistakable fascination with Catholicism in Obrist’s work and writings. Apart from the story of his mother’s ecstatic experience in Dresden, Obrist makes a few references to Catholicism. We know, for example, that when in a lecture in 1906 he discussed the “suggestive power of beauty, poetry, and *Stimmung*,” he used Catholic religious sites as an example. See the report in *Münchener Zeitung* (June 13th, 1906). On the other hand, perhaps more predictably, he also criticized what he called “ultramontanism in art.” See “Sittlichkeit des Künstlers,” *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Munich) 75 (February 12, 1905). Obrist’s ambivalent understanding of Catholicism and of the Baroque as an art of emotive effects should be seen as a larger cultural phenomenon at the turn of the twentieth century. On literary modernism and Catholicism, see the book by Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

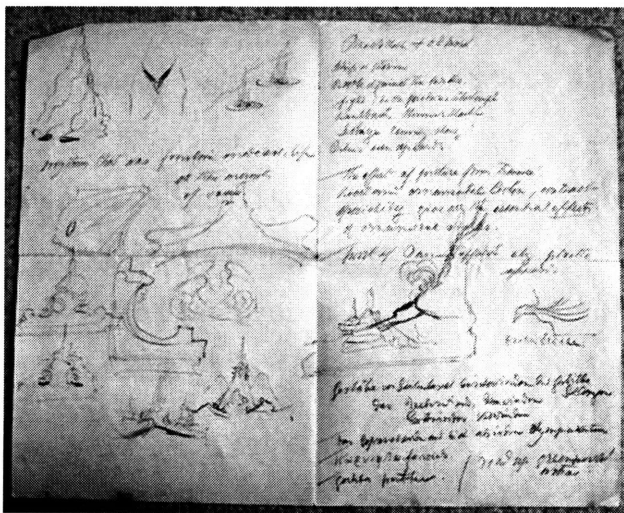
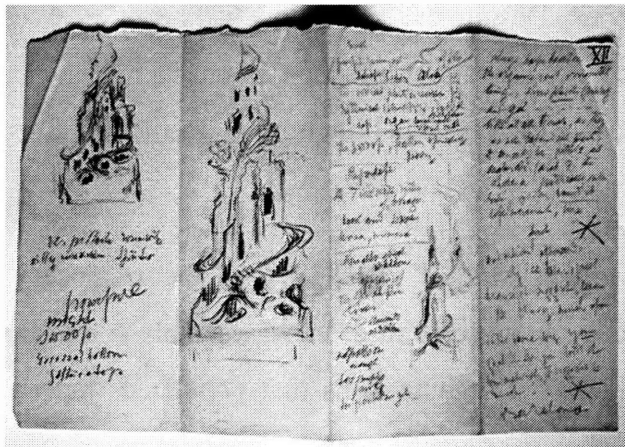
number of new modernist pedagogical practices were instituted. The purpose of these practices was to deploy the instinctual responses of the body to make otherwise hidden “talents” visible in the primarily female student body of the school. I will call these practices, which included spontaneous sketching, comparative looking, and slide projection, ‘kinaesthetic’—not only because they were based on bodily movements but also because they were systematically geared towards developing bodily skills as an alternative to intellectual acumen.

This link between practice and pedagogy may seem self-evident to us today. However, the new kinaesthetic practices did not justify themselves by arguing how much more effective “learning by doing” would be. Rather, they participated in the modernist project of re-imagining the self in radical ways and, furthermore, ingeniously put the body to work to achieve the desired transformation. More specifically, at a historical moment when the concept of *Bildung* was itself undergoing a democratic transformation—described by some as decline—these practices sought to cultivate an unorthodox kind of knowledge that was produced uniquely by the body and could only be interpreted by it without the help of the conscious mind. What Obrist’s remarkable stories about visions and epiphanies afford us, then, is a snapshot of how this re-imagined human body learned its new trade: in what ways this new conception of the body, found especially in the contemporaneous occultist movement from which Obrist drew, helped revise a nineteenth-century model of the self, how it structured the link between the conscious and the unconscious, and, finally, how the idea of ‘design’ was utilized by an emerging modernism to mediate the relationship between forms and the human body.

The Occultist Movement and the Making of a New Self

The right arm is rigid and cold (cataleptic) up to the elbow joint and moves frequently as if it is experiencing cramps. He sits for a few minutes, then suddenly grasps a sheet of paper and a quill and begins drawing. The drawings, which are prepared in this manner—mostly heads and landscapes—have a mystical quality befitting their creator, a mysterious, sometimes almost uncanny character. They emerge from his hand with the aid of none other than paper and stylus and the working hand moves with great speed, hatching the surface with circuitous zigzag

lines. There is no trace of any contour lines here; it seems that he only wants to apply tone onto the paper.²²



Figs. 3.4, 3.5: Hermann Obrist, Sketches and writings, date unknown, Obrist Archive, O1.32 and O2.43.

The account above could have been a description of Obrist drawing while he experienced one of his visions. Page after page in the Obrist archive in Munich testify to how feverishly Obrist sketched and wrote during these sessions.²³ Sentences, usually rendered in a combination of German, English, and French, were followed by quick drawings and were interweaved with them. (Figs. 3.4 and 3.5) Both text and image were almost always left unfinished: what seemingly mattered more to Obrist than complete forms or coherent sentences was capturing the continuous, unconscious flow of his hand movements—what William James would call the “stream of consciousness.”²⁴ The quote above,

however, does not describe Obrist but is from an essay on somnambulist drawing, prepared from the minutes of a session of the Münchner Psychologische Gesellschaft (Munich Psychological Society) in 1888. The young man in question had been examined by prominent physicians and scientist in Vienna before his hand movements were

²² Gustav Gessmann, “Somnambules Zeichnen,” [Memorandum of the July 5, 1888 session of the Psychologische Gesellschaft zu München] *Sphinx* 6. 32 (August 1888) 102.

²³ Obrist Archive, O2.41-50. Most of these sketches are undated but the dates on two of them suggest that they might have been done in 1909.

²⁴ An example from his notebook O2.40: “Stelle dir einen Aufstand vor/ Willen und Sehnsucht vor/ den Berg, den Hügel hinauf rasend/ Die Flamme/ zum Gipfel aufflammend/ Ein Stoss aus Lava aufgeblasen/ Schwefelkrater/ Das Hinauf-anstatt/ hinabstürzen.”

scrutinized by the members of the Gesellschaft in Munich. Not unlike Obrist, the young man felt his body being seized by some mysterious force before he started making intelligible marks on the surface of the paper. Despite the fact that he had never received any training in drawing, the essay claimed, he was able to produce, in only a half-awake state, a quite skilled drawing of butterflies and insects in as little time as one hour and ten minutes.²⁵

The Psychologische Gesellschaft, founded in Munich in 1888 with the purpose of examining occult phenomena from a strictly scientific point of view, was only one of the hundreds of clubs, societies, and other occultist organizations that populated Imperial Germany.²⁶ What historians now call the occultist movement appeared under a variety of guises at the turn of the twentieth century: the so-called abstruse sciences, including ariosophy, astrology, dowsing, graphology, palmistry, parapsychology, spiritualism, magnetism, mesmerism, and theosophy, among others, proved to be immensely fashionable both in the Old and the New World.²⁷ The most popular of these, spiritualism and theosophy, were imported to Europe from the United States, but European occultist groups also often mixed homespun Christian mythology with elements of Eastern philosophy acquired during colonialist endeavors. Occultism often

²⁵ Gessmann, "Somnambules Zeichnen," cited above, 102.

²⁶ Treitel writes that according to newspaper reports, Berlin was home to ten thousand spiritualists, four hundred mediums, and between fifteen and twenty spiritualist clubs in 1902, but Munich was also an important center for occult activities. Treitel, A Science for the Soul, cited above, 57. In 1907 the annual conference of the Theosophical Society took place in Munich. It is also interesting to note that occultism in Munich extended from its bohemian district Schwabing to the communities in the Swiss Monte Verità near Ascona. Treitel, cited above, 59. For an extensive list of these groups, see Hans-Jürgen Glowka, Deutsche Okkultgruppen 1875-1937 (Augsburg: Hiram, 1981).

²⁷ Spiritualism was imported to Europe from the United States around the middle of the nineteenth century. The first theosophical society was founded in New York in 1875; the first theosophical society of Germany in 1884. In 1913 Rudolf Steiner parted ways with the German Theosophical Society and founded his widely influential Anthroposophy Society. Recently historians have turned their attention to this hitherto neglected cultural phenomenon. In addition to Treitel, A Science for the Soul, cited above, see Alex Owen, The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and Simon During, Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). For modern art and occultism, see Sixten Ringbom, "Art in 'The Epoch of the Great Spiritual': Occult Elements in Early Theory of Abstract Painting," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 29 (1966): 386-418; Linda D. Henderson, "Mysticism and Occultism in Modern Art," Art Journal 46.1, Special Issue "Mysticism and Occultism in Modern Art" (Spring 1987): 5-8; and the volume edited by Hellmut Seeman, Veit Loers, et. al., Okkultismus und Avantgarde. Von Munch bis Mondrian 1900-1915, (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, 1995).

opposed what was perceived to be the insidious threat of materialism, mechanistic explanations, and ultimately anarchism. In the 1870s occultism had already become a major cultural force with a broad appeal in Germany: perhaps most famous were the séances held by the American medium Henry Slade (1840-1904) in Leipzig in 1877-78. A public controversy erupted when the astrophysicist Friedrich Zöllner (1834-1882) wanted to use Slade's knot and ring experiment to claim the existence of the fourth dimension, a possibility mentioned by Hermann von Helmholtz only as a thought experiment.²⁸ The psychologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), who also taught at the University of Leipzig and was present at some of the sittings, countered Zöllner's claims.²⁹ For the likes of Wundt, such phenomena as table rapping or planchette writing, in which the agency of individuals seemed to be temporarily lost, were incompatible with a scientific understanding of physical causality and the idea of a conscious self.

The Münchner Psychologische Gesellschaft distinguished itself from other similar endeavors in that it attributed supersensible phenomena such as hypnotism and somnambulism not to demons or spirits but to the workings of the human mind.³⁰

²⁸ See Wayne H. Stromberg, "Helmholtz and Zoellner: Nineteenth-Century Empiricism, Spiritism, and the Theory of Space Perception," Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences 25 (October 1989): 371-383.

²⁹ Zöllner was an astrophysicist, who was a member of the Saxon Academy of Sciences. He invented several important instruments and made important contributions to the field. For Zöllner's defense of Slade, see Karl Friedrich Zöllner, Zur Vertheidigung des Amerikaners Henry Slade (Leipzig: 1897); Der Spiritismus und die sogenannten Philosophen: Offener Brief an Dr. Wilhelm Wundt, ord. Professor der Philosophie an der Universität Leipzig (Leipzig: 1897); Die transcendente Physik und die sogenannte Philosophie: eine deutsche Antwort auf eine "sogenannte wissenschaftliche Frage" (Leipzig: Staackmann, 1879). For Wundt's criticism of the séances, see Wilhelm Wundt, Der Spiritismus. Eine sogenannte wissenschaftliche Frage: offener Brief an Hermann Ulrich (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1879). Translated into English by E. D. Mead and published as "Spiritualism as a Scientific Question," Popular Science Monthly 15 (1879): 577-593. In 1887 the Henry Seybert Commission at the University of Pennsylvania published a report, in which the Zöllner-Slade incident was investigated in detail. Seybert himself was a dedicated spiritualist who wanted to separate the scientific study of spiritualism from quackery. According to Fullerton, who did the research for the report, of those present in Slade's séances, Fechner was almost blind, Zöllner was not sane, and Wundt remained convinced that what seemed to be the working of spirits during the séances was nothing but jugglery. University of Pennsylvania, The Seybert Commission for Investigating Modern Spiritualism, Preliminary Report of the Commission Appointed by the University of Pennsylvania to Investigate Modern Spiritualism in Accordance with the Request of the Late Henry Seybert (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1887). For a secondary source on the controversy, also see Marilyn E. Marshall and Russell A. Wendt, "Wilhelm Wundt, Spiritism, and the Assumptions of Science" in Wundt Studies, eds. Wolfgang G. Bringmann and Ryan D. Tweney (Toronto: C. J. Hogrefe, 1980).

³⁰ This was an important distinction that was constantly stressed by those who promoted a naturalistic and scientific approach to occultism and who wanted to weed out impostors. The psychologist Richard Baerwald (1867-1929), for example, distinguished between three kinds of occultism: 1. spiritualism which

Founded in 1886 by Carl du Prel (1839-1899), a self-declared philosopher, the society was able to attract prominent figures such as the much revered empathy psychologist Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), the psychiatrist Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862-1929), the colonialist Wilhelm von Hübner-Schleiden (1846-1916), the art historian and curator at the Alte Pinakothek Adolf Bayersdorfer (1842-1901), members of the Stefan George Circle as well as painters such as Gabriel von Max (1840-1915), Wilhelm Trübner, and Albert von Keller (1844-1920).³¹ The objectives and methods of the Psychologische Gesellschaft were set clearly in its program. Although the Gesellschaft was convinced that psychology was the propaedeutic science that would serve as the guide to all the sciences and was committed to examining occult phenomena using the scientific experimental method, it was also vehemently opposed to what the members believed were the crude materialism and dualism of experimental psychology. If the latter, epitomized by Wilhelm Wundt, focused its attention on the workings of the healthy (and almost always male) mind, the Psychologische Gesellschaft was interested in the (usually female) mind in such abnormal states as hypnotism, trance, somnambulism, or mental illness—in short, any state in which the unconscious or the subconscious, as it was occasionally called, seemed to play an important role.³² As such, the kind of psychology that the Gesellschaft was promoting was closer in spirit to French clinical psychology and

explained occult phenomena through the spirits of the dead 2. that which explained occult forces by means of a “psychic force” or “anima.” 3. that which avoided all metaphysical explanations by appealing to telepathy, that is, communication between one mind and another. For the first two he wrote: “The development of animism to spiritualism reminds us strongly of the relationship of Protestantism to Catholicism or of Kantian enlightened religion to orthodoxy.” He favored the last because it preferred what he called worldly explanations “Diesseitigkeit” to other-worldly explanations “Jenseitigkeit.” Richard Baerwald, Okkultismus und Spiritismus und ihre Weltanschaulichen Folgerungen (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1926) 14.

³¹ Carl du Prel’s books include: Philosophie der Mystik (1885), Die monistische Seelenlehre. Ein Beitrag zur Lösung des Menschenrätsels (1888), Kants mystische Weltanschauung (1889), Experimentalpsychologie und Experimentalmetaphysik (1891), Die Entdeckung der Seele durch die Geheimwissenschaften (1894), and Okkultismus und Sozialismus (1898).

³² Scholars such as L. L. Whyte and H. F. Ellenberger have found the pre-Freudian origins of the modern concept of the unconscious not only in psychology and philosophy but also traced them to literature and the arts. See Henri F. Ellenberger, The Discovery of the Unconscious : The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry (New York: Basic Books, 1970) and Lancelot Law Whyte, The Unconscious before Freud (New York: Basic Books, 1960). Among the nineteenth-century figures who theorized about the unconscious before Freud were Schelling, Schopenhauer, Herbart, Nietzsche, and William James but particularly influential were the books written by Eduard von Hartmann, Philosophie des Unbewussten : Versuch einer Weltanschauung (Berlin: C. Duncker, 1869) and Das Unbewusste vom Standpunkt der Physiologie und

future Freudian psychoanalysis than the psychology of the experimental kind as it was practiced by Wundt and his students in Germany at the time.³³ The program of the society gave a long list of who would benefit from this kind of research: the philosopher, the cultural historian, the physician, the philologist, the pedagogue, the psychiatrist, the theologian, the lawyer, and last but not the least, the artist.³⁴

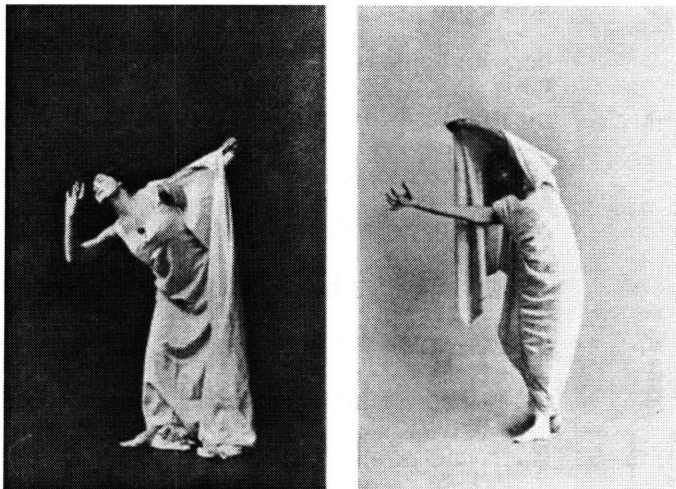


Fig. 3.6: Dreamdancer Magdeleine G., c. 1904.

According to the program of the Psychologische Gesellschaft, the medium's body served the artist as an extraordinarily expressive mannequin. Because the senses and the intellect of the medium—who was usually a woman—were suspended in a state of trance, her body could be manipulated like a mannequin to assume the desired facial and bodily expression using

psychic techniques such as suggestion.³⁵ In many cases, then, the female mediums' docile bodies needed a male 'summoner' to stimulate them. One famous example was

Descendenztheorie: Eine kritische Beleuchtung des naturphilosophischen Theils der Philosophie des Unbewussten aus Naturwissenschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten (Berlin: C. Duncker, 1872).

³³ This is not to say that Wundtian psychology was the only kind practiced in Germany at the time. Although Wundt's laboratory for experimental psychology was an internationally renowned center for psychological research and attracted students from around the world, its authority was by no means uncontested. In fact, in the first decades of the twentieth century, Wundt remained the common enemy for Gestalt psychologists as much as for behaviorists. See Martin Kusch, Psychologism: A Case Study in the Sociology of Philosophical Knowledge (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) and Psychological Knowledge: A Social History and Philosophy (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

³⁴ "Programm der psychologischen Gesellschaft in München," Sphinx 3.13 (1887): 32-36.

³⁵ Artist Albert von Keller, for example, induced the medium Lina to assume a series of physiognomic expressions by showing her his paintings. A camera positioned behind the painting was to capture Lina's facial expression, which would then be used in paintings, including "Die Somnambule," "Spiritischer Apport eines Armbands," "Hexenschlaf," "Mystische Krankenheilung," and "Märtyrerin im Mondschein." Dr. Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing, "Albert von Keller als Malerpsychologe und Metaphysiker," Psychische Studien, 48 (April-May 1921): 193-215. Also see the chapter "The Creative Unconscious" in Treitel, A Science for the Soul, cited above, 108-131. This setup was very similar to the experiment with school children, which was discussed in the introductory chapter.



Fig. 3.7: Medium-artist Frieda Gentes from Richard Baerwald, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus und ihre Weltanschaulichen Folgerungen*, 1926.

the Traumtänzerin (dream-dancer) Magdeleine Guipet.³⁶ (Fig. 3.6) Brought from Paris to be examined by members of the Psychologische Gesellschaft, Guipet performed a seemingly spontaneous yet highly skilled dance when hypnotized by von Schrenck-Notzing, who also prompted her by playing the piano. Guipet mesmerized the Munich bourgeoisie when she danced, à la Loïe Fuller, in the newly built Schauspielhaus in Munich in 1904.³⁷ The similarities between modernist art and the so-called mediumistic art did not go unnoticed: the psychologist Richard Baerwald pointed out in the 1920s that the products of mediumistic art were comparable to “expressionist painting, the newest poetry, the most modern, even atonal music.”³⁸

At other times, however, the summoner disappeared altogether and the medium seemingly took the matter into her own hands. Amongst these were two medium-artists, both of whom unleashed their subconscious by means of drawings: Frau Aßmann who drew decorative patterns like those found in Turkish rugs and Frieda Gentes from Neukölln whose drawings were uncannily similar to Obrist's.³⁹ A photograph shows Gentes at work during a trance: donned with a fashionable Jugendstil gown and

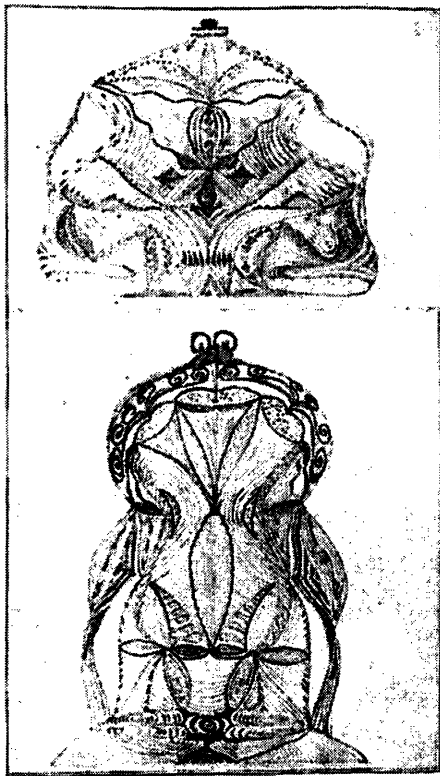
³⁶ Schrenk-Notzing, “Albert von Keller als Malerpsychologe und Metaphysiker,” cited above, 210. According to Schrenk-Notzing, the painter Albert von Keller painted no less than twenty pictures of the dream-dancer.

³⁷ Freiherr von Schrenk-Notzing with Otto Schultze, *Die Traumtänzerin Magdeleine G. Eine psychologische Studie über Hypnose und dramatische Kunst* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1904).

³⁸ Baerwald, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus*, cited above, 114.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

surrounded by drawings of the same sensibility, she sits at a small table ostensibly drawing away in an unconscious state. (Fig. 3.7) Her right arm, uncomfortably parallel to the top of the table, holds a pencil, which, like the needle of a seismograph, is perfectly perpendicular to plane of the drawing. Her face is expressionless, her eyes are closed, and her left hand is positioned such that the drawing is shielded from sight should her eyes suddenly open. This was neither an attentive state, which *Bildung* sought to inculcate, nor a distracted one, condemned by the educated elites at this historical moment; instead Gentes simultaneously displayed absorption and detachment while undergoing an kinaesthetic experience. Even Baerwald, who was eager to weed out impostors from real mediums, was impressed by how the small circular motions of



MEDIALE ZEICHNUNG
von der des Zeichnens unkundigen Frau S.
Bleistiftzeichnung

Fig. 3.8: A mediumistic drawing by a Frau S., from Max Moecke, "Medianyme Malerei," *Der Okkultismus* (October 1925) 37.

Gentes's seemingly cataleptic hands added up to larger patterns and figures.⁴⁰ Other observers reported similar qualities in the so-called mediumistic art : the ubiquity of circular hand motions, the speed with which drawings were executed, the seeming absence of any corrections, and an unmistakable overall design although the medium seemingly worked only with incomplete fragments. (Fig. 3.8) What was most surprising about mediumistic artists, in other words, was that despite the seemingly purposeless automatism of their actions, they were able to achieve designs which revealed an underlying plan or purpose. It was assumed that the hand was endowed with the ability to make visible the *telos* of the universe. Consider the following description of a woman's hand published in 1903 in an art journal:

⁴⁰ Ibid., 115.

Hand, hand, noblest, most elegant form, you artwork of God, when does one behold you?!? Year after year one sees paws and claws, crude and clumsy figures, as if made by a childish creator out of unruly flesh! Where, where does one see a hand made according to God's plans, tender and limber, that trembles with every breath of one's insides and that in its movements tenderly expresses the soul and the mind. The hand should not push into inelegant expression as in stiff souls but should be effortlessly shaking, dancing, be the last corporeal swingings of mind and soul! O beautiful, light, tender, gentle hands, the noblest artworks of nature, where are you?! One should build altars to beautiful, noble, elegant hands, because you are forms that rise directly from the spirit of God! Frau Risa H., graced by God, hail your noble hands!⁴¹

What were the workings of such an occultist self in which automatic elements seemed to coexist with highly cognizant ones? Amongst those who theorized the implications of occultism from a psychological point of view was Max Dessoir (1867-1947), professor of philosophy and aesthetics in Berlin, the editor of the influential *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* and founder of the Berliner Gesellschaft für experimentelle Psychologie (Berlin Society for Experimental Psychology), which would merged with the Munich Psychologische Gesellschaft in 1890.⁴² Dessoir, like many of his fellow occultists who wanted to approach the subject from a strictly scientific point of view, insisted that the temptation to externalize occult phenomena by means of spirits and demons had to be resisted. "The intrusion of foreign 'spirits' into our psycho-physical organism," he wrote "violently contradicts all human experience."⁴³ Such occult phenomena as hypnotism, somnambulism, and other dream-like states had to be traced to

⁴¹ Peter Altenberg, "Die Hand der Frau Risa Horn," *Kunst* (Vienna) 1.1 (1903) 9. Compare this with Charles Bell's use of the human hand for argument from design: Charles Bell, *The Hand, Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design* (New York: Harper and Brothers, [1833] 1855).

⁴² Max Dessoir (1867-1947) was a fascinating figure that merits more scholarly attention. Dessoir was interested in psychology, aesthetics, and parapsychology, a term which he coined. He taught at the University of Berlin for most of his life. Apart from books such as *Das Doppel Ich* (1890), *Geschichte der neuen deutschen Psychologie* (1894), *Karl Philipp Moritz als Aesthetiker* (1899), *Das Unterbewusstsein* (1909), *Abriss einer Geschichte der Psychologie* (1911), *Vom Jenseits der Seele* (1919), and *Vom Diesseits der Seele: Psychologische Briefe* (1923), he edited the important aesthetics journal *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*. He also authored an important book by the same name which was translated into English by Stephen A. Emery as *Aesthetics and Theory of Art* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1970). In 1908 Dessoir founded the Society for the Study of Aesthetics; in 1913 the society had its first congress of aesthetics. See Christian Hermann, *Max Dessoir. Mensch und Werk* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1929).

⁴³ Max Dessoir, "The Magic Mirror," *The Monist* 1 (October 1890): 108-109. Dessoir also theorized the double-consciousness theory of the self in his *Das Doppel-Ich* (Stuttgart: Günther, 1890).

what Dessoir called the *doppel-Ich*, the double consciousness of the human soul. Drawing on a long intellectual tradition of the unconscious, Dessoir used the concept of *doppel-Ich* to outline a new architectonic for the self:

Acts are done in the course even of our everyday life, which presuppose for their origin and execution all the faculties of the soul, yet nevertheless occur without the knowledge of the individual; they require a sort of consciousness and separate memory beyond the cognizance of the normal person.... This points not only to an *unconscious intelligence* but—which is of still greater consequence—to an *unconscious memory*.... Every person conceals within himself the germs of a second personality. I designate the two halves of consciousness that thus operate in greater or less independence of each other—in a figurative sense of course—as super- and subconsciousness, and comprehend the whole as the doctrine of double consciousness or double ego.... Our fully conscious soul-life rests upon an automatically operating substratum of hallucinatory character, in which images, long since forgotten, have their abode.⁴⁴

This conception of the self was very different from the one inherent in the nineteenth-century conception of *Bildung*. We have already seen in the introductory chapter how Wilhelm Wundt, the archenemy of occultist psychology, imagined this self as a “total force” or a “whole circle of effects,” thereby hinting at a centric model of the self. This model of the self, as we have seen, was made up of an immutable core of consciousness, surrounded by rings of increasingly less conscious sensations.⁴⁵ The conscious core was assumed to be the means through which the self apprehended the world. Although they remained elusive as research methods, self-conscious introspection and self-experimentation—as opposed to unconscious states such as hypnotism or dreams—were seen as ways to decipher the workings of this self.⁴⁶ It was this conscious, knowing, introspective self which was hinted at in Kant’s writings, theorized in German Idealism, and propagated in the institutions of *Bildung* throughout the nineteenth century.

⁴⁴ Dessoir, “The Magic Mirror,” cited above, 112.

⁴⁵ Wilhelm Wundt, *Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology*, trans. J. E. Creighton and E. B. Titchener (London and New York: Swan Sonnenschein and Macmillan, [1863] 1907) 250-51.

⁴⁶ Needless to say, introspection and self-experimentation presented numerous difficulties to those who wanted to establish psychology as an empirical science. In his study of Wundt, the historian Danziger argues that these were concepts which could be traced back to Protestant theology, according to which the self-examination of one’s conscience was undertaken in a methodical manner. Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 18.

The self that Dessoir proposed, on the other hand, was not a centric but a layered edifice, consisting of a conscious part sitting on a unconscious substratum. Although this structure did not yet have in place the mechanism of repression, which Freud would theorize to momentous effect only a few years later, the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious was not completely under the control of a knowing, will-centered, conscious core.⁴⁷ The secondary selves appeared at unexpected times: not only in unusual states such as trances and hypnotism but also in dreams. More importantly, in a manner that anticipated Freud, one could catch a glimpse of the *doppel-Ich* in everyday life.

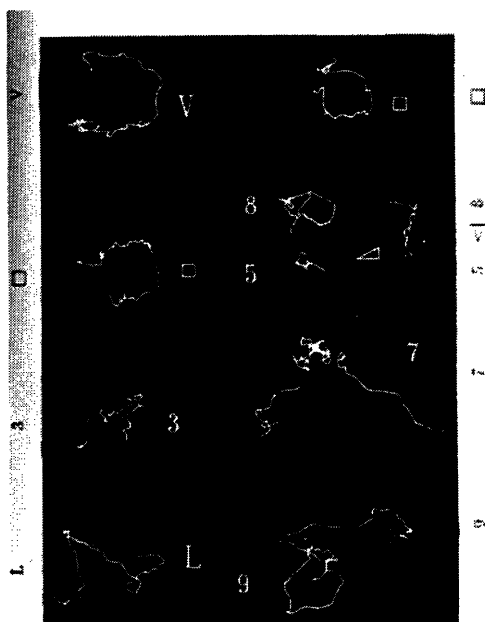


Fig. 3.9: An attempt to identify ideomotor movements, from Richard Baerwald, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus und ihre Weltanschaulichen Folgerungen*, 1926, p. 177.

Consider the following diagram illustrating the results of an experiment in which the subject, whose hand was attached to small, sensitive needles, were asked to imagine a letter or a number. (Fig. 3.9) The movements of the body in this experiment, according to the psychologist Baerwald, did not follow the thoughts but preceded it.⁴⁸ The movements of the body, then, did not merely accompany and clarify apperception, as in the Wundtian model, but took center stage as the means through which the ordinarily invisible second selves demonstrated their unique form of intelligence. In accounting for mediumistic art in terms of the *doppel-Ich*, Baerwald noted that it was not at all unusual for a

⁴⁷ On Dessoir's theory of double consciousness, also see Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, *Über Spaltung der Persönlichkeit (sogenanntes Doppel-Ich)* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1896); Edmund Delabarre, *Interpretation of the Phenomena of Double Consciousness* (New York: 1895). For a more recent discussion of the modern self as "divided, conflicted, and harboring mysterious depths, possibly linked to the world of spirits," see Michael Leja, "The Self's Deceptions" in *Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakins to Duchamp* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 185-219. In this chapter Leja discusses William James's interest in automatic drawing and how the divided self that it implied could be related to certain kinds of contemporary art and visual entertainment.

⁴⁸ Baerwald, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus*, cited above, 180.

medium to experience the artistic products of her subconscious as the acts of a stranger.⁴⁹ It was for this reason that the *doppel-Ich* model of the self contained an element of theatricality.⁵⁰ In other words, the *doppel-Ich* made it clear that subjectivity was not a matter of private introspection but of public performance. In the case of the dream-dancer Magdeleine Guipet, the unconscious substructure of the medium unleashed itself for the benefit of her spectators, who could not see the introspective workings of her mind but could enjoy the movements of her body.⁵¹

It is in the context of Dessoir's *doppel-Ich* that Obrist's 'autobiography' and its curious use of the third-person perspective should be understood. The miraculous unfolding of a hidden self, what Obrist called the birth within him of a "new, inscrutable person within," was the dramatic crux of the narrative of his transformation into an artist. This was the moment when his gaze fixed upon a plant gave way to the involuntary yet expressive twitchings of his body. The former emanated from Obrist the scientist—a robust, active, willing, and autonomous self, which self-assuredly converted the raw sensations of the world into structured experience by observing, classifying, and naming phenomena—in other words, in accordance with what I have called the centric Wundtian self. The latter, in contrast, was geared towards corroding this monolith. Obrist the artist experiencing visions had no control over his former conscious self and acted like an idiot-savant whose convulsions produced highly idiosyncratic drawings, even in the purported absence of the years of training that would ordinarily be required. Obrist's curious autobiography, then, was not only a critique of existing forms of education and knowledge but one which partook in the ambitious goal of replacing a dominant, nineteenth-century model of the self that was developed for and by them.

Obrist's biography also revealed another kind of *doppel-Ich*. Obrist was both an insider and an outsider to the values of *Bildung*. On the one hand, coming from an aristocratic

⁴⁹ Ibid., 101.

⁵⁰ Wundt himself described the theories of the unconscious using the analogy of the theater. See Wundt, *Lectures*, cited above, 235-236.

⁵¹ Compare this with the model of the self which Ernst Mach proposed during the same period and which was discussed at some length in the Introduction. Ernst Mach, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen* (Jena: G. Fischer, 1886) translated as *Contributions to The Analysis of the Sensations*, trans. C. M. Williams (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1897).

family and having been educated at home primarily by private tutors, Obrist was never subjected to the systematic indoctrination of the *Gymnasium* and abandoned both the university and the art schools, which he briefly attended. In fact, his rejection of formal education became an important part of his persona as an artist and a pedagogue. On the other hand, there is no doubt that he was intimately familiar with the ethos of the educated middle classes: his mother kept a salon frequented by the literati of Weimar, he had a large library at his disposal, and his family was keenly interested in literature, arts, and particularly music.⁵² In short, he was engaged in the kind of education that was idealized at the end of the nineteenth century as belonging to the age of Goethe. At a moment when there was much controversy surrounding schools, Obrist's conception of education was understood by his contemporaries as *Bildung* in its original sense as unrestricted self-cultivation without the interference of institutions. It was under the guise of such an unusual double consciousness that Obrist's talent became manifest.

Creative talents lying dormant in the unconscious proved to be a favorite theme of occultists at the turn of the century. If German Romanticism and Idealism, with their centric structuring of the self, were infatuated with the idea of 'genius,' occultists showed much more interest in its sister concept 'talent.' "No one knows where it comes from and how it emerges," wrote the critic Scheffler of talent.⁵³ Of particular interest were individuals who, in a state of hypnosis, somnambulism, delirium, trance, or under the influence of drugs, unexpectedly demonstrated a skill that had been previously alien to them. Whereas genius was apparently exclusively found in men, it seemed at the turn of the century that women, too, had the potential to be endowed with talent. The pages of occultist journals abounded with examples of the 'talent eruption' familiar from Obrist's autobiography: an uneducated maid could speak Latin when hypnotized, a Frau Holland could suddenly compose up to twelve poems in one hour; a woman named Helen Smith spoke what she insisted was the Martian language and even drew a detailed picture of a Martian city; and the dream-dancer Magdeleine Guipet demonstrated an extraordinary

⁵² Obrist, "Ein glückliches Leben," cited above.

⁵³ Karl Scheffler, "Das Talent," *Kunst und Künstler* 12 (1914) 509.

and inexplicable talent for dance.⁵⁴ It also needs to be noted that in a social context, in which *Bildung* was the most important marker of social standing, these stories of ‘talent eruption’ were also stories where boundaries of class and gender were trespassed. What made these performances extraordinary in the public’s eye was that the mediums insisted—frequently despite evidence to the contrary—that they had never received any training in whatever field they demonstrated their newly discovered talent. Their talent seemingly appeared suddenly and under unpredictable circumstances.⁵⁵

If these otherwise ‘mindless’ mediums were able to demonstrate surprising talent, their skill was construed as the product of neither genius nor education but rather of an ‘unconscious intelligence’ produced on the peripheries of the body.⁵⁶ It was precisely these latent talents and unconscious judgments that Obrist sought to awaken and teach as learnable skills at the “Lehr- und Versuchateliers für angewandte und freie Kunst,” the private school that he founded with the painter Wilhelm von Debschitz in 1902 in Munich.⁵⁷ However, the paradox that was inherent in occultism would come to haunt the pedagogical agenda of the Debschitz School as well. On the one hand, the layered conception of the self demonstrated in Dessoir’s *doppel-Ich* democratized art: women, maids, or children could now count as artists by virtue of the involuntary yet expressive

⁵⁴ Baerwald, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus*, cited above, 112.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁶ Obrist differentiated between genius and talent in “Wozu über Kunst Schreiben?” *Dekorative Kunst* 3.5 (1900) 171. Genius is incredibly rare, he wrote, and 98% of those with talent could not develop it because of the failures of conventional education.

⁵⁷ The Debschitz School has not attracted much scholarly attention in English or in German. For the most comprehensive history of the school, see the thesis by Dagmar Rinker, “Die Lehr- und Versuch-Ateliers für angewandte und freie Kunst (Debschitz-Schule), München 1902-1914,” Magisterarbeit, University of Munich, 1993. Other recent accounts of the school are Helga Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, “Die Münchner Debschitz-Schule” in *Kunstschulreform 1900-1933* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1977): 66-82; Beate Ziegert, “The Debschitz School, Munich: 1902-1914,” *Design Issues* 3.1 (Spring 1986): 28-42; and Norbert Götz, “Die Debschitz-Schule Hohenzollernstraße 21” in *Schwabing. Kunst und Leben um 1900*, cited above, 236-255. Also see the newspaper article by Eva Chrambach, “Künstlerischer Kunstunterricht mit Praxisbezug,” *Unser Bayern* (June 2002): 88-89.

Contemporary reviews of the school include the following: A. L. Plehn, “Die Künstlerschule von Hermann Obrist,” *Die Gegenwart* 11 (March 15, 1902): 170-171; Karl Scheffler, “Unterricht im Kunstgewerbe,” *Dekorative Kunst* 5.10 (1902): 365-384; Franz Dülberg, “Die Ausstellung der Lehr- und Versuchateliers von Hermann Obrist und Wilhelm von Debschitz,” *Kunstchronik* N.F. 15 (1904): 242-247; H. Lochner and Wilhelm von Debschitz, “Ateliers und Werkstätten für angewandte Kunst,” *Innen-Dekoration* 20 (1909); and Georg Jacob Wolf, “Die Lehr- und Versuch-Ateliers für freie und angewandte Kunst in München,” *Dekorative Kunst* 14 (1911): 193-200.

movements of their bodies. On the other hand, their newfound agency was quickly undermined by an automatism that appeared inevitable in the seeming absence of the will-centered, educated, conscious, mind that had been the cornerstone of the nineteenth-century *Bildungsbürgertum*.

An *Anschauungsunterricht* for Art

In September 1901, only months before the official opening of the Debschitz School, Obrist participated in a conference on reforming art education (*Kunsterziehung*) in Dresden, where he publicly laid out some of the principles of the Debschitz School.⁵⁸ The organizers of the conference, including such prominent figures as the aesthetics professor Konrad Lange (1855-1921), the director of the Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum Peter Jessen (1858-1926), and the director of the Hamburg Kunsthalle Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914), declared at the outset that their goal was not simply to reform the way in which artists or connoisseurs would be trained but “to open the eyes and heart of the youth for a true, healthy, German art.”⁵⁹ Particular emphasis was placed on drawing, which had become a mandatory part of secondary education since 1872 when the Prussian May Laws (also known as the Falk Laws) were passed as part of Bismarck’s attempts to secularize education within the framework of the *Kulturkampf*. As such, this endeavor was part of the complex and intertwined liberal reform movements in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century. Just as the *Kunstgewerbebewegung* (applied arts movement) sought to reconcile the demands of industrialization with aesthetics by improving schools and museums of applied arts, the art education movement (*Kunsterziehungsbewegung*) aspired not only to reform art education at primary and secondary schools but also to use art instruction (drawing, manual skills, and improvement of taste) as a tool to reform the society at large.⁶⁰ Julius Langbehn’s

⁵⁸ The proceedings of this conference were published as *Kunsterziehung. Ergebnisse und Anregungen des Kunsterziehungstages in Dresden am 28. und 29. September 1901* (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1902).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁶⁰ Recent critical histories of the *Kunstgewerbe* movement are Mark Jarzombek, “The *Kunstgewerbe*, the *Werkbund*, and the Aesthetics of Culture in the Wilhelmine Period,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53.7 (March 1994): 7-19; Wilhelm Sibylle, *Kunstgewerbebewegung: ästhetische Welt oder Macht durch Kunst?* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1991); Hartwig Brandt, *Motive der Kunsterziehungs- und Kunstgewerbebewegung* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1981); and on the relationship between *Kunstgewerbe* museums and schools, Barbara Mundt, *Die deutschen Kunstgewerbemuseen im 19.*

controversial book *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890, Rembrandt as Teacher) had been influential in popularizing some of the main ideas of the movement, but equally important was the role played by the museum directors Alfred Lichtwark and Peter Jessen, the aesthetics professor Konrad Lange, as well as the publishers Georg Hirth and Alexander Koch.⁶¹

As we have already seen in the previous chapters, at stake in these discussions was *Bildung* and the particular kind of knowledge that it promoted. Helmholtz described this knowledge as *Wissen*: a rigorous and historicist knowledge gleaned from classical texts and preserved in language. What the theorists of the art education movement criticized, above all, was this dependence of *Bildung* upon language. With a typically liberal mindset, they argued that for education to benefit the entire nation—and not only the educated middle classes—it had to liberate itself from the domination of words and rather place more faith in images. According to these liberal reformers, *Bildung* had to be more *anschaulich*, that is, more concrete, graphic, and descriptive. A similar kind of

Jahrhundert (Munich: Prestel, 1974). Contemporaneous accounts of the movement include Heinrich Waentig, Wirtschaft und Kunst. Eine Untersuchung über Geschichte und Theorie der modernen Kunstgewerbebewegung (Jena: Fischer, 1909).

For the related *Kunsterziehungsbewegung*, see Diethart Kerbs, “Kunsterziehungsbewegung und Kulturreform” in Schund und Schönheit. Populäre Kultur um 1900, eds. Kaspar Maase and Wolfgang Kaschuba (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001): 378-397; Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., “Kunsterziehungsbewegung,” in Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen: 1880-1933 (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1998): 369-378; Peter Ulrich Hein, Transformation der Kunst: Ziele und Wirkungen der deutschen Kultur- und Kunsterziehungsbewegung (Köln: Böhlau, 1991); Karl Kreuzer, “Jugendstil und Reformpädagogik,” Dissertation, University of Munich, 1988; Gerd Selle, Kultur der Sinne und ästhetische Erziehung. Alltag, Sozialation, Kunstunterricht in Deutschland vom Kaiserreich zur Bundesrepublik (Cologne: DuMont, 1981); Hartwig Brandt, Motive der Kunsterziehungs- und Kunstgewerbebewegung (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 1981); Peter Joerissen, Kunsterziehung und Kunstwissenschaft im wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1871-1918 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1979); Irene Below, “Probleme der ‘Werkbetrachtung’—Lichtwark und die Folgen” in Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung (Gießen: Anabas, 1975): 83-136; Hermann Lorenzen, Die Kunsterziehungsbewegung (Bad Heilbrunn/ Obb: Klinkhardt, 1966); Julius Gebhard, Alfred Lichtwark und die Kunsterziehungsbewegung in Hamburg (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1947); Otto Götze, Ein kritischer Gang durch die Kunsterziehungsbewegung (Langensalza: Beyer, 1914); Johannes Richter, Die Entwicklung des kunsterzieherischen Gedankens als Kulturproblem der Gegenwart (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1909).

⁶¹ See Julius Langbehn [initially published without the author’s name], *Rembrandt als Erzieher* [von einem Deutschen] (Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1890); Konrad Lange, *Die künstlerische Erziehung der deutschen Jugend* (Darmstadt: Bergstaeßer, 1893); Georg Hirth, *Die Volksschule im Dienste der künstlerischen Erziehung des deutschen Volkes* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1897); Alfred Lichtwark, *Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken* (Hamburg: Lütke & Wulff, 1897) as well as the periodical *Kind und Kunst* published by Alexander Koch. Also important was the 1901 exhibition “Die Kunst im Leben des Kindes” which opened in Berlin and traveled to other German cities.

opposition had been playing out in German secondary education in the form of a battle between the *Humanisten* and *Realisten* since the middle of the nineteenth century. On the surface the disagreement had been over the amount of natural science courses that should be included in the curriculum of the elite *Gymnasia* and the middle-brow *Realschulen*. However, deeper down a fault line had been forming between the role in pedagogy of textual interpretation versus scientific observation with “*sinnliche Anschauung*,” (sensual thinking) which, it was claimed, allowed things to speak for themselves. Making education more accessible and putting emphasis on practical matters in secondary education (studying living as opposed to dead languages, for example), however, caused concern for some who believed this would lead to a deterioration of the neo-humanistic ideal of knowledge.

The word *Anschauung*, referring to a particular kind of intellectual operation realized without the aid of abstract concepts, turned out to be rather popular among those who were present at the *Kunsterziehung* conference.⁶² One of the organizers, the teacher Theodor Götz, argued for art education in secondary schools as the basis of an *Anschauungsunterricht* (usually translated as “object-lesson” or “visual instruction”).⁶³ Following Helmholtz’s well known distinction between *Wissen* and *Kennen*, he set up an opposition between abstract thinking, which severed things from their surroundings, and a living, concrete, unmediated “*anschauendes Denken*” (concrete thinking).⁶⁴ Both art and science, when properly taught, Götz reasoned, could allow the child to grasp nature “as a whole moved and animated by an inner force by masterfully employing inductive

⁶² *Anschauung* is a difficult word to translate. In his dictionary of philosophical terms, Rudolf Eisler described the word as follows: “*Anschauung* is the unmediated (that is, without concepts and logical conclusions) acquisition of a concretely given object, in its spatial-temporal determinateness. *Anschauen* consists of the calm observation of the object in the transformation of its characteristics through the unity of apperception.” Rudolf Eisler, “*Anschauung*” in *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1904). According to the *Encyclopädischen Handbuch der Pädagogik* published in 1903, *Anschauung* was “without doubt one of the most significant concepts of contemporary pedagogy.” *Encyclopädischen Handbuch der Pädagogik* cited in Jens Ruchatz, *Licht und Wahrheit. Eine Mediumgeschichte der fotografischen Projektion* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003) 227.

⁶³ Götz, *Kunsterziehung*, cited above, 142-143. The American psychologist James Baldwin defined *Anschauungsunterricht* (English: Object-lesson; French: *enseignement intuitif* or *leçons de choses*; Italian: *lezione obbiettiva*) as “a class-room exercise upon a concrete object, such as an animal, plant, or mineral.” James M. Baldwin, “Object-Lesson,” *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1901).

⁶⁴ Götz, *Kunsterziehung*, cited above, 146.

cognitive operations.”⁶⁵ Despite the protestations of some who rejected the assertion that “art should work directly on the mind of the student without a single word,” reading and writing were dismissed by most participants at the conference as the tools of an old-fashioned *Wissen* found in obsolete forms of *Bildung*. Drawing and manual training were to become as the primary means of motivating an *anschauendes Kennen*.⁶⁶ Alfred Lichtwark, the director of the Hamburg Kunsthalle and a prominent advocate of the art education movement, described in concrete terms what such an artistic *Anschaungsunterricht* would entail: classes were to be held in museums and not within the confines of the classroom, guided tours were to replace textbooks, and the original artworks were always to be preferred over their photographic reproductions. He called this kind of instruction *Kunstanschauung* not to be confused with the more conventional and tedious *Kunstgeschichte* (art history).⁶⁷

Obrist agreed with many of the participants on the usefulness of an art education which would replace older pedagogies that had for too long placed undue emphasis on *Methodik* and *System*. He had experienced personally, he said, how difficult it was to learn a classical language when one was limited to studying its grammar only and how much more efficient and enjoyable learning became when one tried to master a spoken, living language instead.⁶⁸ “Imagine a *Gymnasium* that begins with the language, the joy of thinking and speaking and ends with grammar,” he reflected, “instead of beginning with grammar and never ending.”⁶⁹ However, Obrist was not convinced that such traditional institutions of education could be easily purged of their long-standing dependence upon

⁶⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁶⁶ Menge, *Kunsterziehung*, cited above, 189 and Götz, *Kunsterziehung*, 147.

⁶⁷ Alfred Lichtwark, *Kunsterziehung*, 183-188. Along with Wilhelm von Bode and Justus Brinckmann, Lichtwark was one of the most prominent museum directors of Wilhelmine Germany. After studying under Hermann Grimm in Berlin, he became the director of the Kunsthalle in Hamburg in 1886. He founded the “Gesellschaft der Hamburger Kunstfreunde” (Society of Hamburg Friends of Art) with the purpose of formulating a more public role for the museum. In 1897 Lichtwark organized the exhibition “Das Kind als Künstler” (The Child as Artist).

⁶⁸ Obrist, *Kunsterziehung*, cited above, 168.

⁶⁹ Obrist, “Ein künstlerischer Kunstunterricht,” *Der Lotse. Hamburgische Wochenschrift für deutsche Kultur* 1. 23 (February 23, 1901) 687. This essay was initially delivered as a lecture in Fall 1900. Also see by Obrist, “Kunstakademien oder Schulen für die Kunst?” *Allgemeine Zeitung München* 106. 107 (April 18, 1903): 1.

Methodik and *System*. “Art flourishes so long as it is not taught,” he would argue, “out with orderly, planned, instruction!”⁷⁰ The natural sciences were much more promising for the arts than neo-humanistic education: with a “scientifically ripened gaze,” an artist would have an inductive understanding of the forms, structures, and movements of nature.⁷¹ Obrist also referred to other pedagogical possibilities: the school that he and the painter Wilhelm von Debschitz were about to start in Munich, he suggested, would not be a school in the strict sense of the term but be modeled after artisans’ workshops. Here learning would be realized by hands-on experimentation. It was only in such environments, he argued, that *anschauen* could truly be realized without concepts: instead of *anschauen*, a term with an intrinsic reference to the sense of sight, he insisted on *auffassen*, a word which literally evoked physical grasping.⁷² In other words, the possibilities of an *Anschauungsunterricht* did not have to be limited to visual vividness but could encompass tactile and kinaesthetic experiences.

In January 1902, only months after the conference in Dresden, the “Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst” opened in Hohenzollernstrasse in the Schwabing district of Munich—not far from the studios of the artists Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter and the dancer Rudolf Laban.⁷³ An announcement in a contemporary journal explained that the school offered instruction in “practical design” (*praktische Gestaltung*), which could be employed in a wide variety of fields including

⁷⁰ Obrist, “Kunstschulen,” *Kunst und Künstler* 5 (1907): 208.

⁷¹ See two newspapers reports of Obrist’s lecture “Naturwissenschaft und die bildende Kunst,” *Die Zeit* (Vienna) 6 (March 3, 1903) and *Hannoverschen Courier* 9 (March 3, 1903). These two pieces summarized Obrist’s argument as follows: “Previously the artist’s position vis-à-vis nature was more or less subjective; its appearances impacted him personally as an *Stimmungserreger* (summoner of dispositions). But the moment of mental knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of what was observed in nature failed him. The natural sciences show objectively, however, how animals and plants themselves suffer, live, fight, and perish as part of a besouled organic world.... Hence the rallying cry: out of the artistically darkened atelier into free nature so as to observe with a *scientifically ripened gaze* the endless phases of germinating and growing, the myriad forms of plant movements in striving upward, hanging, climbing, crouching, and clinging, the architectonic structures of rock formations, the downfall of the cascade, the tectonic secrets of the microscopic world and to constantly inseminate the artistic imagination anew from this immense treasure of living forms and changing structures.” (Emphasis mine)

⁷² Obrist, *Kunsterziehung*, cited above, 195.

⁷³ The Debschitz School was located in Hohenzollernstrasse 7a in Schwabing, Munich. Nextdoor was Kandinsky’s Phalanx Schule. Down the street lived in Hohenzollernstrasse 21-23 lived Gabriele Münter and in 120 Rudolf Laban, one of the founders of modern dance.

applied arts, life drawing, sculpture, landscape, and figure painting. These design classes were augmented by slide lectures, which were open to the general public.⁷⁴ By avoiding the convention of separating artistic activity into isolated realms, the announcement promised, the school would allow each individual to flourish according to his or her own “talent” (*Begabung*).⁷⁵ What the school thus hoped to circumvent was the conventional forms of art education based on *Wissen*: in both theory and practice, the Debschitz School was meant to be unlike the polytechnics, the Kunstgewerbe schools, which had been active since the middle of the century, and the Beaux-Arts-style academies, which were still considered by many to be the most prestigious institution for an artistic training.

The name the “Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst” (Atelier for Teaching and Experimenting in Applied and Free Art) already signaled some of the

⁷⁴ Obrist lectured frequently throughout Germany. In his autobiography, he wrote that he gave lectures on biology, bio-psychics, ethics, religion, and natural philosophy at locales such as Akademischer Verein für bildende Kunst, Kunstgewerbeverein, Verein für Fraueninteressen, Goethesbund, and at various Monistenbunde. Obrist, “Ein glückliches Leben,” cited above, 32. An announcement of his lectures mentioned the following topics: “Psychisches Trainieren” (Psychical training), “Verbrauchte und latente Kräfte” (Exhausted and latent powers), “Regeneration” (Regeneration), “Das hilflose moderne Ich” (The helpless modern ego), “Die Hygiene des Funktionirens” (Hygiene of functioning), etc. Obrist Archive, O4. The newspaper clippings in the same section of the archive give a better idea of the breadth of his lectures: “Fortschreiten und Stillstehen im Kunstgewerbe” (1897 Progress and stalling in applied art), “Hat das Publikum Interesse das Kunstgewerbe zu heben?” (1897, Does the public have an interest in enhancing applied art?), “Was sollen Künstler und Publikum thun zur Hebung des Kunstgewerbes?” (1897, What should artists and the public do to support the applied art?), “Die Zukunft unserer bildenden Kunst,” (1900, The future of our visual art), “Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst,” (1902, New possibilities in the visual art), “Fürstengunst und Selbsthilfe” (1902, The Prince’s favor and self-help), “Soll der Künstler Denken? (1902, Should the artist think?), “Die neue Grundsätze in der bildenden Kunst,” (1902, The new principles in the visual art), “Ist eine Bereicherung der bildenden Kunst durch die Naturwissenschaft möglich?” (1903, Is it possible to enrich the visual art by means of the natural sciences?), “Hat die weibliche Jugend Aussicht, in der Kunst Eigenes und Wertvolles zu leisten?” (1904, Do young women have the prospect of achieving something unique and valuable in art?), “Fürstenkunst oder Bürgerkunst,” (1905, Prince-art or bourgeois art), “Die moderne angewandte Kunst als ethische und religiöse Wegweiserin,” (1906, The new applied art as ethical and religious guide), “Wissenschaft und Kunst als Freund und Feind,” (1905, Science and art as friend and foe), “Das Problem der modernen Plastik,” (1906, The problem of modern sculpture), “Unsere architektonische und kunstgewerbliche Zukunft,” (1906/1907, Our architectonic and applied-art future), “Ist eine moderne religiöse Kunst möglich?” (1906, Is a modern religious art possible?), “Die Gefahren des ästhetischen Genießen” (1907, The dangers of aesthetic enjoyment), “Wie sollen wir kunstgewerblich schaffen? (1907, How should we create in the applied art?), “Deutsche und undeutsche Kunst,” (1908, German and un-German art), “Die Sittlichkeit des Künstlers,” (1908, The morality of the artist), “Neue geistige und sittliche Strömungen in der Kunst,” (1909, New spiritual and ethical currents in art), “Prinzipien und Theorien als Hemmungen der Kunst” (1913, Principals and theories as the repression of art), “Die Frau als bildende Künstlerin,” (1920/1921, Woman as visual artist), “Zweckmäßigkeit gegen Schöpfertrieb,” (1924, Purposiveness against the creative instinct), “Das Glück des schöpferischen Gestaltens” (1924, The bliss of creative design). Although there are newspaper reports of these lectures, it is impossible to know the full content of what was said.

school's ambitions. Not only did the school promise to encompass both the fine and the applied arts under the same roof and emphasize the experimental nature of the enterprise by putting the applied arts in front of the fine arts, but it also substituted the word "school" with "atelier". More importantly, the school was not a school in the conventional sense but had organically grown out of the workshops that were established by the "Vereinigten Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk" to teach artists about crafts. Throughout its history the school's ties to industry remained strong: student work was frequently sold to manufacturers and public exhibitions were organized to promote the work done at the school—most notably at the Wertheim Store in Berlin.⁷⁶ As such, the Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst was similar in spirit to the



Fig. 3.10: Debschitz School, Metal Workshop, c.1903.

many private art schools that had appeared everywhere in Germany at the turn of the century: Henry van de Velde's "Kunstgewerbliches Seminar" in Weimar (founded in 1902) and August Endell's "Formschule" in Berlin (f. 1904) as well as the Ažbè Schule (f. 1891), the Lothar von Kunowski Schule, (f. 1902), and Kandinsky's Phalanx-Schule (f. 1901) in Munich.⁷⁷

The school started with only six students; two years later it had 146 and by 1913 it was able to attract 249 and was the largest of its kind in Germany.⁷⁸ (Fig. 3.10) Throughout its history, the student body of the school was made up mostly of women. Although the schedule varied from student to student, the school generally offered a four-year program,

⁷⁵ "Lehr- und Versuchsatelier für angewandte und freie Kunst," Kunst und Handwerk 52 (1901-1902): 119.

⁷⁶ To this end, Debschitz and Hermann Lochner founded the company "Ateliers und Werkstätten für angewandte Kunst" in 1906. Theoretically the company was a separate entity, but in reality it sold the students' work. See "Lehrwerkstätten der Vereinigten Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk," Kunst und Handwerk 51.6 (1900-1901): 188.

⁷⁷ O. W. Dressler, Kunstjahrbuch. Ein Nachschlagebuch für bildende und angewandte Kunst, 4 vols. (Rostock: Dressler, 1906-1913). The Debschitz School is said to have exerted a considerable influence on later private art schools, particularly on the Bauhaus.

⁷⁸ Obrist, "Ein glückliches Leben," cited above, 33 and Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künste (Leipzig: Seeman, 1908-1950) 510.

for which the students had to pay themselves.⁷⁹ There were neither exams nor a diploma given at the end of this period; a portfolio and letters of recommendation were deemed sufficient for the students to find positions in academia or industry. Despite its purported ambitions to challenge conventional boundaries between the arts, however, the school was divided into ateliers that focused on free arts and applied arts.⁸⁰ Although other sections were later added, initially the former included studios in painting and drawing while the latter had workshops in interior architecture, metal, textiles, and ceramics.⁸¹ In addition, students took lecture courses on history, materials, calculation, perspective, and geometric drawing and participated in the public lectures regularly delivered by Obrist in the evenings. As in the contemporaneous *Wandervogelbewegung*, excursions were an important part of the curriculum: starting in 1904 students started taking regular trips during the summer to the country (Hohenpeißenberg, Grafrath, Wildenroth, and Starnberg) in order to study painting and drawing *en plein air*.⁸² There were also frequent field trips to the manufacturing facilities of furniture, glass, or light fixture producers.⁸³

⁷⁹ It was not until 1912 that the school was subsidized by the Bavarian state and the city of Munich. In the early years of the school, some students who did not have the means were forced to support themselves by working on the side. See Götz, “Die Debschitz-Schule Hohenzollernstraße 21,” cited above.

⁸⁰ Among the first teachers at the school were Else Hartmann-Sapatka (metal work and pattern design for ceramics), Wilhelm Preissler (ceramics and metal sculpture), Friederich Adler (stucco workshop), Hans Schmithals (hand-painted wallpaper), and Hugo-Steiner Prag (lithography, etching, woodcut, illustration). Wilhelm von Debschitz was responsible for the administrative matters and taught *Gestaltung* (design) while Obrist taught sculpture, *Gestaltung*, and textile design and lectured in the evenings. E. W. Bredt, an art historian who worked as a curator at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, lectured on art history. In 1908 Paul Klee taught a life drawing class for one semester. Many of the former students later taught at the school. Most famous students of the Debschitz School were Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Philip Harth, and Hans Schmithals. Among other students were Friedrich Adler, Rolf von Hoerschelmann, Dora Polster, Carl Georg von Reichenbach, Wolfgang von Wersin, and Fritz und Karl Schmoll von Eisenwerth, who took over the school in 1910-11 and again in 1912-13.

⁸¹ Stagecraft, photography, and furniture workshops were among sections that were added later.

⁸² See Obrist’s description of a fictive day at the school in “Ein künstlerischer Kunstunterricht,” cited above, 682-686. Debschitz also discussed the importance of “play” in art education in Wilhelm von Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* (March 1907) 297.

⁸³ Obrist left the school in 1904 although he continued to lecture in the evenings. In 1914, Debschitz sold the school to become the director of the State Arts and Crafts School in Hanover. After that the school operated under the consortium of Emil Preetorius, Paul Renner and Hans Cornelius.

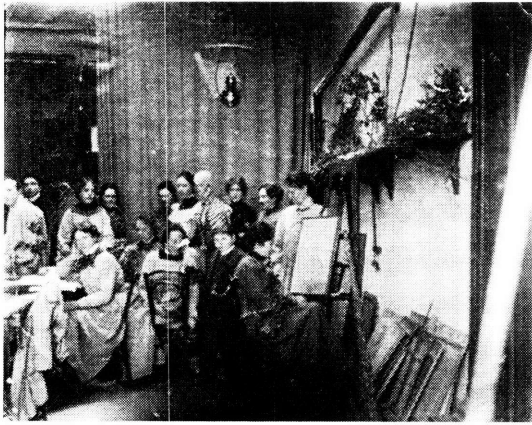


Fig. 3.11: Debschitz School, Drawing Atelier, c. 1903.

However, what distinguished the Debschitz School from other similar endeavors was the *Elementarunterricht* (elementary course), the general design course which all first-year students were required to take and which was meant to be an opportunity for students to explore their talents before they made a decision to specialize within the applied or the fine arts. The length of the preliminary course ranged from three months to a full year

depending on the student. Both Obrist and von Debschitz were convinced that previous artistic training was more a liability and less an advantage.⁸⁴ Those students who arrived as a *tabula rasa* were preferred to those who had been “mis-educated.” The *Elementarunterricht* had three components: design with an emphasis on drawing (*zeichnerisches Entwerfen*), model making (*modellieren*), and representational techniques (*Darstellungstechnik*), which included exercises in the study of nature (*Naturstudium*) and typography (*Schriftzeichnen*). The founders of the school believed that *nacherleben* (re-experiencing) was the basis of all art and not *nachzeichnen* (re-drawing) or *nachahmen* (imitating).⁸⁵ All these activities took place within the same space under conditions that Obrist fondly described as a “gypsy camp.”⁸⁶ (Fig. 3.11) In an article published in 1901, in which Obrist explained what it took to have an “artistic” art education, Obrist described the role of the teachers at the Debschitz School as follows:

⁸⁴ “Woe to him who has learned to well for he is condemned to always repeat.” Obrist, “Die Zukunft unserer Architektur,” *Dekorative Kunst* 4.9 (1901) 332. This essay was written in March 1900 and delivered as a lecture in November 1900.

⁸⁵ The importance of exercising “*nacherleben*” as opposed to “*nachahmen*” appears repeatedly in the writings of Obrist and Debschitz. See, for example, Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 271, 275, 277 or Obrist, “Ein künstlerischer Kunstunterricht,” cited above, 679. Obrist did not hold Renaissance in high esteem precisely because he thought Renaissance works mirrored or echoed forms of antiquity rather than being drawn “inwardly from the nature and soul of a creative spirit.” Obrist, “Die Zukunft unserer Architektur,” cited above, 331.

⁸⁶ Obrist described the studio where the preliminary course was taught as follows: “Over there someone is drawing the folds of a dress; here the head of the teacher bent over his reading is being drawn. On a wall a youngster is boldly trying to paint a larger-than-life fresco. Someone has in a cage a squirrel that he wants to study. Bowls and vases are being kneaded out of plasticine and clay; the hand and the arm of a friend are being modeled.” Obrist, “Ein künstlerischer Kunstunterricht,” cited above, 685.

All who want to become artists—be it draughtsman, painter, builder, or functional or ornamental artist—all these young people should be brought together for a year in an elementary course without a program and be allowed to jubilantly swarm under barely perceptible guidance. No duties should be imposed on them other than the task of condensing all their observations into one drawing or model every day, however modest that effort may be. This will mean for the teacher—whether they are out for a stroll, visiting art collections, in the city or in the mountains—that he becomes an inspirer, stimulator, and facilitator from the rich source of his experience, knowledge, and capabilities in order to heighten, sharpen, deepen, and broaden Looking, that beginning of all visual art, the joy of seeing as the holiest of the young artistic soul, to conserve the chaste and the untouched from the poison of lectures, workloads, and requirements, of the burdens of tedium, reluctance, and ultimate odium.⁸⁷

Contrast this with Obrist's description in the same text of how professors at the academy taught:

May God protect us artists from academies, polytechnic schools, and *Kunstgewerbeschulen*. May God protect you, young man, from that famous professor who has only produced yellow-grey-brown canvases for years. He enters the students' studio hastily and nervously, erases your life drawing, sketches you a shivery arm, and recommends himself.... "Meyer," tells you the professor, "you leave too much empty space in your picture. More balance. This would be a good place for a Byzantine."⁸⁸

The old-fashioned *Korrektur* (correction) at the academy was meant to be replaced at the Debschitz School with conversations, which were described by Obrist as "mental massage."⁸⁹ The striking similarity of the students' work to each other and to Obrist's work in general notwithstanding, these dialogues were not supposed to dictate how the work under examination should be executed but purported to stimulate and arouse the potentials that were assumed to be lying hidden within each student's individual psyche. The teachers at the Debschitz School, in other words, were not teachers who conveyed knowledge in the conventional sense; rather they were to *indirectly* awaken "talent"—not unlike contemporaneous occultist practitioners who sought to kindle otherwise hidden mediumistic tendencies. It is no wonder that Obrist called their pedagogy a "method of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 684.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 680.

⁸⁹ Obrist, "Die Lehr- und Versuch-Ateliers für angewandte und freie Kunst," *Dekorative Kunst* 12 (1904): 229.

psychical awakening.”⁹⁰ If von Keller induced the medium Lina to produce facial expressions by showing her reproductions of his paintings and von Schrenk-Notzing prompted Magdelene G. to dream-dance by playing music to her, Obrist and Debschitz utilized their unconventional curriculum to stimulate and bring into sight the latent aptitudes of their students, most of whom were, like contemporaneous mediums, women. These talents were summoned from the unconscious substructure of the self, as it was aptly described by Max Dessoir—from what Obrist described as “the mystical productivity of the subconscious.”⁹¹ And just as bodily movements were the means through which the female mediums were roused and interpreted by the occultists at the Psychologische Gesellschaft, kinaesthesia became the foundation of the pedagogical practices instituted as a new curriculum of art education at the Debschitz School.

Kinaesthesia as a Pedagogical Agenda

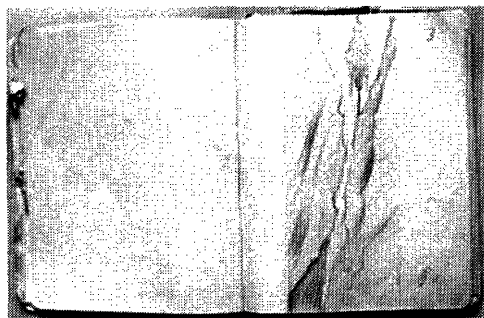
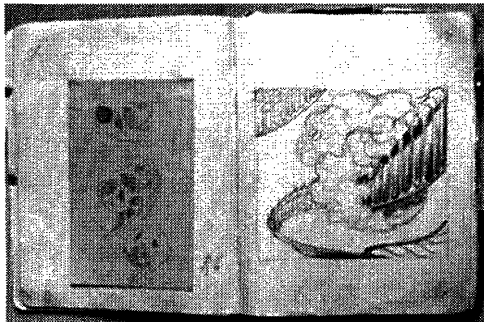


Fig. 3.12.a: Pages from Obrist’s “Programmatisches” notebook at the Obrist Archive, O2.40.

In Obrist’s notebooks at the Graphische Sammlung in Munich, one encounters a valiant, albeit incomplete, attempt at devising a comprehensive theory of formal effects or impacts (*Wirkungen*).⁹² According to Obrist, the artist always started with an inexplicable flash of inspiration, but the rest of the creative process could be analyzed and taught. His rhetoric against *Methodik* and *Systematik* notwithstanding, Obrist not only classified these effects (purely optical form effects, effects of direction, effects of color, psychic effects of space, etc.) and enumerated them (effects of direction, for example, were enumerated as forwards, backwards, spirals,

⁹⁰ Ibid., 232.

⁹¹ Obrist, “Ein glückliches Leben,” cited above, 25.

⁹² Obrist Archive, O2.40.

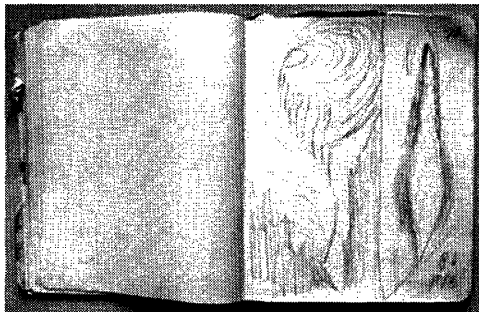
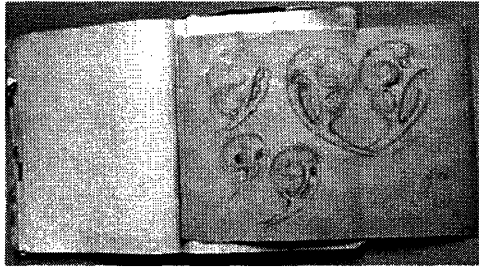
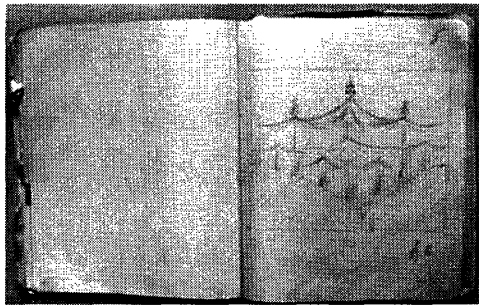


Fig. 3.12.b: Pages from Obrist's "Programmatisches" notebook at the Obrist Archive, O2.40.

zigzags, vibrating lines, etc.) but also followed them with numerous sketches which were applications of his detailed classifications.⁹³ (Fig. 3.12.a, b) "Art is intensified sensations... it is heightened life," he wrote elsewhere, "the value of an artwork depends on the value of the sensations that it evokes in us."⁹⁴ In the case of architecture, for example, what mattered was not materials or construction but rather the feeling of space, among them, "the feelings of ample or depressed space, of uplifting, of intimate, of cheerful, prosaic, holy space."⁹⁵ At a time when German architectural culture seemed to be desperately looking for a new style befitting the times, Obrist argued that the future of architecture was not in style but in "aesthetic emotive effects," that is, architectural forms' capacity to evoke feelings and dispositions (*Stimmungen*).⁹⁶ A contemporary noted that Obrist's form stimulated

⁹³ An excerpt from the first page of Obrist's notebook at the Obrist Archive O2.40: "Through purely optically gripping form-effects: (pure black and white, graphic) directionality, direction. What does the movement strive toward? Filling up of space through the distribution of masses, distribution of curves, contrast of masses, rigidity and living impetus. Through the effect of direction, directionality: the looming, the lying, the receding, the striving, supporting, plummeting, undulating, tilting, falling, subsiding, soaring, bending, winding, resting, broken, cracked, gazing, defying, looping, string towards, striving away, forward, backward, swirl, spiral attained by means of the intensification of the black and white, of massing, of the force of the line."

⁹⁴ Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst schreiben?" cited above, 189, 191.

⁹⁵ The longer quote is: "The feelings, which the inner feeling-expansion could give us and which could already be present in the beholder or could effect his psyche in a powerful manner, may no longer remain an unconscious factor for the architect. The feelings of ample or depressed space—of uplifting, intimate, cheerful, prosaic, holy space—these are all artistic, architectonic values, through which the architect expresses himself according to his own powerful or delicate, strict or playful, intellectual or sensual nature—exactly like the musician who does the same with his own rhythms and his own dynamic and melodies, not because he chooses a cheerful or serious style, but because as the architect, he consciously want to produce this *Stimmung*." Obrist, "Die Zukunft unserer Architektur," cited above, 335.

⁹⁶ Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst schreiben?" cited above, 189 and "Die Zukunft unserer Architektur," cited above, 335.

“the lungs, the heart, the brain, and the musculature.”⁹⁷ Parallels between music and the visual arts occupied much of the latter half of Obrist’s analysis. It is no wonder that his notebooks were entitled “Programmatisches,” a term meant to evoke music’s ability to stir up dispositions. According to Obrist the world vibrated with musical energy:

Rhythms, oscillations, and vibrations are to be found everywhere—in the waves and clouds, in the change of days and seasons, in the rustling of trees in the wind, in every waterfall, in every geyser, in every creeping plant, in every march, dance, and music. And the rhythm, the crescendo and the decrescendo, contrast effects such as forte and piano, the beat, the counterpoint, the intellectual and spiritual upswing of music, *Bewegungsstimmung*, which provoke allegro, largo, scherzo, andante, and finale in him, translated themselves into the optical, and the *Klangfarbe* (color-tone) of individual instruments into *Farbenklang* (tone-color).⁹⁸

Debschitz would disagree with Obrist on the mystical nature of the first inspiration, but he too defined art as any kind of activity which made “visible things that aesthetically produce[d] an effect on the viewer.”⁹⁹ This definition allowed Debschitz to jettison the distinctions between the fine and the applied arts as well as between media such as painting and sculpture and to incorporate all artistic activity under the aegis of “design” (*Gestaltung*).¹⁰⁰ Like Obrist, Debschitz was essentially convinced that art could not be taught except through effects (*Wirkungen*). The teacher could only hope to show the students the origins and the mechanism of aesthetic effects.¹⁰¹ This was a four-stepped

⁹⁷ Kunowski, “Hermann Obrist, ein Beginner,” cited above, 242.

⁹⁸ Obrist, “Ein glückliches Leben,” cited above, 27. Compare this with the *Klangfarben* that Kandinsky elaborated on in Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst insbesondere in der Malerei* (Munich: R. Piper, 1912). For an excellent study of Kandinsky and the artistic milieu of the turn-of-the-century Munich, see Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979). Weiss argues here that Kandinsky was influenced greatly by Obrist and Endell. Colors also had an important role in Kandinsky’s experimental plays. See Peter Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) 217-234.

⁹⁹ Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 266. Unlike Obrist, Debschitz repeatedly asserted that an artistic idea could not be inspired by mystical incidences. See Debschitz, “Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts,” *Dekorative Kunst* 7 (March 1904) 210. Generally speaking, Debschitz did not reject all methodology and systematic thinking as Obrist did; on the contrary, he argued that *Methodik* was necessary in art education. Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 278.

¹⁰⁰ Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 266.

¹⁰¹ Debschitz, “Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts,” cited above, 210.

process. In the first stage, the student tried to identify an effect in a natural form (usually a plant) and to determine the means through which the effect was created. The student then made experimental sketches to explore the ways in which the observed effect could be heightened or diminished. In the third stage, which also involved intense sketching, it was crucial to detach the effect from the appearance so as to avoid imitation. Finally the effect was applied to a specific material and either an artwork or an object of use was produced.¹⁰²

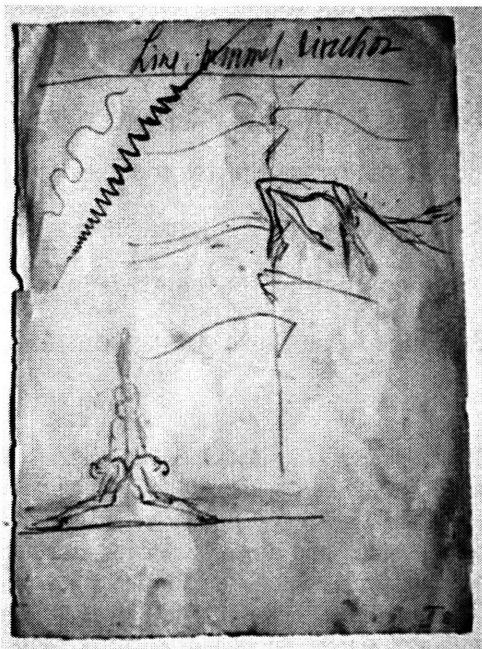


Fig. 3.13: Hermann Obrist, Sketch showing the relationship between line and the body, Obrist Archive, O2.1.

If forms' assumed kinaesthetic impact on the body formed the basis of Obrist and Debschitz's theorizations, drawing was considered the best means of reproducing these effects (*Wirkungen*).¹⁰³ The seemingly accidental movements of the wrist produced twists, curves, and meanders, Obrist wrote, but in fact these impulsive markings upon the paper captured effects much better than a deliberately drawn line.¹⁰⁴ Consider an undated sketch by Obrist: a link is revealed here between the tension of a line and the tension of the human body. (Fig. 3.13) It was not the proportions of a human body at rest that gives Obrist's ornaments form in this

drawing, but rather the dynamic lines of the body's movement. In other words, the line

¹⁰² Ibid., 220-222.

¹⁰³ The line had an important role to play in Jugendstil in general. Among others, see August Endell, "Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst," *Dekorative Kunst* 2.9 (1898): 119-25; Julius Meier-Graffe, "Floral-Linear," *Dekorative Kunst* 3 (1899): 169-73; Walter Crane, *Line and Form* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1900) translated into German as *Linie und Form* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann, 1901); Franz Servaes, "Linienkunst," *Ver Sacrum* (Vienna) 5.7 (1902): 111-22; Henry van de Velde, "Die Belebung des Stoffes als Schönheitsprincip," *Kunst und Künstler* 1 (1903): 453-63; Felix Poppenberg, "Die Ausdrucksprache in der modernen Angewandten Kunst," *Berliner Architekturwelt* 8.10 (1906): 359-63; Konrad Lange, "Symmetrie und Gleichgewicht," *Die Kunst* 16 (1907): 240-44; Hans Schmidkunz, "Linienführungen," *Die Raumkunst* 1.17 (1908): 247-54; and Ernst Michalski, "Die Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Jugendstils," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 46 (1915): 133-49.

¹⁰⁴ Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst schreiben?" cited above, 193-94.

built a bridge between the artist and the beholder in Obrist's work, precisely because it was produced by the body's movements and perceived through them. The artist's hand recorded the universe's ubiquitous vibrations and transformed them into lines which had a direct impact on the viewer's body.¹⁰⁵ According to the dictum of *nacherleben* at the Debschitz School, what made the aesthetic enjoyment of both drawing and viewing a line possible was not the line itself but rather—to use the vocabulary of the famous empathy theorist Theodor Lipps—the enjoyment of the self as objectified by the line.¹⁰⁶

Lines, particularly curves, had a central role not only in the work of Obrist and Debschitz but in Jugendstil in general.¹⁰⁷ “Just as psychical events express themselves in bodily gestures,” the critic Arthur Roessler wrote in describing the work of the painter Adolf Hölzel, “artistic sensations as inner movement could be made visible by means of the line.”¹⁰⁸ The critic Karl Scheffler used the methods of graphology to demonstrate that the line was an expression of an unconscious self. After comparing the handwritings of Henry van de Velde and Peter Behrens, Scheffler concluded that what was unconscious

¹⁰⁵ A similar kind of pedagogy was undertaken by Adolf Hölzel, a painter who instructed his students to make 1,000 mindless strokes everyday. Johannes Itten studied in Stuttgart with Adolf Hölzel before founding his own school in Vienna between 1917-19 and directing the *Vorkurs* (elementary course) at the Bauhaus. Essays by Hölzel include “Über künstlerische Ausdrucksmittel und deren Verhältnis zu Natur und Bild,” *Die Kunst* 11 (1905): 81-88, 106-13; “Über bildliche Kunstwerke im architektonischen Raum,” *Der Architekt* 15 (1909): 34-37, 41-46, 73-80; “Aus dem Tagebuch Adolf Hoelzels,” *Die Rheinlande* 15 (1915): 65-68; (with Johannes Itten) *Hölzel Und Sein Kreis* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1916); “Über künstlerische Ausbildung des Malers,” *Der Pelikan* 9 (1920): 21-26; “Die Schule des Künstlers,” *Der Pelikan* 11 (1921): 3-8. On Hölzel see Arthur Roessler, *Neu-Dachau, Ludwig Dill, Adolf Hölzel, Arthur Langhammer* (Bielefeld, Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1905); Hans Hildebrand, *Adolf Hölzel als Zeichner* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1913); *Hölzel und sein Kreis, Der Beiträge Stuttgarts zur Malerei des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart und Kunstgebäude am Schlossplatz, 1961); “Tausend Striche,” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 90 (1963): 9; Walter Hess, “Zu Hölzels Lehre,” *Der Pelikan* 65 (1963): 18-34; Johannes Itten, “Adolf Hölzel und sein Kreis,” *Der Pelikan* 65 (1964): 34-40; Nina G. Parris, “Adolf Hoelzel's Structural and Color Theory and Its Relationship to the Development of the Basic Course at the Bauhaus,” Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1979; Rainer Beck, *Adolf Hoelzel, Aufbruch zur Moderne* (Munich: Museum Villa Stuck, 1980); and Nina G. Parris, “Van De Velde, Obrist, Hoelzel, The Development of the Basic Course,” cited above.

¹⁰⁶ Theodor Lipps famously described aesthetic enjoyment as “objectified self-enjoyment.” See Theodor Lipps, “Einfühlung und ästhetischer Genuß,” *Die Zukunft* 54 (1905) 100-114

¹⁰⁷ Fragments from Obrist's notebook on curves in the Obrist Archive O2.40: “Not only the curves of lines but forms that have become sculptural and corporeal; forms whose outlines shape beautiful curves. Heightening of curve-power through the heightening of stroke power, power of line weight, crescendo of the thickness of the curve, thickness of the stroke. Heightening and hardness through the multiplication of masses.”

¹⁰⁸ Arthur Roessler, *Neu-Dachau*, cited above, 119.

in the artists' handwriting was only made visible in their ornamental designs.¹⁰⁹ Subverting the terms of the traditional *disegno e colore* debate, according to which drawing and color represented the primacy of reason versus the senses respectively, Jugendstil thus transformed the line into an entity that was produced and interpreted exclusively by the musculature of the body without reference to the conscious mind.

The principle of *nacherleben* manifested itself, above all, in drawing techniques at the Debschitz School. Drawing from models, an essential pedagogical practice at academies, was strictly prohibited at the school while *Naturstudium* and drawing from memory were encouraged.¹¹⁰ If academic drawing was a matter of mastering preparatory contour lines and understanding mathematical scale and proportions, learning to draw at the Debschitz School involved developing a 'feel' for the rhythm of hand movements and for an intuitive *Augenmaß* (visual discrimination).¹¹¹ A pedagogical tool that Debschitz used to teach students how to draw was a diagram, in which an oat husk was rendered in eight different configurations.¹¹² (Fig. 3.14) Depending on how the midpoint of the drawing was positioned in relation to the husk's presumed center of gravity, Debschitz explained, the curvature of the lines produced the impact of varying degrees of lightness or heaviness on the beholder.¹¹³ The students were encouraged to explore the different permutations of a given effect by drawing them over and over again.

¹⁰⁹ Karl Scheffler, "Meditationen über das Ornament," *Dekorative Kunst* 4.10 (1901) 397.

¹¹⁰ Despite his public declarations against imitation, Obrist frequently copied forms from books, particularly from popular scientific works with illustrations, such as the following: Hans Kraemer, *Weltall und Menschheit: Geschichte der Erforschung der Natur und der Verwertung der Naturkräfte im Dienste der Völker* (Berlin: Bong, 1902); Ernst Krause (Carus Sterne), *Werden und Vergehen. Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte des naturganzen in gemeinverständlicher Fassung* (Berlin: Gebr. Bonrtraeger, 1880); *Wunder der Natur. Schilderungen der interessantesten Natur-Schöpfungen und Erscheinungen in Einzeldarstellungen. Unter Mitw. hervorragender Fachmänner* (Berlin: Bong, 1912-1914) and Pettigrew, *Design in Nature*, cited above. See Obrist-Archive O1.26, 27, and 29.

¹¹¹ Compare the pedagogy at the Debschitz School with that developed by Lothar von Kunowski. See Lothar von Kunowski and Gertrud von Kunowski, *Unsere Kunstschule* (Liegnitz: Verlag für Nationalstenographie, 1910) and the series Lothar von Kunowski, *Durch Kunst zum Leben* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1901-1906).

¹¹² Debschitz, "Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts," cited above, 213.

¹¹³ In a manner reminiscent of Hildebrand's famous distinction between *Daseinsform* (form of being) and *Wirkungsform* (form of effect) Debschitz argued that the point of drawing should not be to capture *Erscheinungsform* (form of appearance), that is, forms in their contingency but in their *Gegenständlichkeit* (objecthood), that is, independent of contingency. The purpose of drawing was to develop a spatial

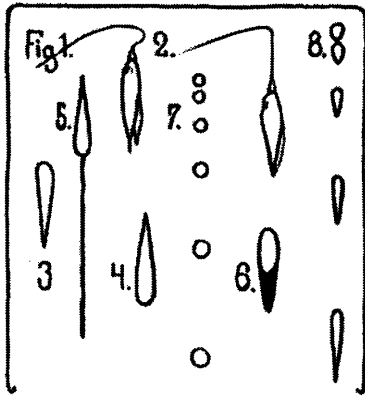


Fig. 3.14: Wilhelm von Debschitz's diagram for teaching the aesthetic effects in the various configuration of an oat husk, from Debschitz, "Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts," *Dekorative Kunst* 7 (1904) 213.

In Obrist and Debschitz's theory of effects consciousness only hindered creativity. Debschitz hinted at a mind which did its most creative work unconsciously even at moments of seeming distraction: "The melody, which we heard only once but which we could repeat years later despite its complexity," he wrote, "we hear not only with our ears; rather our soul was active in hearing it."¹¹⁴ In other words, Obrist and Debschitz not only imagined self as a structure made up of conscious and unconscious layers, but they were also convinced that the latter was more active and productive, because it lacked the self-consciousness that defined the former.¹¹⁵ They argued that it was precisely this absence of self-consciousness

that made children's drawings much more compelling than most contemporary art. The unself-conscious parts of the self, they lamented, was eventually ruined by conventional education.¹¹⁶ If neo-humanistic *Bildung* targeted the conscious superstructure of the self; Obrist and Debschitz's pedagogy tried to train the bodily movements that originated from the unconscious substratum.

Obrist's desire to circumvent consciousness became especially evident in the so-called comparative method, which he used at the Debschitz School: "There is only one correct artistic-psychological way," Obrist wrote, "and that is that of the comparative

imagination, which, according to Debschitz, educated the power of *Erkennen* (sensual knowledge) and taught the students a correct spatial imagination, which would allow them to have an intimate exchange with things in the world. Debschitz, "Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst," cited above, 269. Also see Adolf Hildebrand, Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst (Strassburg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1893). Translated into English as The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture, trans. Max Meyer and Robert Morris Ogden (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1907) and "The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts," Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-93, introd. and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994): 227-79.

¹¹⁴ Debschitz, "Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts," cited above, 210.

¹¹⁵ "Everything unconscious and natural. This is how we must work.... If you do not become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of creative art." Obrist, "Die Zukunft unserer Architektur," cited above, 332.

*Anschaung.*¹¹⁷ The underlying assumption of the comparative method was that when presented with two juxtaposed objects, the eye moved back and forth between them and a judgment could be made automatically—just as in a reflex action—without recourse to higher cognitive faculties. Obrist explained how the comparative method was to be used: put examples of good and bad chairs in front of your designers, Obrist urged furniture manufacturers, and you will find that they will immediately start designing more beautiful, comfortable, and less expensive chairs—a result that years of training at the Kunstgewerbeschule could not achieve.¹¹⁸ Looking at one object required the sustained, willful attention that only a long, laborious education made possible; moving the eyes back and forth between two objects, by contrast, guaranteed sound judgments even in the absence of an educated intellect. Repetition, however, was essential to the comparative method. If comparative exercises was consistently repeated, Obrist reasoned, the unmediated impact of good and bad examples could not fail to be imprinted upon the body of the viewers and become ingrained habits.¹¹⁹

A particularly promising technology for the comparative method was the projection of slides, a technology that we will examine in more detail in the last chapter. Obrist regretted that it was not always possible to use original artworks, which he believed would produce stronger effects, for the comparative method. Still he frequently used the terminology of magic to extol the virtues of “conjuring up” life-size images of artworks on the wall—images which were to be juxtaposed rather than presented sequentially.¹²⁰ After providing a long list of paintings to be compared—the Battle of the Amazons by Rubens next to the wall paintings by Prell in Palazzo Caffarelli in Rome, for example—

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 331-332; Debschitz, “Lehren und Lernen in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 271; and Debschitz, “Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts,” cited above, 209.

¹¹⁷ Obrist, “Wozu über Kunst Schreiben?” cited above, 174. Obrist elaborated on the comparative method in other writings as well. See Obrist, “Die Zukunft unserer Architektur,” cited above, 334 and “Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst,” cited above, 145-146. Children’s drawings as a model for modern art would prove to be a modernist trope with a long life. See Barbara Wittmann, “Zeichnen, im Dunkeln. Psychophysiologie einer Kulturtechnik um 1900” in *Randgänge der Zeichnung*, eds. Werner Busch, Oliver Jehle, and Carolin Meister (Munich: Wilhelm Fink: 2005): 165-186.

¹¹⁸ Obrist, “Wozu über Kunst schreiben?” cited above, 174.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 178.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

he promised that repeating this practice three times a week between October and July at the Debschitz School would quickly teach the students the difference between good and bad art.¹²¹ This was similar to Fechner's equation of authenticity with beauty: the good example was imagined to be the one that also produced the most powerful impact on the viewer.

This kind of *Anschauungsunterricht*, Obrist noted, was not only in the service of artists but was already being used in the art history classroom by such innovative scholars as Konrad Lange and Heinrich Wölfflin.¹²² These art historians' willingness to employ the comparative method, according to Obrist, would ease the historically strained relationship between artists and historians, finally bringing art history closer to aesthetics. Of all the pedagogues who used the comparative method, however, it was Obrist's friend, the painter Paul Schultze-Naumburg (1869-1949), who enjoyed the most momentous cultural impact by juxtaposing ostensibly good and bad images of architecture and cities in his popular *Kulturarbeiten* books.¹²³ In other words, everywhere that it was used, the comparative *Anschauungsunterricht* replaced an intellectual *Wissen* with a corporeal *Kennen*:

The aesthetic can be seized (*erfasst*) only by the senses quickly and unequivocally. The written can be grasped (*begriffen*) only after the visual.... Only from simultaneous comparisons between successful and unsuccessful examples can knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) arise quickly. All other means, such as confronting beautiful things in museums or in display windows also have their impact (*Wirkung*), but these emerge more slowly. The eye should see and enjoy and immediately thereupon the intellect grasps the why; only then "can one go home reassuredly."¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid., 185.

¹²² Obrist, "Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst," cited above, 159-160. Obrist considered the exchanges between the artist, art historian, and aesthetician to be one of the new possibilities in the visual arts. To this list of art historians one must add Ernst Wilhelm Bredt, who was a professor of art history and curator at the Graphische Sammlung in Munich and who frequently lectured at the Debschitz School.

¹²³ Ibid., 169. Paul Schultze-Naumburg started his career as a landscape painter but became famous as a cultural critic. He started publishing the *Kulturarbeiten* series in 1900. These books, which were meant to educate the reader about the environment by juxtaposing good and bad photographs of architecture, domestic interiors, cities, and landscape, were extremely popular and went through several editions. In 1928 Schultze-Naumburg joined the National Socialist *Kampfbund für deutsche Kunst*. Schultze-Naumburg's other books include *Kunst und Kunstpflege* (1901), *Die Kultur des weiblichen Körpers als Grundlage der Frauenkleidung* (1905), and the notorious *Kunst und Rasse* (1928). On Schultze-Naumburg, see Norbert Borrmann, *Paul Schultze-Naumburg 1869-1949* (Essen: Richard Bacht, 1989).

¹²⁴ Obrist, "Wozu über Kunst schreiben?" cited above, 185, 176.

We have seen in the previous chapters how the two kinds of perception outlined by Obrist here corresponded to different kinds of education intended for different social classes in Imperial Germany. The slow, attentive contemplation that grasped the “written” as quickly as the visual was the distinguishing mark of the educated middle classes, who undertook years of painstaking *Bildung*. On the other hand, as the example of the comparative *Anschaunungsunterricht* makes clear, the unconscious and immediate perception was developed as a pedagogical program for those whose will and attention were not developed enough through the right kind of schooling. If the former always required the presence of authentic artworks; the former could make do with reproductions—ghosts of the original—made possible by such technologies as slide projection and the cinema.¹²⁵ Despite his criticism of academic traditions, then, Obrist was typical of his class in that he was equally displeased by the emergence of mass culture. In his writings he frequently expressed disdain for cheap furniture, folksy art, or cartoons from the popular illustrated journal *Gartenlaube*.¹²⁶ Obrist’s own preference was for aristocracy: regarding the school policy of selecting the few who would become the “true artists” at the end of each year, Obrist announced proudly that “what began democratically end[ed] aristocratically.”¹²⁷ At the very moment when German academic elites complained that the democratization of education was diluting *Bildung*, Obrist lamented that art in the hands of the “common fellow” was resulting in a mediocrity that he found difficult to stomach:

The wild, disorderly emancipation from teachers, tradition, school, and guidance had to happen.... Just as women no longer want to abide by their dependence on parents, spouses, relatives and society but rather seek to earn their own living, do not want to live echo-lives but their own, countless young painters have been working for some time now as partial or complete autodidacts.... But the “common fellow” is already there painting, modeling, building, ornamenting endlessly, and we have to endure all that. Artistic activity has now become so democratically public

¹²⁵ As I discuss at length in Chapter 1, many members of the educated elite classes in Wilhelmine Germany were careful to stay away from the cinema, which was generally viewed as cheap entertainment for the masses. See Konrad Lange, *Die Kunst des Kinematographen* (Mönchengladbach: Volksvereinsverlag, 1918) and *Das Kino in Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1920).

¹²⁶ See, for example, Obrist, “Volkskunst,” cited above, 85-86.

¹²⁷ Obrist, “Ein künstlerischer Kunstunterricht,” cited above, 686.

that we have to ask resolutely: how do we prevent these ridiculous efforts? How do we heighten the efforts of the many so that they contribute to the enjoyment of all rather than to the mis-education of the masses and the annoyance of the few?¹²⁸

Obrist's anxiety about an emerging mass public and its taste in cultural matters is palpable here. Obrist, like many fellow liberal-minded reformers in Imperial Germany, theorized kinaesthetic response to artworks as the primary mode of perception for those outside of the *Bildungsbürgertum*: the uneducated as well as women, children, and Catholics were the intended subjects. Since academic traditions of *Bildung* were rendered defunct in the age of mass culture and mass education, it was now necessary to establish a new pedagogy which could train artists to produce a new type of art whose principal task would be to choreograph experience. Kinaesthetic practices were formed by repetition; they were 'mindless' habits which served as surrogates to elegant thought. Just as Obrist assumed that industrial types could safeguard good taste in the absence of traditional cultures that produced well crafted objects, kinaesthetic habits became readily reproducible practices which could guarantee the correct kind of art appreciation. This seemed particularly important at a historical moment when art was available to the masses in museums, popular journals, cheap photographs, etc., but many intellectuals felt that the requisite techniques of attentive, contemplative viewing were becoming extinct.¹²⁹ In other words, within this aesthetic discourse kinaesthesia did not denote just any bodily movement but those that could serve as a substitute for cognitive capacities such as thought and language.

The cultural role of the artist in this context was similar to that of the 'summoner' found in occult séances. According to Obrist and Debschitz, the artist's only task was to choreograph aesthetic effects and thus the resulting experience. "The artist orients the viewer by virtue of his better understanding of appearances," Debschitz wrote.¹³⁰ The pedagogy at the Debschitz School made this possible by teaching the students to

¹²⁸ Ibid., 680-681.

¹²⁹ For Obrist on types, see "Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst," cited above, 144-145.

¹³⁰ Debschitz, "Eine Methode des Kunstunterrichts," cited above, 212.

recognize deeper structures in nature—its regularities, structures, and movements.¹³¹ “For the artist art is giving intensified feelings,” Obrist wrote, “for the consuming lay public it means receiving, taking, *mitempfinden*, *nachfühlen*, *mitfühlen*, and *einfühlen* into the stronger life of the artist.”¹³² The task of designing the education of these choreographers, in turn, fell to Obrist and Debschitz. Just as these two pedagogues targeted the students’ unconscious, the students targeted the unconscious of the public. What the Debschitz School thus set up was a *mise en abîme* of control: the viewer needed an artist to choreograph his involuntary response to form; the artist needed pedagogues who would calibrate his unconscious for this task, and, ultimately, the public needed the guidance of the educated elites in matters of artistic taste.¹³³ Obrist and Debschitz’s new pedagogy seemed to indefinitely defer the ability to think independently, which was once an ideal of *Bildung*.

However, the specter of automatism that haunted occultism could not be shaken off the pedagogical practices at the Debschitz School either. The ingenuity of kinaesthesia was that practices such as comparative looking or kinaesthetic sketching reproduced themselves as mechanical habits. Just as the apparent absence of agency in séances made objects look like they were moving on their own, designed objects seemed to acquire magical properties, striking their recipient, as it were, with aesthetic effects. This was how ‘design’ would function in the twentieth century: it would be taken for granted that designed objects—whether teacups, chairs, or buildings—had the immanent ability to affect the body and alter its behavior patterns. The assumed immediacy between form and affect, a relationship forged at the end of the nineteenth century, would thereby be transformed into an assumed immediacy between design and behavior in twentieth-century modernism.

¹³¹ Obrist, “Die Lehr- und Versuch-Ateliers für angewandte und freie Kunst,” cited above, 229.

¹³² Obrist, “Wozu über Kunst schreiben?” cited above, 190. These German verbs are all variations of an empathetic exchange.

¹³³ “... it is the economic task of the rich to energetically further the idiosyncratic inventiveness in the people.” Obrist, “Hat das Publikum ein Interesse das Kunstgewerbe zu heben?” cited above, 38. Also Obrist, “Volkskunst,” cited above, 85-86 and “Luxuskunst oder Volkskunst,” cited above, 99.



Fig. 3.15: Fritz Erler, Poster design for the Cococelloclub in Munich, 1905.

A poster from 1905, designed by Fritz Erler for the Munich club Cococello, wittily captured this paradox. (Fig. 3.15) The inscription “The Munich Berlitz School of United Arts” did not only allude to the German Kunstgewerbe movement’s self-professed affinities with the English Arts and Crafts Movement. It also reminded the viewer of the so-called “direct method” of teaching devised by Maximilian Berlitz, the German émigré who had founded a successful chain of language school in the United States and had recently made headlines for having taught the Kaiser English at an unprecedented speed.¹³⁴ The innovation of the Berlitz technique was that it replaced the older methods of grammar

instruction, translation, and rote memorization with a practical emphasis on speaking and active learning. The poster compared what the Debschitz School attempted to achieve in art education to what Berlitz did in language instruction. The result, it was implied, was not without irony. The two figures in the image, “artes mechanicae,” represented by a mannequin and “artes liberales” by a female figure above whom two muses floated, seemed to have their roles completely reversed. The mannequin of the applied arts, whose jointed frame was seemingly now endowed with life, mischievously cranked a mechanism, which was meant to set the automaton-like body of the female figure in action. Kinaesthetic practices may have started out with the ambition of liberating the body from the constraints of an overly intellectualizing *Wissen* and the nineteenth-century self that it cultivated. But once transformed into mindless habits, kinaesthesia transformed the newly liberated body into a heap of soulless, mechanistic parts.

¹³⁴ Maximilian Berlitz (1852-1921) founded the first Berlitz school in Providence, Rhode Island in 1878. The legend is that he was using the traditional grammar-translation method of teaching a foreign language before he discovered by coincidence the much more effective direct method. His schools soon became a world-wide business. For the Berlitz method, see, for example, M. D. Berlitz, Methode für den deutschen Unterricht in den Berlitz’schen Sprachschulen (Boston: C. H. Heintzemann, 1882) and Gerhard J. Stieglitz, “The Berlitz Method,” The Modern Language Journal 39.6 (October 1955): 200-310.

CHAPTER 3:

AUGUST ENDELL'S SCIENCE OF EMOTIVE EFFECT

Tabularizing Emotions

boshaft	höhnisch	hochmütig	pathetisch	kalt	unerbittlich	grausam	fürchterlich
frivol	übermütig	herausfordernd	stolz	streng	gewaltsam	wild	grässlich
kokett	chic	prächtigt	kühn	rücksichtslos	wuchtig	kolossal	scheusslich
geziert	graziös	elegant	energisch	kraftvoll	derb	ungeschlacht	roh
süßlich	zierlich	geschmeidig	feurig	stark	gedrungen	gewaltig	entsetzlich
fade	zart	hingebend	gross	vornehm	machtvoll	ungeheuer	furchtbar
nüchtern	einfach	innig	warm	ernst	tief	erhaben	grausig
stumpf	kraftlos	müde	bekümmert	traurig	schwermütig	düster	finster

Fig. 4.1: Table of Emotions from August Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898).

A curious table accompanied an essay written by the architect August Endell (1871-1925) and published in 1898 in the Munich-based journal *Dekorative Kunst*.¹ (Fig. 4.1) Made up of eight rows and eight columns, Endell’s table meticulously inventoried for the reader sixty four adjectives—ranging from blunt to spiteful on the left side and from horrible to gloomy on the right. Endell remarkably called this a “table of emotions” and explained the logic behind it as follows:

¹ August Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898) 121. The article appeared in two parts: “I. Die Freude an der Form” in *Dekorative Kunst* 1 (1897-98) 75-77 and “II. Die gerade Linie,” “III. Geradlinige Gebilde,” in *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898) 119-25. Short excerpts have been translated into English as “The Beauty of Form and Decorative Art” in *Art in Theory, 1900-1990*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford, U.K.: Cambridge, U.S.A.: Blackwell, 1992): 60-63. I will use my own translation and the page numbers in the original publication. Some articles that I refer to in this chapter were reprinted in August Endell, *Vom Sehen: Texte 1896-1925, über Architektur, Formkunst und “Die Schönheit der großen Stadt.”* ed. Helge David (Basel, Berlin, and Boston: Birkhäuser, 1995). Endell’s table of emotions must have appeared peculiar even to the editors of *Dekorative Kunst*, as they added a short statement akin to a disclaimer to the end of the article: “The ideas printed above move into such new and abstract territories that we gladly publish it without, however, being able to identify with them any further.” Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” cited above, 125.

....Strain (*Anstrengung*) and quickness (*Schnelligkeit*) are the mutually constitutive components of every feeling (*Gefühl*). A slow tempo is common to the simple, the heartfelt, the warm, the grave, and the sublime whereas quickness and intensity consistently characterize the exuberant, the defiant, the proud, the stern, the violent, and the fierce. But the degree of tension, strain, force, and intensity—or whatever one may choose to call it—increases gradually in each row from one entry to the next.... Between the extremes, each feeling receives a specific tempo and a degree of tension. The following table tries to arrange primary nuances of feeling accordingly: in the horizontal rows the strain rises from left to right whereas it is the quickness which rises in the vertical from bottom to top.²

A rectangle separated the thirty-six emotions in the middle of the table from the outer twenty-eight, which, Endell explained, were feelings of *Unlust*. The middle section of the table was occupied by the more agreeable adjectives: the seemingly feminine side, made up of “chic,” “graceful,” and “fragile,” gradually gave way to the masculine side, marked by “fierce,” “brutal,” and “potent.” The perimeter of the rectangle listed feelings that would not rouse the subject, the explanation continued, because they required too much or too little effort or because they were exerted too slowly or too quickly.³

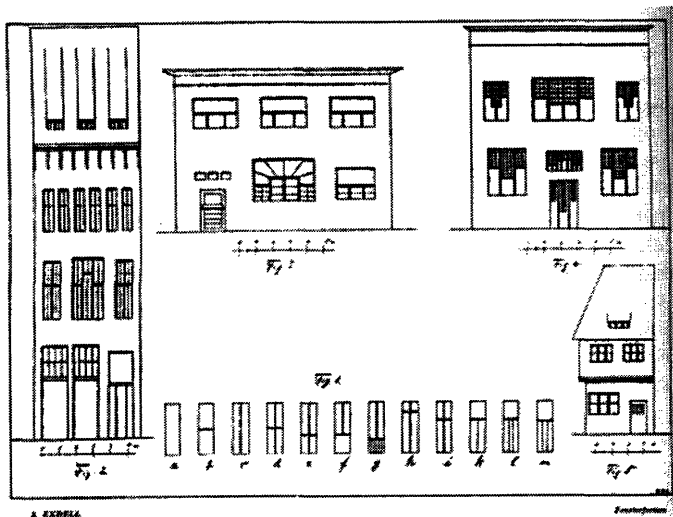


Fig. 4.2: Façade Studies from August Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” *Dekorative Kunst* 2 (1898) 122.

The title “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst” (Beauty of Form and Decorative Art) signaled the main thesis of the essay: every form, Endell insisted, had an immediate “emotive effect” (*Gefühlswirkung*) on the perceiving subject and it was the architect’s task to both understand the variations of these effects and to apply them appropriately. A page later in the same text appeared a

² Ibid., 120.

³ Ibid.

series of diagrammatic façade studies which served as the architectural counterpart to the earlier table of emotions.⁴ (Fig. 4.2) In these studies, Endell systematically explored—through no less than twelve different variations—how dividing a window horizontally or vertically in various ways would alter the emotional impact of the resulting façade: “...window B is divided horizontally, its upward direction is dislodged; its tension is alleviated as well as its quickness; thus B is calmer than A. Window C is vertically divided; quicker as the parts are narrower; it is more energetic and more severe than window A.”⁵ Endell stressed repeatedly that there was no dearth of emotional effects in architecture; the question was how to clear up the illusory vagueness of these effects.⁶ His meticulous analysis of emotions and the methodical manner in which he correlated these emotions to variations of architectural composition sought to achieve precisely such clarification.

These were ideas that August Endell (1871-1925) had been developing since the early 1890s, when he had come to Munich from Tübingen and had decided to give up philology in order to study mathematics and the natural sciences.⁷ The vibrant intellectual atmosphere of Munich, however, soon caused him to be more interested in philosophical questions instead of purely scientific ones. Already by 1893 he was reporting to his cultural historian cousin Kurt Breysig (1866-1940), who taught in Berlin, that he was ready to renounce his scientific studies in favor of what he called the “new philosophy”—a philosophy, which replaced Hegel’s metaphysical speculation with

⁴ Ibid., 122.

⁵ Ibid., 121.

⁶ See for example, Endell, “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration 1 (1897-98): “There is no scarcity of possibilities of effects; one must only be clear in one’s mind about the goal to be reached.”

⁷ Much about the intellectual leanings of the young Endell can be gleaned from the letters that he wrote to his cultural historian cousin Kurt Breysig. These letters can be found today at the Handschriftenabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Breysig Nachlass K.5. Excerpts of this correspondence have been published in Tilmann Buddensieg, “Zur Frühzeit von August Endell” in Festschrift für Eduard Trier zum 60. Geburtstag, eds. Justus Müller Hofstede and Werner Spies (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1981): 223-50. A much shorter version of this article was translated as Buddensieg, “The Early Years of August Endell: Letters to Kurt Breysig from Munich,” Art Journal 43.1 (Spring 1983): 41-49.

epistemological concerns about sensations and experience.⁸ In addition to epistemology, he was interested in ethics and aesthetics. “Epistemology is just like the master builder that constructs the great dome of metaphysics,” he wrote in 1892. If an epistemologically oriented philosophy made the plans for the edifice of life, he argued, it was up to science and art to carry these plans out.⁹

Munich at the turn of the century was also the center of much artistic activity and the heart of the emergent Jugendstil, and Endell’s interest in aesthetics was instigated by the numerous exhibitions and lectures that took place in the city.¹⁰ However, it was after meeting Hermann Obrist (1863-1927)—an incident which was so powerful that Endell described it as an experience akin to a religious conversion in his letters—that Endell decided to embark on an artistic career instead of an academic one.¹¹ According to Endell’s own account, Obrist’s embroideries belonged to the most significant artistic production of his time and had an immediate effect on the viewer like music.¹² The

⁸ Endell uses the word *Erkenntnistheorie* in German. Historians of philosophy have linked the rise of epistemology (*Erkenntnistheorie*) as an autonomous field of investigation to the emergence of neo-Kantianism and the opposition to Hegelian idealism. See Thomas E. Willey, Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860-1914 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978); Herbert Schnädelbach, Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Klaus Christian Köhnke, The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy between Idealism and Positivism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Endell frequently wrote that he was interested in the work of neo-Kantians such as Cohen and Wilhelm Windelband. See the letters from Endell to Breysig, K.5.19-70 dated between 1891-1893. It would be too simplistic to attribute Endell’s musings in these letters about the relationship between the natural sciences, philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, and epistemology to an indecisive personality. I find it more productive to see the questions raised in these letters as important disciplinary questions that were symptomatic of the intellectual environment in which Endell found himself.

⁹ Letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.35-52 dated April 18, 1892.

¹⁰ In Thomas Mann’s short story “Gladius Dei” (1903), which starts with the famous sentence “München leuchtete,” reference is made to what appears to be the Elvira façade: “Manchmal tritt ein Kunstbau aus der Reihe der bürgerlichen hervor, das Werk eines phantasievollen jungen Architekten, breit und flachbogig, mit bizarrer Ornamentik, voll Witz und Stil.”

¹¹ See letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.95-98 undated from 1896. For more on Endell’s biography, see Klaus Reichel, “Vom Jugendstil zur Sachlichkeit: August Endell (1871-1925),” Diss., Ruhr University in Bochum, 1974.

¹² Endell considered Obrist’s embroideries as harbingers of the new style that everyone was looking for, a style whose existence some were even doubting. Endell wrote of Obrist: “I examined [Obrist’s] works at first purely as a psychologist and aesthetician until I gradually became convinced that it might be possible to reach powerful and lively effects in architecture and the applied arts through freely invented forms.” Endell, “Das Wolzogen-Theater in Berlin,” Berliner Architekturwelt 4.11 (1902) 384. Obrist’s work appealed to Endell primarily because his artistic goal was to create forms and colors that had a powerful and immediate effect, just like musical tones and accords. See Endell, “Der englische Einfluss im

presence of the famous empathy theorist Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) was also a palpable intellectual force in Munich. It was under Lipps's supervision that Endell wrote his thesis with the provocative title "Gefühlskonstruktion," ("Feeling-construction").¹³ In a letter he wrote to his cousin in 1896, Endell remarked: "I have touched an area, practically ignored, the burning question of all philosophy, the goal of all psychology and the point of departure of applied psychology, that is, of all ethics, logic, aesthetics, etc., and that is the theory of feeling (*Gefühlstheorie*)."¹⁴

Endell's theory of "emotive effect" consistently occupied center-stage throughout his life.¹⁵ His theoretical work as a critic and pedagogue paralleled—if not surpassed—his activities as a designer of buildings and furniture. His first important publication as an art critic "Um die Schönheit," in which he laid out his theory of emotions for the first time, appeared in 1896, a year before he participated in the Glaspalast exhibition in Munich.¹⁶

Kunstgewerbe," Wiener Rundschau 2 (1898) 703. Obrist also influenced the young Kandinsky. For an excellent account of the artistic circles in Munich at the time, see Peg Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

¹³ Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) became a professor of philosophy and psychology at the Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich in 1894 and taught philosophy and psychology with an emphasis on logic, ethics and aesthetics. His most important contribution to psychological aesthetics was his elaboration of empathy (*Einfühlung*) theory. The Psychological Institute, which he founded in Munich in 1896, was quite different from Wilhelm Wundt's institute, founded in Leipzig in 1879. Lipps is often credited for having been a significant influence on the Munich phenomenologists. Among Lipps's publications are: Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens (1883), Ästhetische Faktoren der Raumanschauung (1891), Raumästhetik und Geometrisch-Optische Täuschungen (1893), Das Selbstbewusstsein: Empfindung und Gefühl (1901), Ästhetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst (1903), Leitfaden der Psychologie (1903), and Zur Einfühlung (1913). Although Lipps was Endell's teacher, they were not as close as is usually assumed. Endell himself admitted to having departed from the teachings of Lipps. See letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.79-82, dated November 16, 1884.

¹⁴ Letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.93-94, dated early 1896.

¹⁵ I emphasize the consistency in Endell's career, because much critical attention has been wasted trying to prove that his work marked the transition from empathy to abstraction and thereby prophesied the twentieth-century Modern Movement. This is the argument in the dissertation by Klaus Reichel, "Vom Jugendstil zur Sachlichkeit August Endell (1871-1925)," cited above. In the canonical text Pioneers of Modern Design, Pevsner sees Endell as a precursor of Gropius and compares the above-mentioned façade studies to interwar housing projects. See Nicolaus Pevsner in Pioneers of Modern Design, from William Morris to Walter Gropius (Middlesex: Penguin, [1936] 1975) 106, 194. Citing Endell's project for the Mariendorf Running Track, Banham argues that Endell was a figure, who like Muthesius, admired steel engineering structures such as the Eiffel Tower not because of their monumentality, but because of their *Zweckmäßigkeit*. Reyner Banham, Theory and Design in the First Machine Age (Cambridge: MIT Press, [1960] 1980) 81. Pevsner's erroneous argument is repeated in Harry Francis Mallgrave, Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673-1968 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 211.

¹⁶ August Endell, "Um die Schönheit. Eine Paraphrase über die Münchener Kunstausstellungen 1896," Die Zukunft 17 (Oct. 10, 1896). The essay was also published as a pamphlet.



Fig. 4.3: August Endell, Cover of the pamphlet *Um die Schönheit*, 1896.

(Fig. 4.3) His rise to fame as a Jugendstil architect, however, was due to his notorious 1898 design for the Elvira Photography Studio in Munich, which boasted an unusual ornament on its flat façade.¹⁷ Endell's theorization of feelings formed the backbone of his pedagogy as well: both when he taught at his own Schule für Formkunst (1904-14) in Berlin, modeled after the Obrist-Debschitz School, and later as he succeeded Hans Poelzig as the director of Akademie für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe in

Breslau, he insisted on exploring the emotive effects of forms in the most methodical manner.¹⁸ Consider his description of how he went about drawing an orchid plant:

...I take an orchid, I change the proportions and observe how the effect (*Wirkung*) changes. I make the blossom smooth or rough, I accentuate the filaments or make them vanish, I make the bulbs round or skinny. I free the blossom from its stem and conceive it as a loose entity, make cellular shapes on the bulbs, cover the body with dots or decorate it with parallel stripes, dissolve the stripes in the dots again, and etc., etc.¹⁹

This method of designing by trial-and-error was meant to challenge the Beaux-Arts tradition of drawing, according to which the architect tried to materialize an original idea

¹⁷ In fact, the building was found to be so scandalous that the government building official of the time, Johannes Otzen, argued that, along with Victor Horta's *Maison du Peuple*, the Elvira Studio promoted an individualism that was as dangerous as the "dynamite of anarchists." Otzen cited in Buddensieg, "Zur Frühzeit von August Endell," cited above, 232.

¹⁸ For Endell's pedagogical activities in Berlin, see the programs of Schule für Formkunst in the Breysig Nachlass, K.5.244-245 and 257-258 and Karl Scheffler, "Eine Schule für Formkunst," *Kunst und Künstler* 2 (1903/1904): 508. For the period when Endell was the director at the Academy of Breslau, which is today the city of Wrocław in Poland, see *Poelzig, Endell, Moll und die Breslauer Kunstakademie 1911-1932*, Catalogue of Exhibition at the Akademie der Künste and Städtische Museums Mülheim an der Ruhr. Berlin April 25-May 23, 1965; Mülheim an der Ruhr July 2-July 28, 1965 (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1965).

Endell built a few projects in Wrocław, but much of it was destroyed during the war. These include two tombs: one designed in 1923 for the Scholler Family in the cemetery on Ślężna Street, which no longer exists, and another one designed in 1922 for the Eichborn Family in the partially destroyed Grabiszyński cemetery. Endell also designed the interior of the Silberg Apartment on Kutnowska Street 3. These projects by Endell are never mentioned in secondary literature.

¹⁹ Endell, "Das Wolzogen-Theater in Berlin," cited above, 386.

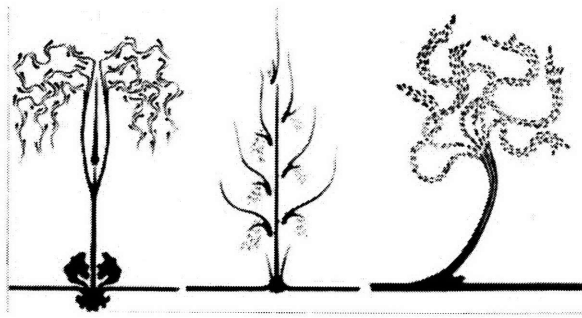


Fig. 4.4: August Endell, Sketches for study of forms.

through a series of sketches and drawings. Endell wrote that “only through empirical analysis can one determine what is to be demanded from an artwork.”²⁰ It was precisely the inductive nature of Endell’s investigations into the “dark regions of the theory of form-sensations,” which the critic Karl Scheffler would praise

profusely in 1904.²¹ (Fig. 4.4) Declaring such experimentation with the physiology and psychology of forms to be of utmost importance to “the natural history of architectonic arts” that was yet to be written, Scheffler urged the readers of *Dekorative Kunst* to follow Endell’s example of tabularizing emotions and publish their own experiential findings in a similar manner. The accumulation of the results of experimentation in the studio, he added, would be essential to addressing the scientific side of artistic problems. In an addendum to Scheffler’s article, the editor of the journal supported Scheffler’s proposal and promised that *Dekorative Kunst* would lead the way in developing a shared inventory of forms, which would continue in the spirit of Endell’s innovative table of emotions.

Endell’s project of cataloguing the emotions, however, was anything but new by the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, theories concerning feelings—classified as calm or violent, hostile or benevolent, objectless or with an object, purely corporeal or mental, public or private—had always been an integral part of Western intellectual life.²² It

²⁰ Letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5. 35-52 dated April 18, 1892.

²¹ Karl Scheffler, “Ein Vorschlag,” *Dekorative Kunst* 12 (1904): 378-79. In addition to Endell, Scheffler mentioned Henry van de Velde, Hermann Obrist, Wilhelm von Debschitz, and the critic Julius Meier-Graefe among those who promoted an inductive design methodology.

²² Technically speaking, there are differences between the words “emotion” and “feeling.” Usually, “passion” is considered an older term that had connotations of the Crucifixion in Christianity. According to Magda Arnold, “passion” was associated with passive suffering while “emotion” implied being moved to action. Arnold, *Emotion and Personality* (New York: Columbia University, 1960). For some thinkers, such as Alexander Bain, all mental stuff was “feeling.” Generally speaking, however, it is safe to assume that for those who are most attentive to the separation of the mental components of a feeling from its corporeal manifestations, “feeling” denotes the former and “emotion” the latter. In other words, “emotion” is always what is manifested in bodily expression while “feeling” may occasionally be made to stand for any mental content. Recently Damasio has argued that feelings are private mental affairs while emotions are public manifestations of such feelings. Antonio R. Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2003). The terminology becomes even more confusing when translating

should suffice to remind the reader of some of the most rehearsed of these theories before the nineteenth century: Descartes's dualistic system described six primary passions, understood as agitations of animal spirits; Spinoza, with his neo-Stoic sympathies, differentiated between active and passive passion but defined both as misguided thoughts; and Hume famously stated that reason ought to be the slave of the passions.²³ At the close of the eighteenth century, before Romanticism placed emotions on an equal footing with reason, Kant differentiated between turbulent but temporary emotions and deeper and longer passions but famously dismissed both from the sphere of cognition.²⁴ A century later Nietzsche would turn the tables and claim that every passion contained its own quantum of reason.²⁵

It needs to be added that pictorial representation of emotional expression had always been a fundamental part of these theorizations. One immediately thinks of Le Brun's visual codification of twenty two passions or the physiognomic permutations in the popular books of Lavater.²⁶ What was being presented in these studies was clearly not the private

from other languages. In German *Gefühl* may mean both feeling and emotion, while *Gemütsbewegung* and *Affekt* usually mean emotion. Given the history that I am outlining here, "emotion" is usually the more appropriate term to use in English. For a history of these terms, see Graham Richards, "Emotions into Words—or Words into Emotions?" in *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine*, eds. Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills (London: Ashgate, 2005): 49-65.

²³ René Descartes, *Les passions de l'âme* (Passions of the Soul), 1649; Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethica Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata* (Ethics Demonstrated in a Geometrical Manner), 1675; and David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739-40. The following may serve as guides into the history of emotions: Magda B. Arnold, *The Nature of Emotion: Selected Readings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969); Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon, eds., *What Is an Emotion?: Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Martin Luther Reymert, ed., *Feelings and Emotions*, The Wittenberg Symposium, International University Series in Psychology (Worcester, MA: Clark University Press, 1928); and Martin Luther Reymert, ed., *Feelings and Emotions*, The Mooseheart Symposium (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950). For a history of "passions" before Descartes, see Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Susan James *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, 1798-1800. Translation *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, [1978] 1996).

²⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht. Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte*, 1900. Translation *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).

²⁶ Sébastien Le Clerc, *Caracteres des passions graves sur les desseins de l'illustre Mons. Charles Le Brun*, 1696; Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, 1774-78. Lavater's book went through several editions in a number of languages, and I will be citing from Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. Thomas Holcroft (London, 1844). J. W. von Goethe, *Lavaters Physiognomischen Fragmenten*, 1775-78; J. J. Engel, *Ideen zu einer Mimik*, 1785-86;

mental components of feelings—instead it was their public corporeal manifestations that were stressed. Nonetheless, the eighteenth century physiognomic tradition made an art of reading visible signs off the surfaces of the face and the body so as to connect them to an internal “character.”²⁷ In the following century Duchenne de Boulogne continued this visual tradition but with the new techniques of photography: his documentation of electrically induced emotions, which promised to be an “orthography of facial expression,” would inspire Darwin’s *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, arguably the most influential treatise on emotions published in the nineteenth century.²⁸ The photographic camera seemed to be a particularly appropriate device for capturing the variations in facial expression—the subtle twitches and jerks that helped distinguish disdain from contempt or surprise from astonishment.²⁹

Perus Camper, The Works of the Late Professor Camper, on the Connexion between the Science of Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing, Painting, Statuary in Two Books, [1791] 1794.

²⁷ See, for example, Barbara Maria Stafford, Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Stafford, “‘Peculiar Marks’: Lavater and the Countenance of Blemished Thought,” Art Journal 46.3 (Fall 1987); and Stafford, Symbol and Myth: Humbert de Superville’s Essay on Absolute Signs in Art (Cranbury, N. J.: University of Delaware Press, 1979).

²⁸ G.-B. Duchenne de Boulogne, Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine ou analyse électro-physiologique de l’expression des passions applicable à la pratique des arts plastiques (Paris :Chez Ve Jules Renouard, 1862). Translated as The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression, ed. and trans. R. Andrew Cuthbertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de L’Homme, 1990). Charles Darwin, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, introd. Konrad Lorenz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, [1872] 1965). Other noteworthy works on physiognomy and expression preceding Darwin’s book are: Sir Charles Bell, The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts. Fifth edition (London: Henry G. Bohn, [1806] 1865); D. P. G. Humbert de Superville, Essai sur les signes inconditionnels dans l’art (Leiden: C. C. van der Hoek, 1827-32); C. G. Carus, Symbolik der menschlichen Gestalt. Ein Handbuch zur Menschenkenntnis (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1853); Theodor Piderit, Grundsätze der Mimik und Physiognomik (Braunschweig: Friedrich Viewig und Sohn, 1858); I. P. Gratiolet, De la physionomie et des mouvements d’expression (Paris, 1865).

²⁹ In his essay on the use of photography in Darwin’s book, historian Phillip Prodger explains how the photograph of a crying baby, dubbed “Ginx’s Baby” by critics, became one of the most widely distributed images of the Victorian Era. Although Darwin wanted to employ the instantaneity of photography to capture the subtleties of emotional expression, he ended upon using this image, which was not a true photograph, but a composite of a photograph and a drawing manipulated to achieve the desired effect. See Phillip Prodger, “Rejlander, Darwin, and the Evolution of ‘Ginx’s Baby,’” History of Photography 23.3 (Autumn 1999): 260-68. On photography and physiognomy in the nineteenth century, see the excellent study by Carol Armstrong, Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive” in The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989): 342-88; Robert A. Sobieszek, Ghost in the Shell: Photography and the Human Soul, 1850-2000 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1999); and Tom Gunning, “In Your Face: Physiognomy, Photography, and the Gnostic Mission of Early Film,” Modernism/Modernity 4.1 (January 1997): 1-29.

How did Endell's table link itself to this tradition of listing, classifying, and tabulating emotions? Perhaps the most difficult part of understanding these two tables as physiognomic exercises is that the human face is completely absent from them. Image was entirely replaced by word in one of the two tables. In fact, if one looks closely enough, the entries of the first table do not even correspond to emotions in any conventional sense. They are simply adjectives that were arranged, we are told, according to the tension and tempo of perception—that is, according to the effect (*Wirkung*) that they produced on the viewer. Recent architectural history has convincingly demonstrated the many connections between practices of physiognomy and architectural theory in the eighteenth century.³⁰ Within the French academic tradition, in particular, “character” was developed as a concept that assured the decorum of a building by adjusting its exterior to its interior or the architectural form to the emotion produced on the viewer. In the case of Endell, however, there is no comparable correspondence between inside and outside. Even in the façade studies, which look nothing like human faces, we find no physiognomic game of inferring character from external visual signs. It seems certain that we are no longer in the realm of physiognomy as was practiced by Le Brun or Lavater or found in the architecture of “character.” How did emotions migrate from the physiognomic illustrations in Lavater's books to Endell's prosaic table of feelings? In what ways did Endell's project of classifying emotions relate to his architectural theory and practice? What kind of relationship was being forged here between form and affect?

The Architecture of Pathognomy

All is here at rest; no look of the eye, no motion of the lip—yet who can say this lifeless countenance does not speak?.... Does not wisdom hover in these eyebrows, even though they were singly considered? Does not penetration, demanding our reverence, conceal itself under their shadow?.... You are, by this time, sensible, worthy sir, yes, I am convinced you are, that, independent of the motion of the muscles, the fire of the

³⁰ See, for example, Anthony Vidler, *The Writing on the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987); Vidler, “The Idea of Type: The Transformation of the Academic Ideal, 1750-1830,” *Oppositions* 8 (Spring 1977); and Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

eyes, of complexion, gesture, and attitude; independent of speech and action; there is a physiognomy of the firm parts, of the grand outlines; a physiognomy of the talents, which may be read, even in the sleeping, or the dead.³¹

Neither greatness of character nor bodily strength is expressed in a beautiful nose; its appearance has nothing to do in the least with either.... everyone knows how hard it is to interpret expression correctly. The more one occupies oneself with it, the more he recognizes that positive keys to character are extremely rarely made of the expression of a face and that momentary movements such a look, a twitch of the mouth can say more than the most meticulous observations of a face at rest.³²



Fig. 4.5: Plate from Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, 1774-78.

The former quote, taken from Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, is addressed to the mask of a dead man, whose lifeless contours, we are told, betray greatness of character much better than his animated gestures would. In the second quote, by contrast, our protagonist Endell is skeptical about the practice of reading character from a motionless face: not only does he seem indifferent to the idea of character but he is also suspicious of the interpretive skills that would be required to decipher it. It is the difference between these two positions—between physiognomy and pathognomy—that I would like to accentuate in order to theorize Endell's peculiar table. Lavater the physiognomist provided a description for the latter term: unlike

³¹ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, cited above, plate LII. The phenomenon of the death mask in the nineteenth century has not received enough historical attention. For perspectives on this history, see Bernhard Kathan, "Totenmaske und Fotografie: zur Verhäuslichung des Todes," *Fotogeschichte* 20.78 (2000): 15-26 and Robert Cecil, *The Masks of Deaths: Changing Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century* (Lewes: Book Guild, 1991).

³² Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 23-25.

physiognomy, which studied expressions of a face at rest, pathognomy was interested in the changes that took place in expression as facial muscles expanded and contracted under the influence of the passions. (Fig. 4.5)

It was no coincidence that Lavater preferred the physiognomic approach. In the late eighteenth century when social volatility was the source of much anxiety, physiognomy promised to bridge the gap between seeming and being by referring ambiguous, superficial cues to an innate, unequivocal character.³³ As in the popular pastimes of shadow-painting and silhouette-reading, physiognomic practices aspired to capture permanent form—assumed to be found more readily in the rigid bone structure of the face than in the fleeting variations of its flexible muscular configuration. Although physiognomy thus fixed its attention on the surfaces of the body, it was predicated on the assumption that there was a deep structure behind those surfaces, a structure which allowed the character within to project cryptic yet reliable signs without. For anyone who knew how to decipher those signs, the message was crystal clear: the angularly pointed nose was the telltale sign of a choleric temperament as were drooping lips of the phlegmatic.³⁴

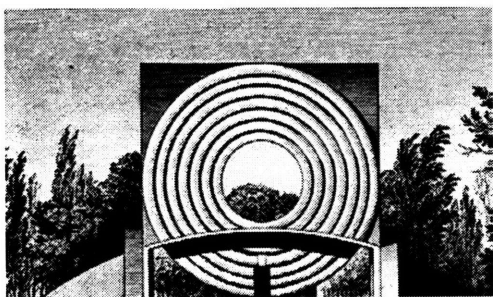


Fig. 4.6: The Cooper's Workshop from Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *L'Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation*, 1804.

As already mentioned above, the physiognomic method was associated within the architectural discourse with the École des Beaux-Arts concept of “character.” Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), the *secrétaire-perpétuel* of the school, traced the etymology of the word to imprinting, inscribing, and engraving and defined it as “the art of impressing each building with a state so appropriate to its nature or its use that one can

³³ See Stafford, *Body Criticism*, cited above, 84-129. Historians have convincingly constructed connections between physiognomy and anxiety of social instability. Judith Wechsler illustrates, for example, that the rise of caricature in Paris had to do with the flooding of the city with people from different places. Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

³⁴ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, cited above, plate LIV.

read in its salient traits what is is and what it cannot be.”³⁵ It was essential, for example, that circular plans only be used in buildings such as theaters, which incorporated auditoria; the use of a circular plan in a villa, for example, caused nothing but confusion. In the *architecture parlante* of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806) the concept of character was pushed to its extremes and turned into a caricature: a workshop for barrel makers would be shaped as a barrel whereas a river surveyor’s house looked like a sewage pipe.³⁶ (Fig. 4.6) In both cases, the building surface was imprinted with instantly recognizable signs of its inner character.

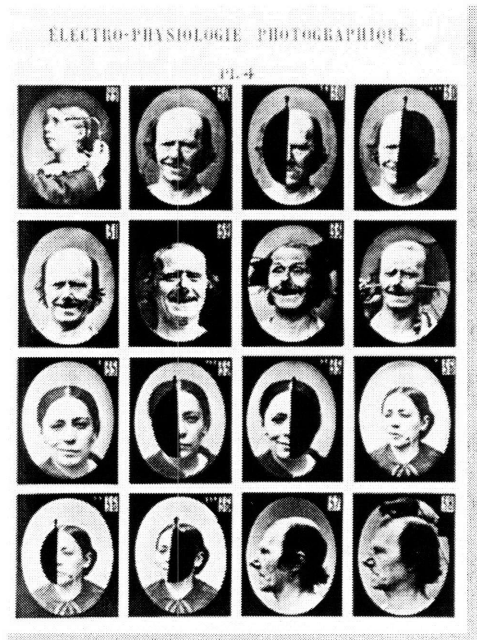


Fig. 4.7: Plate from Duchenne de Boulogne’s *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine ou analyse électro-physiologique de l’expression des passions applicable à la pratique des arts plastiques*, originally published in 1862.

Compare eighteenth-century physiognomics with the pathognomics of Duchenne de Boulogne, whose treatise *Mécanisme de la physionomie humaine* (The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression) was published in 1862, almost a century later than the first edition of Lavater’s books. (Fig. 4.7) Convinced that the expressions of the human face could be discovered only by studying muscle action, Duchenne developed a technique whereby he could apply electrical currents to facial muscles without puncturing the skin and documented the results by means of photography. He began with a face at rest—the gaze of the subject had to be fixed and directed forward, he explained; he then put muscles in isolated contraction; finally he combined various

³⁵ Antoine-Chrysothôme Quatremère de Quincy wrote his *Dictionnaire d’architecture* in three volumes between 1788 and 1825. For an English translation of the “character” entry, see Samir Younés, ed., *The True, the Fictive, and the Real: The Historical Dictionary of Architecture of Quatremère de Quincy* (London: Andreas Papadakis, 1999). According to Quatremère de Quincy, the concept of character could be used in three different ways although the third one was the most important one for contemporary architecture: 1. for buildings endowed with qualities of strength, might, size and moral loftiness 2. for architecture that had distinctive marks 3. for works that were able to convey their particular nature and purpose.

³⁶ Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *L’Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l’art, des moeurs et de la législation* (Paris, 1804).

contractions until he obtained the desired expression. Facial expressions, Duchenne wrote, were the “gymnastics of the soul” and formed a universal language.³⁷ Duchenne’s project was not unlike Lavater’s to the extent that he too sought to master the grammar of the language of expressions. There was, however, a marked difference between the two: pathognomy seemed indifferent to the idea of a permanent character or an inner state that emanated unmistakable signs of its essence.

Lavater’s subjects had been merchants, countrymen, aristocrats, and literati; Duchenne, in contrast, chose his specimens among those who were both sensually deprived and seemingly devoid of will power and posed them as if they were mannequins.³⁸ The protagonist of Duchenne’s photographic atlas was an old man, “with a thin face, neither ugly nor good-looking,” “not unlike a still irritable cadaver.”³⁹ Duchenne considered himself most successful when he could stimulate half of a face with one emotion and the other half with its diametrical opposite: the same person could be shown, he argued, to be a virgin and a bacchante simultaneously. It was precisely because Duchenne’s mannequin-like subjects lacked willpower, autonomy, and a stable inner state that Duchenne could place them in carefully constructed *mise-en-scènes*.⁴⁰ In other words, liberated from the burden of a single character, whose decipherment was the topic of physiognomy, the theatrical subject of pathognomy—all surface and no depth—could enact a multitude of characters.

³⁷ Duchenne, The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression, cited above, 29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁰ Consider the following passage from Duchenne: “A mother comes to lose one of her infants. Another infant—the only one that remains—is equally gripped by a mortal illness; he is on the point of succumbing. Sitting at the foot of his cradle, she abandons herself to the greatest sorrow. Yet a last hope can save him: A crisis may deliver him! Clinging to the life of her poor child, she anxiously follows the progress of the disease and discovers in these features the first signs of this happy crisis; she cries: “He is saved!” *Ibid.*, 105. The temptation might be to understand Duchenne’s experiments as rehearsing the Cartesian mechanistic understanding of the body, however, this account overlooks the long history that spanned the period between Descartes and the middle of the nineteenth century. Canguilhem has illustrated how Descartes was used in the nineteenth century to legitimize a mechanistic point of view. See Georges Canguilhem, “The Concept of Reflex,” A Vital Rationalist: Selected Writings, ed. François Delaporte (New York: Zone Books, 1994): 179-202.



Fig.4.8: August Endell, Exterior view of Elvira Photography Studio, Munich, 1898.

The logic of pathognomy, especially its prioritization of external surfaces, was already evident in the Elvira Studio (1898-1900) in Munich, the first architectural project of Endell's career.⁴¹ (Fig. 4.8) The building housed a photography studio that was owned by the unconventional couple, Anita Augspurg and Sophia Goudstikker, who were active in the local organization

Verein für Fraueninteressen.⁴² The most striking feature of the building was a gigantic ornament, which was colored light pink, red, and turquoise and plastered onto an otherwise completely flat green façade.⁴³ Neither the large tentaculated relief ornament that dominated the surface of the building nor the smaller ornaments, which were interspersed between the few window openings, referred to the interior spaces of the building in any way.

The bizarre ornamentation caused much speculation among Endell's contemporaries: it was compared to waves found in Japanese prints, to fantastical creatures out of fairy tales, and, not infrequently, to the underwater life forms depicted in Ernst Haeckel's books. Endell, however, adamantly refused the idea that these forms were stylized plants

⁴¹ Endell's own account of the building can be found in Endell, "Architektonische Erstlinge," *Dekorative Kunst* 3.8 (1900): 297-317.

⁴² For an extremely interesting history of both the building and the Elvira photography studio that was owned by these two unconventional women, see Rudolf Herz and Brigitte Bruns, eds., *Hof-Atelier Elvira, 1887-1928. Ästheten, Emanzen, Aristokraten*, Exhibition at the Fotomuseums im Münchner Stadtmuseum Dec. 13-March 2, 1986 (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1985). On the "third sex" in the Elvira studio, see the controversial novel by Ernst von Wolzogen, *Das dritte Geschlecht* (Berlin: Eckstein, 1899). For a history of the Verein für Fraueninteressen, see Renate Lindemann, *100 Jahre Verein für Fraueninteressen* (Munich: Verein für Fraueninteressen, 1994).

⁴³ For a description of the colors of the façade, see Reichel, "Vom Jugendstil zur Sachlichkeit," cited above, 126-27 and in Werner Hansen ed., *August Endell: der Architekt des Photoateliers Elvira 1871-1925*, Catalogue for Exhibition in Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (Munich: Munich Stadtmuseum, 1977) 24. The large façade ornament was plastered over before the building was destroyed during WWII bombings.

or animals; he argued instead that his designs strived towards a pure *Formkunst* that was free from all associations and symbols, an art that consisted of “formal structures that are nothing and mean nothing, which work on us without any intellectual mediation like music.”⁴⁴ The surface of the Elvira Studio was thus meant to act like a wax tablet: the embossed frieze-ornament was designed to imprint its bizarre form directly upon the viewer—without, however, allowing the viewer to associate it with any particular character. The similarity between the production of photographic images in the Elvira Studio and the creation of architectural impressions by means of frieze-ornaments might have been merely accidental; yet the desire to create architectural effects by means of flatness remained a fundamental aspect of both Endell’s and his contemporaries’ work. Endell frequently renounced attempts to “force one’s way under the surface” of an artwork and “behind the appearance of an object.”⁴⁵

Jugendstil has often been described as the art of flatness and frequently dismissed because of its interest in superficial decoration.⁴⁶ What is often overlooked is that the idea of flatness coexisted in the artistic discourse of the period along with ideas of space and spatiality. In the work of Endell, for example, we find a fascination with “atmosphere.”⁴⁷ In many of his writings throughout his career, Endell repeatedly used the term *Stimmung*, the German word that can simultaneously signify the mood of a person and the atmosphere of an environment.⁴⁸ The term appeared numerous times in Endell’s well-known 1908 text *Die Schönheit der großen Stadt*. (“Beauty of the Metropolis”), in which Endell tried to defend Berlin against the much repeated claim that

⁴⁴ Endell, “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” cited above, 33. This statement has been used to argue that Endell’s architecture was a precursor of twentieth-century modernist abstraction.

⁴⁵ Endell, *Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder 1908).

⁴⁶ For a good discussion of Jugendstil’s simultaneous interest in the concept of space and flatness, see the important study by Fritz Schmalenbach, *Jugendstil. Ein Beitrag zu Theorie und Geschichte der Flächenkunst* (Würzburg: K. Tritsch, 1935). An influential dismissal of Jugendstil can be found in Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, “Introduction,” *Modern Architecture* vol. 1, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (Milano and New York: Electa and Rizzoli, [1976] 1986).

⁴⁷ For an account of the place of atmosphere in architectural modernism, particularly in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, see Mark Wigley, “Die Architektur der Atmosphäre= The Architecture of Atmosphere,” *Daidalos* 68 (June 1998): 18-27. The entire issue is dedicated to the theme of atmosphere in architecture.

⁴⁸ In addition to “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst” cited above, see “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” cited above, 141-153; “Raum und Körper,” *Kunst und Künstler*, 23.8 (April 1925) 303-306; and *Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt*, cited above.

it was “the capital of modern ugliness.”⁴⁹ Inspired by the French Impressionists, who had zealously painted the smog covering the miseries of industrial Paris, Endell described at length how the city was magically transformed by atmospheric conditions, which acted as “veils” of day and night.⁵⁰ The rain sharpened the visual impact of the metropolis while the fog muffled it.⁵¹ According to Endell’s description, the disagreeable forms of Berlin melted away only because the city seemed to exude an intangible ether, which put a spell on its inhabitants and transformed their dispositions. The ingenuity of Duchenne’s experiments had been that electrical stimulation from without the subject created the impression that a feeling was being experienced within; in Endell’s Berlin the external climactic conditions that affected the city seemed to be similarly projected by it. A similar kind of reversal was discussed by Endell on other occasions:

⁴⁹ Berlin grew significantly in the course of the nineteenth century: its population increased from 415,00 in 1850 to 1,300,000 in 1800 and to 4,000,000 in 1925. Compare these figures with those of Munich, which grew from a population of 100,000 at the mid-century to 500,000 in 1900. Berlin’s physical unattractiveness, as well as its alleged moral decadence and political unrest were subjects taken up frequently by anti-urbanist writers since the beginning of Berlin’s rapid growth in the second half of the nineteenth century. A few years before Endell’s text was published, Walther Rathenau argued that Berlin lacked not only natural and man-made beauties but also an overall image as a metropolis. Schinkel’s Athens on the Spree was dead, Rathenau declared; Chicago on the Spree, guided only by the desire for materialistic gain, was emerging instead. Soon Karl Scheffler declared Berlin to be not only the ugliest city in Germany but “the capital of all modern ugliness.” Walther Rathenau, “Die schönste Stadt der Welt” in Impressionen (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1902): 137-63; Karl Scheffler, Berlin: Ein Stadtschicksal (Berlin: E. Reiss, 1910) 200.

⁵⁰ “The French discovered the veil of air that can transform things into entirely different creations with new laws and new beauties. They no longer painted people, bridges, towers, but rather the strange appearances that the air, the lighting, the dust, and the glare make of them. The acting man is forced by this veil to see through; he has to recognize. These painters discovered, however, that if one only saw without sharp focusing, without destroying the visible through intentional abstraction from appearance, a new world of wonders opens itself up; and they painted what they saw. This explains the sketchiness of their pictures that are reprimanded in a schoolmasterly manner.” Endell, Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt, cited above, 45.

⁵¹ Endell described the atmosphere of the fog as follows: “It changes a street completely. It covers the houses with a thin veil; gray if the clouds above hide the sun; warm, golden, and colorful if the sky above is free. It changes the colors of the houses, makes them unified and milder; it blurs the strong shadows, elevates them, and these buildings, almost all of which suffer from a senseless excessive relief, appear finer, more restrained, and flatter. Even the cathedral (*Berliner Dom*), this dreadful product of a handicraft that has got out of control and is without a goal, appears to be a wonderful image on this hazy fall day when the fog becomes visible and warm around ten o’clock in the morning, ... the fog makes the terrible architecture into something fine, it fills the streets which otherwise seem to run into endlessness, and renders out of their void an enclosed space.” Endell, Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt, cited above, 48-49.

The path does not go from essence to appearance; on the contrary, appearances may only begin to signal essences. The form arouses the feeling without any mediation; we know of no intermediary, psychical occurrences..... One thinks, for example, of the instinctive fear found in animals and children.... This is the power of form upon our mind, a direct, immediate influence without any elements in between, by no means an anthropomorphic effect, but one of humanization (*Vermenschlichung*). If we speak of a sorrowing tree, we do not at all think of the tree as a living being which sorrows, but we mean only that it awakens in us the *feeling of sorrow*. Or when we say that the pine tree strives upwards we do not animate (*beseelen*) the pine tree. It is just that the expression of the act of “striving” produces more easily in the soul of the listener the gradually forming image of verticality. We are employing nothing more than a verbal aid to make up for an insufficient vocabulary and to produce a lively concept more quickly.⁵²



Fig. 4.9: August Endell, Interior view of the entrance hall, House on Steinplatz, Berlin, 1906-7.

Endell’s work has often been understood within the framework of the so-called “empathy theory.”⁵³ The emphasis in the quote above, however, is not on the mental ability to project and incorporate one’s bodily form into an objective vessel, but rather on a flow that proceeds in exactly the opposite direction. This reversal is not unlike that found in the nineteenth-century shift from physiognomy to pathognomy: Endell seemed more interested in lines of force emanating *from* objects and in how this force field sets into action the body’s musculature than the mental projection of a sovereign subject upon an object. It is no wonder, then, that architectural forms seemed to suggest magnetic powers in

⁵² Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” cited above, 149.

⁵³ Because Endell was close to Theodor Lipps, Endell’s work has been considered within the framework of empathy theory. For influential accounts of empathy theory in English, see Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, eds., “Introduction,” *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994): 1-85; Ernest K. Mundt, “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 17.3 (March 1959): 287-310.; and Mark Jarzombek, “The Body Ethos,” *The Psychologizing of Modernity* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 37-79.



Fig. 4.10: August Endell, View of the foyer, Wolzogen Theatre, Berlin, 1901.

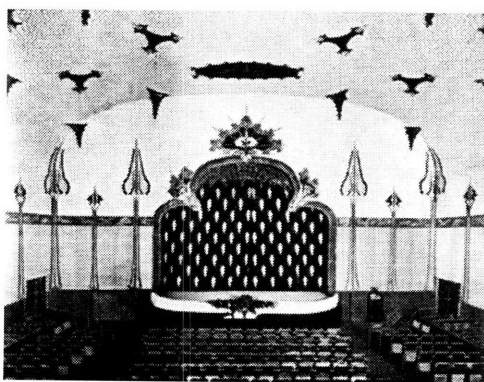


Fig. 4.11: August Endell, View of the main auditorium, Wolzogen Theatre, Berlin, 1901.

Endell's work; they often radiated force lines that became visible as patterns on the walls, floors, and ceilings. (Fig. 4.9, 4.10) Endell's designs vibrated with energy and forcefully impressed themselves upon their recipient. "The material of the visual arts is form and color," Endell explained, "both stir up, as does everything that we become aware of, certain feelings in us and indeed the same color and form awaken in all people the same feeling."⁵⁴ These feelings distinguished themselves primarily as pleasure and pain, but also as a variety of tones such as calm, graceful, cheerful, hilarious, angry, mighty, sublime, etc.

As in Duchenne's experiments, there was an inherent theatricality in this kind of architecture; the goal was not only to produce effects but to stage them carefully.⁵⁵ This theatricality became all too evident in the Wolzogen Theatre that Endell designed in Berlin in 1901. On the opening night, the critics could not help noticing that the architecture was far more stimulating than the theatrical performance itself.⁵⁶ (Fig. 4.11,

4.12, 4.13) Situated on a small site in the courtyard of a tenement block, the building was

⁵⁴ Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 19. Endell called the different tones of feelings *Gefühlsqualitäten*. "The feeling-effect (*Gefühlswirkung*) of forms and colors is familiar to everyone, we say, they have a definite character, and we speak of bleak colors, of delicate, graceful forms, etc."

⁵⁵ Endell was not alone in advocating an architecture of arousal and effect. Surveying periodicals from this period, one realizes that others, such as Hermann Obrist and Adolf Hölzel, joined his enthusiasm for emotions and *Stimmung*. See the previous chapter on Obrist. Also see Adolf Hölzel, "Über künstlerische Ausdrucksmittel und deren Verhältnis zu Natur und Bild," *Die Kunst für Alle* 20; reprinted in *Die Kunst. Monatshefte für freie und angewandte Kunst* 11 (1905): 81-88, 106-13.

⁵⁶ For a history of von Wolzogen's cabaret, see Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993): 36-61.

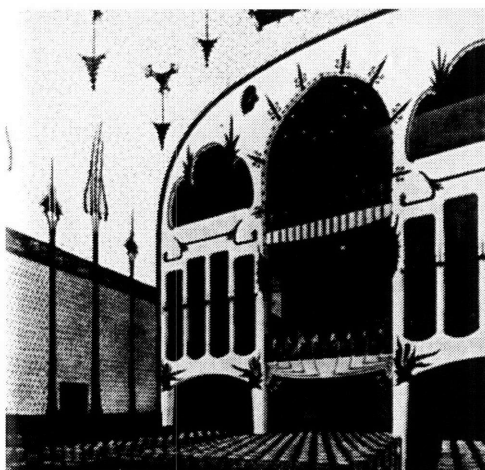


Fig. 4.12: August Endell, View of the main auditorium, Wolzogen Theatre, Berlin, 1901.



Fig. 4.13: August Endell, View of the foyer, Wolzogen Theatre, Berlin, 1901.

arranged around the central space of an auditorium. In order to heighten the effect of a total space encompassing the viewers, Endell designed the walls and the ceiling of the auditorium as a continuum and applied on their surface a pattern of plant-like forms. An ornamental narrow band that was periodically interrupted by tall tree-like figures ran the entire course of the space. The design aspired to create a powerful atmospheric impression: Endell had painstakingly designed every detail of the building—from ornamentation on the doors to the patterns of the carpets, from the furniture and lighting fixtures to the friezes on the walls. The most sensational aspect of the building, however, was its color scheme, which gave it the nickname *Buntestheater*. The vaulted ceiling of the auditorium was painted in a pointillist manner borrowed from Neo-Impressionism: on the brown and gray background were applied speckles of paint arranged as a constellation of circular forms.⁵⁷ Each circle had a light red center and rings of purple, light green and dark green around the center all applied in small dots on the single colored background. The remaining surfaces

⁵⁷ Endell wrote the following on pointillism: “I suppose it is not generally known that we possess in the barks of our home-grown trees the most resounding symphony of colors that a painter can dream of. Especially after the rain, when the colors are glowing and fresh, we find there the richest and the most wonderful motif. One needs to approach a trunk and insistently observe, dot by dot, the tiny specks of the size of one’s palm. Even intense colors mix with each other. Velvety violet, fiery yellow-red, bluish shimmering grey, lively green of the most diverse nuances run into each other in a richer spectrum of the boldest medley. And here one can at least recognize the principle that nature devotes its resources to reach glowing effects of color. The secret lies in the avoidance of monochrome surfaces and in the employment of many colors, in themselves intense, in small specks next to each other.” August Endell, “Das Wolzogen-Theater in Berlin,” cited above, 389.

were colored with light blue and silver dots.⁵⁸

What Endell was imagining, then, was an architecture of arousal (*Erregung*) and effect (*Wirkung*)—an architecture of pathos rather than ethos.⁵⁹ This architecture of pathognomy posed several critical questions: firstly, what was the cause and the effect in emotional expression? If emotions did not have to originate from inner mental states, as Duchenne illustrated in his experiments, would it be possible to imagine them triggering such mental states? This was also the question famously posed by the American philosopher William James in his polemical 1884 essay “What is an Emotion?”:

Our natural way of thinking about these standard emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My thesis, on the contrary, is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion. Common sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ These descriptions can be found in Reichel, “Vom Jugendstil zur Sachlichkeit,” cited above, 134-46 and Werner Hansen, *August Endell*, cited above, 34-41.

⁵⁹ The concepts of feeling, effect, and arousal were also at the heart of Lipps’s theory. Lipps started his treatise on aesthetics with the following words: “Aesthetics is the science of the beautiful; implicitly also of the ugly. ‘Beautiful’ means an object that we call as such, because it awakens in me—or is fit to create in me—that which we describe as the feeling of beauty (*Schönheitsgefühl*). In any case, ‘beauty’ is the name for the capability of an object to evoke in me a definite effect (*Wirkung*).” Theodor Lipps, *Grundlegung der Ästhetik. Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst* (Hamburg and Leipzig: Verlag von Leopold Voss, 1903) 1.

⁶⁰ James, “What is an Emotion?,” *Mind* 9.34 (April 1884): 189-90. This article was reprinted in *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1890). James wrote a response to his critics a decade later: James, “Discussion. The Physical Basis of Emotion,” *The Psychological Review* 1.5 (Sep. 1895): 516-29. This particular theory of emotions came to be known as the James-Lange theory of emotions. See Carl Georg Lange, *Über Gemütsbewegungen. Eine Psycho-physiologisch Studie* (Leipzig: T. Thomas, 1887). Translated into English as “The Emotions” in *The Emotions by Carl Georg Lange and William James* (New York: Hafner, 1922).

The James-Lange theory unleashed a controversy in the 1890s on both sides of the Atlantic about the nature of emotions. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the response was immediate: the British psychologist Edmund Gurney criticized James by arguing that the latter’s theory amounted to claiming that emotions were

Bodily states, according to James, were not simply the “expression,” “manifestation,” or “natural language” of emotions but were constitutive of them.⁶¹ Duchenne would have never claimed that such reversal was possible; in reality the virgin in his experiments was never transformed into a bacchante after all. Endell, on the other hand, forced the implications of the Duchenne’s experiments further in a direction anticipated by James. According to Endell’s theory of emotive effect, architectural forms stimulated the human body and configured it in specific ways, which caused certain emotions to be experienced as a result.⁶² Pathognomy, then, also raised questions about the role of the environment. If physiognomy was predicated on the assumption that an inner character pressed its marks upon the face, pathognomy implied that expression should be understood as an

“producibile with an astringent lotion” while his American colleague H. M. Stanley expressed concern that making emotion precedent to expression gave too determined a causal order to psychic life. J. M. Baldwin, on the other hand, found in the James-Lange theory a new model of consciousness, which did not necessitate a separation of emotions from the higher faculties of the mind. Instead, Baldwin pointed out, the James-Lange theory suggested a continuum between the conscious and the unconscious. Even such endeavors of the musculature as ingrained habits or reflexes, which seemed to have little to do with cognition, were accompanied with a kind of sentience, if not full consciousness. See Edmund Gurney, “What is an Emotion?” *Mind* 9.35 (July 1884): 421-26; Henry Rutgers Marshall, “What is an Emotion?” *Mind* 9.36 (October 1884): 615-17; D. Irons, “Prof. James’ Theory of Emotion,” *Mind* 3.9 (1894): 77-97. H. M. Stanley, “Feeling and Emotion,” *Mind* 11.41 (Jan. 1886): 66-76; J. Mark Baldwin, “The Origin of Emotional Expression,” *The Psychological Review* 1.6 (Nov. 1894): 610-23; James R. Angell, “A Reconsideration of James’s Theory of Emotion in the Light of Recent Criticisms,” *The Psychological Review* 23.4 (1916): 251-61. On the European side Lehmann combined a centralist model of the emotions with a keen interest in their physiological manifestations. Féré, who considered psychology to be a specialized branch of physiology, argued for a purely physical explanation of the emotions. Instead of the electrical currents used by Duchenne, Féré relied on chemicals to bring about emotional change in his subjects. Ribot, often called the “French Wundt,” identified an intellectualist versus physiological thesis of the emotions and sided with the latter. Alfred Lehmann, *Die Hauptgesetze des menschlichen Gefühlslebens* (Leipzig: O. R. Reissland, [1888, 1892] 1914); Charles Féré, *La Pathologie des émotions: études physiologiques et cliniques* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1892); Théodule Ribot, *La psychologie des sentiments* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1896). The James-Lange theory was ultimately discredited when the Harvard physiologist W. B. Cannon brought solid empirical evidence to bear on the theory. W. B. Cannon, “The James-Lange Theory of Emotion: A Critical Examination and an Alternative Theory,” *American Journal of Psychology* 39 (1927): 106-24.

⁶¹ James, “What is an Emotion?,” cited above, 189.

⁶² As another example of the reversal that I am trying to illustrate here, consider the paradox of theatricality that was cleverly formulated by the Enlightenment philosopher Diderot in the previous century. An actor can successfully feign different characters, Diderot reasoned, only if he has no character himself: “... a great actor is also a most ingenious puppet and his strings are held by the poet, who at each line indicates the true form he must take.” Once hollowed out in this manner, the figure of the actor raised the following puzzling question for Diderot: does a person become cruel because he is an executioner, or does he become an executioner because he is cruel? Denis Diderot, “The Paradox of Acting.” [written in the 1770; first published in 1830] in *Paradox of Acting and Mask or Faces?* introd. Lee Strasberg (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957). Original title was *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*. For a history of the mask in the eighteenth century, see Dorinda Outram, “Masks, Truth, and Nostalgia: Enlightenment Problems and Our Responses,” *Figurationen* 2 (2000): 93-107.

imprint not from within but from without.⁶³ In the eighteenth century, an emotion was understood to be an *affect* of mental states within; by the end of the nineteenth century it could be seen to be the *effect* of external forces. Endell's pathognomic model of the emotions thus challenged the nineteenth-century unitary self with an immutable core, the self, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, was associated with *Bildung* throughout the nineteenth century. Instead it was beginning to map the outlines of a subject whose consciousness did not exist prior to its actions and interactions with its surroundings and other subjects in the world. What happened to the self when consciousness was not securely situated between incoming and outgoing impulses but was dissipated and contingent? More important for our understanding of architectural modernism was another question: if the self did not exist a priori but it made by its surroundings, what role could architecture be expected to play in the construction of this modern self?

⁶³ James speculated about the impact of the environment: "As surely as the hermit-crab's abdomen presupposes the existence of empty whelk-shells somewhere to be found, so surely do the hound's olfactories imply the existence, on the one hand, of deer's or foxes' feet, and on the other, the tendency to follow up their tracks. The neural machinery is but a hyphen between determinate arrangements of matter outside the body and determinate impulses to inhibition or discharge within its organs." James, "What is an Emotion?," cited above, 190. A little later in the same text James wrote that "each creature [brought] the signature of its special relations stamped on its nervous system with it upon the scene." *Ibid.*, 191. James also took an additional step that proved to be anticipatory of the emergence of social psychology in America: the most important part of the environment was, in fact, other human beings. It was the consciousness of fellow-beings, James observed, that unlocked one's shames, indignations, or fears." *Ibid.*, 191. It was John Dewey who noted that from a psychological point of view, there was no such thing as an expression: "We call it expression when looking at it from the standpoint of an observer.... To rate such movements is primarily to fall into the psychologist's fallacy: it is to confuse the standpoint of the observer and explainer with that of the fact observed." John Dewey, "The Theory of Emotion. Part I: Emotional Attitudes," *The Psychological Review* 1. 6 (November 1894): 553-69 (here p. 555) and "The Theory of Emotion. Part II: The Significance of Emotions," *The Psychological Review* 2.1 (January 1895): 13-32.

George Herbert Mead would later forcefully assert that "... we find no evidence for the prior existence of consciousness as something which brings about behavior on the part of one organism that is of such a sort to call forth an adjustive response on the part of another organism, without itself being dependent on such behavior. We are rather forced to conclude that consciousness is an emergent from such behavior; that so far from being a precondition of the social act, the social act is the precondition of it." George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, [1934] 1967) 17.

Circumventing the Mental

Also in question in the new pathognomic subject of architecture was the relationship of the mental to the corporeal. Endell made it clear that each entry in his table was correlated to the intensity and the speed of tension, effort, or exertion—all of which were functions performed by the musculature of the body independently of the workings of the mind. Forms were guaranteed to awaken feelings in us, he argued, only because “all feelings are made of nothing but tempo and strain.” In reversing the accepted order of the formation of emotions and locating them in bodily states, however, Endell was envisioning a process of aesthetic perception which was entirely bypassing mental states. In order to see the “symphony of colors” hidden in every tree bark, he argued in one essay, one had to eliminate the conclusions drawn by the apperceptive faculties of the mind. If one looked at a shoe carefully enough without prejudices, for example, one would observe that the shine of a shoe was not black but rather white, perhaps green, or even some other color, depending on the surroundings. What crippled one’s perception of the true color of the shoe, then, was the *knowledge* that it was black.⁶⁴ If physiognomic calculations strove to get to the core of character, Endell’s emotive effects circumvented central psychical processes and stopped at the extremities of the body.

Endell rejected the tradition of architectural theory that had been developed since Alberti on the grounds of its intellectualism. In an essay in which he severely critiqued the architectural theorist Friedrich Ostendorf’s text-books on architecture, Endell put the blame on one historical period: the Renaissance, which, he claimed, preached intellectual thought instead of aesthetic persuasion.⁶⁵ If perspective drawing, which dictated that things be represented not as they were *seen* but as they were *known*, was the product of Renaissance intellectualism, he argued, then modern Impressionism should be its antidote.⁶⁶ According to Endell, Alberti had been particularly detrimental to architectural

⁶⁴ Endell, “Um die Schönheit,” cited above, 21.

⁶⁵ The Baroque seemed to fare much better in Endell’s view. Endell, “Der englische Einfluss im Kunstgewerbe,” cited above, 701. The text-books in question were by Friedrich Ostendorf, Sechs Bücher vom Bauen, enthaltend eine Theorie des architektonischen Entwerfens (Berlin: W. Ernst & Sohn, 1913).

⁶⁶ “Painters have taught us a lot but their goal has always been color and even when they sought form, they mostly sought the intellectual characteristics through the exact reproduction of its object and not the aesthetic characteristic that nature provides only rarely and incidentally in such dimensions as the painter

theory. While he acknowledged that Alberti's theories sharpened the intellectual skills of the architect, this was thought to be at the expense of demoting beauty and emotive effects.⁶⁷ As the lecture notes of his student Hanns Jacob illustrated, Endell developed an understanding of proportions which rejected the *Proportionslehre* (theory of proportions) that had dominated architectural theory from Palladio to Theodor Fischer. Whereas the latter had always depended on mathematical relationships, Endell's system claimed to rely on the immediacy of lived experience instead.⁶⁸ Especially in his later writings, Endell systematically repudiated the intellectual factor in architecture:

The enjoyment of architecture is, in no way, the joy of an architectonic thought (*Gedanke*) but rather the joy of an outlook (*Anschauung*). Thoughts are always conceptual (*begrifflich*) entities and architecture is by no means at all conceptual. One can describe the façade of the Doge's Palace conceptually as a closed rectangular stone wall of significant proportions with two rows of loggias, but one does not thereby describe the essence of this façade.... What makes up the Doge's Palace is not the conceptual principle of its façade but rather the singular way that this principle is employed through the choice of proportions, forms, and materials. And it is first and foremost in my outlook and not in my thinking that this effective and shaped façade makes an impact; this is the particular beauty-value that it has.⁶⁹

Contrary to what historians have claimed, then, Endell's battle cry to purity was less about modernism's alleged drive towards abstraction and more about his conviction that

needs." Endell, "Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst," cited above, 147. A child draws wheels as circles, Endell argued elsewhere, because he *knows* that wheels are circles and does not pay attention to what he actually sees. Endell, "Eindruckskunst," *Die Neue Gesellschaft. Sozialistische Wochenschrift* 23 (Sept. 6, 1905): 275-76.

⁶⁷ Endell, "Architektur-Theorien," *Neudeutsche Bauzeitung* 10 (1914) 54.

⁶⁸ Hanns Jacob, "August Endells Schule für Formkunst. Formwirkungen," Akademie der Künste Archive, Baukunst Abteilung, End-01-40.

⁶⁹ Endell, "Architektur-Theorien," cited above, 38. Also: "Every aesthetic theory, however foolish it may be, is better than the superstition that the beautiful can be grasped by historical or intellectual means that are external to the work. There is only one means of understanding Beauty, and that is Seeing with the whole soul, precisely, watchfully, with love, undividedly so that no thoughts or concepts remain in our soul but rather only the artwork. To understand a work of art means to become the work itself, to die completely in one's thought so that one may live only in Seeing." Endell, "Das Bayerische Nationalmuseum," *Freistatt. Süddeutsche Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst* 37-38 (10.9.1904-17.9.1904): 738-739, 758-760.

architectural discourse had to be purged of intellectualism.⁷⁰ Thus, when Endell called for “works of pure form-art, that is, formal entities that are nothing and mean nothing, that have an impact on us without any intellectual mediation, like musical tones,” he was not urging for non-representation in art but rather for forms that aroused strong feelings, which were independent of associations, perceptions, or intellectual conceptualizations—in short, emotions entirely free of all cognitive processes.⁷¹ Not unlike the reflex action which bypassed the higher levels of the nervous system, the aesthetic experience that Endell was imagining was an irritation that took place at the peripheries of the body and resulted in the arousal of emotions without the mediation of the mind. Endell’s architecture, in other words, stimulated the affective surfaces of the subject’s body while leaving its core of consciousness unmoved. Once again, the nineteenth-century unitary model of the self was being challenged by one whose surfaces mattered more than an immutable conscious core. Endell depicted this unitary self as a fortress in isolation from others and expressed yearning for what could be described as an ‘oceanic self’:

We are strangers to ourselves; we do not know each other, deep abysses separate our souls. For a long time we have deceived ourselves about this fact, and we have failed to understand the truth. There exist those whose eyes will never be opened, and one might as well praise them for being happy according to their own will. But whoever wakes up to Seeing is seized by the horrors of loneliness, and his life becomes a desperate fight,

⁷⁰ Peg Weiss has argued that Kandinsky’s famous text “Concerning the Spiritual in Art” was the victim of a mistranslation: when translated as “spiritual,” “*geistlich*” had too many religious connotations. She reminds us that “*geistlich*” in German signifies the notion of the incorporeal or immaterial, on the one hand, and notions of mind, intellect, or genius, on the other. Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich*, cited above, 139-41. The text in question is Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst insbesondere in der Malerei* (Munich: R. Piper, 1912). Translation *Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Painting in Particular*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: George Wittenborn, 1947). The argument that Endell’s work was an example of the transformation from empathy into abstraction is found in the dissertation by Reichel, as well as in Pevsner and Banham. See footnote 15. The opposition between abstraction and empathy was laid out famously by Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* (Munich: Piper, 1908). Translated by Michael Bullock as *Abstraction and Empathy: a Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (New York: International Universities, 1953).

⁷¹ Endell, “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” cited above, 33. The same statement is repeated in Endell, “Der englische Einfluss im Kunstgewerbe,” cited above, 703, but the emphasis in the latter is on how music arouses the mind without any mediation by means of freely created tones. Endell also wrote: “I set line on line, without worrying about nature, the impression that I will achieve is the only guideline. Hence, the strange forms that others have described as animals. For me they are forms (*Formgebilde*) that arouse a strong feeling and nothing more. Pure art of forms is my goal, away with every association.” Letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5. 158-163, undated [probably from between September and October of 1897].

a longing to extend the boundaries of the self (*Ich*) and to find one's feeling (*Fühlen*) in other souls. We thirst for understanding, for faith, and appreciation; we will never tire of dissecting our being, of pursuing its finest elements, of which yesterday we barely knew, and of understanding others and being understood by them. We know that these efforts are never fully realized, that our souls cannot always be one, that only for a few moments can our thoughts and feelings pervade other people's; but we also know that these brief moments are the most valuable that life affords us, and that we will not stop searching for them.⁷²

Note that there is no mention of conventional language in this hyperbolic picture of hopelessly separated souls; communication with words is not even considered among the possible remedies to the horrors of psychic compartmentalization. The only promise of redemption, according to Endell, came from an empathetic exchange—one in which seeing would play a much more crucial role than speaking and emotions that were cut off from the intellect would serve as the currency of the exchange. For Endell, although emotional expression could be communicated as visible lines on the face—of sorrow, joy, anger, fear, etc., these lines would never act like symbols or associations.⁷³ It was clear from everyday experience, Endell wrote, that not every emotion appeared on every face in identical manner: some furrowed their brow not because they were angry but because they were absorbed in their thinking.⁷⁴ Still, despite the infinite number of variations in which emotions manifested themselves, their interpretation was rarely mistaken. Words might be inadequate to the task of accomplishing the extension of the self into other

⁷² Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 13. It is interesting to note that for Theodor Lipps the highest level of empathizing was the level at which the subject transcended the boundaries of his ego and experienced himself "as a human being in the most general and fundamental sense of the word 'human.'" Lipps, "Einfühlung und ästhetischer Genuss," *Die Zukunft* 54 (1905) 109.

⁷³ "These relations have misled to the theory that forms themselves actually awaken no feeling, that they are ugly or beautiful only insofar as they are symbols for mental or corporeal activities and faculties. As sadness evokes certain lines in the face, we are supposed to first learn to recognize these lines as sad, others as cheerful, and yet others as lofty, etc. We are also supposed to recognize the character of lines through experience and beauty is supposed to be the greater, the more valuable and ethically more meaningful the personality that speaks in them. This theory, which under the name symbol-theory and is the ornament and pride of our newer and newest aesthetics, at first glance has much that is plausible but is in conflict with facts." Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 23.

⁷⁴ "It is not even true that our expression is adequate to our *Stimmung*. Whoever occupies themselves with mimicry will often make the discovery in the mirror of how absolutely different the face appears from one expects. Some furrow their brow while thinking the most amicable thoughts. Sometimes a laugh seems obnoxious, not because the person in question is an obnoxious person but because he has projecting teeth. Overall, pure coincidence changes the expression in the most conspicuous ways. One need only think about, how the cheerfulness of a laugh will be heightened by the shine of the teeth and the lips." Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 25.

selves, Endell reasoned, but emotions always guaranteed to surpass the difficulties of intersubjective interaction. In other words, emotions succeeded precisely where words failed. However, in Endell's case, emotions started taking over some roles traditionally assigned to the cognitive faculties of the mind:

From the indescribable-ness of feelings is drawn the conclusion that feelings are somewhat vague and unclear. That is, however, not at all the case. Feelings are absolutely definite, clear and distinct; they do not allow themselves to be expressed in words, numbers, and metrics, but that does not prove in the least their haziness. On the contrary, emotional sensation is very often used to substitute judgments used in measuring and counting: for example, in bisecting a line, in judging if two angles are parallel, and so on. The so-called "measuring by eye" (*Augenmass*) makes it possible to judge relationships of scale through feeling, and one knows how extraordinarily precise this "measuring by eye" can be. And the feeling is even sharper and more definite in purely artistic things, where it always concerns the evaluation of nuances of feeling in artistic impression. And those who have lived among painters and musicians know how well they communicate through inflection, gesture and so on, despite the absence of the possibility of an exact description.⁷⁵

On the one hand, then, Endell tried to eradicate all that was cognitive from the realm of the aesthetic; on the other hand, he argued that emotions could act as ersatz cognition. However, Endell's project was not limited to assigning a form of knowledge to the aesthetic: an eye endowed with feeling, Endell suggested, was more intelligent than a hand with a measuring stick or an intellect equipped with mathematical formulas. In other words, the tables were turned: if bodily feelings were capable of measuring and counting more precisely than the more venerable faculties of the mind, then emotions were no longer slave to reason but contended with it, making an equally valid claim to truth and knowledge. What was unusual in Endell's scheme was that the precision that was usually identified with the privileged cognitive operations of the mind could now be afforded by the expressive yet non-verbal capacities of the body—gestures, inflections, affective poses, postures, etc.

⁷⁵ Endell, "Architektur-Theorien," cited above, 54. On the question of "measuring by eye" or "visual discrimination," see Theodor Lipps, "Die empirischen Täuschung des Augenmasses" in *Zur Einfühlung* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1913): 359-79.

Note that although such expressive movements could be interpreted as a language, Endell's underlying assumption was that the body was capable of drawing logical conclusions from its movements *without* the aid of conventional language. As in the empiricist tradition discussed in Chapter 1, kinaesthesia was understood here as ersatz ratiocination. Feelings were vague and unclear, Endell insisted, only to the extent that one tried to pigeonhole them by means of words. Bodily sensations, by contrast, could be assumed to be much more subtle: it was possible to *feel* the difference between two emotions by a slight change in the exertion of a muscle as it was to perceive the minutest change in gestural expression on another person's face. It was for this reason that throughout his writings Endell betrayed a distrust of spoken and written language and preferred nonverbal communication as a more reliable mode of intersubjective exchange.⁷⁶ However, in light of Endell's misgivings about language, his table of emotions seems even more peculiar. We then need to ask ourselves: if language is inadequate to the task of capturing the manifold of emotions, why does Endell ultimately rely on nothing but words in his table of emotions? If the musculature of the body can register the intricacy of feeling so much more accurately, why is every shade of feeling fixed in the table with a word?

Feelings and Language

These were exactly the kinds of questions that were being asked in a debate about emotions in psychological circles at the turn of the twentieth century. Endell's teacher in Munich, Theodor Lipps, laid out a theory of feelings, according to which it was futile—if not completely erroneous—to try to classify emotions through linguistic usage

⁷⁶ A quick scanning of *Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt* will reveal that when Endell mentions language, it is usually with negative connotations. In this text, Endell often states that words are insufficient for the visual experiences which he is describing. In many parts of this text, Endell constructs long sentences that are essentially a list of adjectives without any verbs. A similar approach can be found in Endell's attempts to write poetry earlier in his career. It is interesting to consider Endell's relationship to language in light of his proximity to literary circles in Munich, particularly to the Stefan George Circle and to Rainer Maria Rilke. In letters to Breysig, he wrote that he was interested in the modern poetry of Liliencron, Hart, Hartleben, Bierbaum, Falke, Dehmel, Ambrosius, and Arno but that he was most influenced by Stefan George. See the letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.95-98, undated from 1896. The isolation of the individual word in Endell's poetry and in his table of emotions is also not unlike Dadaist poetry in the 1920s.

(*Sprachgebrauch*).⁷⁷ The central question of Lipps's text—as was the underlying problem in Endell's table—was how to account for the qualitative differences between feelings: the difference, for example, between the taste of vinegar and sugar.⁷⁸ Neither the fact that different tastes emanated from different objects, nor that we call one by one name and the other by another sufficiently justified the difference. “I know the differences in feelings,” Lipps insisted, “because I experience them.”⁷⁹ What set one emotion apart from another one was immediately felt feeling-qualities (*Gefühlsqualitäten*) as opposed to presentation-elements (*Vorstellungselemente*) filtered by means of a process of apperception, defined by Lipps as the objects of perception and thinking.⁸⁰ His conclusion was that feelings were too manifold to be classified in any way.

The invisible opponent in the text, in fact, was none other than the psychology of Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), whose tri-dimensional model of feeling Lipps refuted at the end of the same article.⁸¹ In the 1870s Wundt had identified three axes for the classification of every feeling—a system that was remarkably similar to the one used by Endell: pleasure-displeasure (*Lust-Unlust*), arousing-subduing (*Erregung-Hemmung*), and strain-relaxation (*Spannung-Lösung*).⁸² Furthermore, Wundt argued that the three

⁷⁷ The clearest expression of Lipps's theory was given in Theodor Lipps, “Gefühlsqualitäten,” *Psychologische Untersuchungen* 2.1 (1912): 81-110.

⁷⁸ Endell wanted to “begin with the modern direction in psychology... the one which is opposed to Wundt and which centers around the periodical *Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*. I need not play the hypocrite with Lipps. I take, in part, a different position. But furthermore, I can learn a great deal from him.” Letter from Endell to Breysig, K.5.79-82, dated November 16, 1884.

⁷⁹ Lipps, “Gefühlsqualitäten,” cited above, 83. Using the first person is a consistent strategy in Lipps's writings.

⁸⁰ Endell also used the term *Gefühlsqualitäten*. According to the 1907 edition of Friedrich Kirchner's *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Grundbegriffe*, *Vorstellungen* are: “psychical entities that are made of sensations (*Empfindungen*) and perceptions (*Wahrnehmungen*) by means of association and reproduction.” In James Mark Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, *Vorstellung* is translated as “presentation.” Friedrich Kirchner, *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Grundbegriffe* (Leipzig: Dürr., 1907) and James Mark Baldwin, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, [1895] 1905).

⁸¹ Lipps was not the only philosopher and psychologist to challenge Wundt's theory of feeling. See E. B. Titchener, “Zur Kritik der Wundt'schen Gefühlslehre,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* (1899): 321-26 and Carl Stumpf, “Über Gefühlsempfindungen,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* (1907): 1-49.

⁸² See Wundt, “Über das Verhältnis der Gefühle zu den Vorstellungen,” *Vierteljahresschrift Wiss. Philosophie* 3 (1879); Wundt, “Über den Ausdruck der Gemütsbewegungen,” *Deutsche Rundschau* (April 1877); and Wundt, “Bemerkungen zur Theorie der Gefühle,” *Philosophische Studien* 15 (1900): 449-82.

coordinates could be quantitatively determined by tracking the movements of the body's musculature, that is, by registering the contraction and dilation of blood vessels, the motions of the eyes, or the beating of the heart in his laboratory.⁸³ The experimental psychologist here was deciphering neither an inner character nor the universal grammar of gestures; the hermeneutics of physiognomy and pathognomy had been effectively replaced by a practice of making and reading graphs, which—like Endell's table—bore no isomorphic resemblance to the body. (Fig. 4.14)

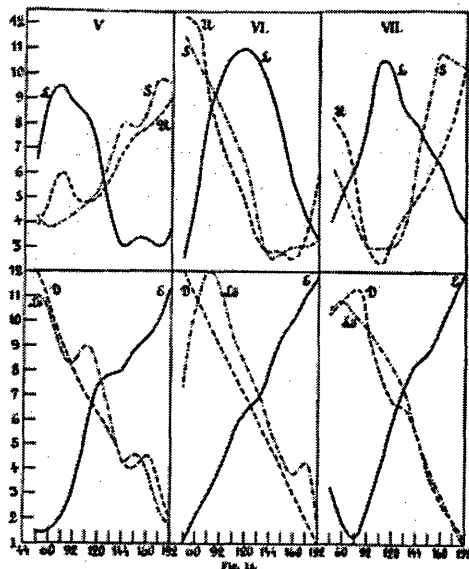


Fig. 4.14: Diagram from Alfred Lehmann's *Die Hauptgesetze des menschlichen Gefühlslebens*, 1892.

While acknowledging the poverty of language with regards to pinpointing a specific feeling, Wundt still claimed that every possible feeling could be located accurately within the space of his axial system. The conformity of feelings to a system, however, had less to do with the orderliness of the world and more with the synthetic activities of the conscious mind that imposed an order on the chaotic manifold of the universe by means of its apperceptive activity.⁸⁴

It was not because Wundt meticulously measured the corresponding heartbeat and the pulse in his laboratory that a feeling could be located at a precise point in Wundt's system of coordinates. Rather, the feeling was part of a lawful system because it was already the product of the mediation of the mind, whose logical

Feelings were part of Wundt's theory of apperception, according to which stimuli entered consciousness only after being processed by the musculature of the body. According to Wundt, numerous stimuli might hit the retina of the eye, for example, but what was eventually perceived was a result of the movements of the eye muscles. A feeling, then, was a muscle-sensation that accompanied apperception and that thus allowed a kind of self-consciousness.

⁸³ Wundt used the graphics devised by Alfred Lehmann, *Die Hauptgesetze des menschlichen Gefühlslebens* (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, [1888, 1892] 1914).

⁸⁴ Wundt, "Zur Lehre von den Gemüthsbewegungen," *Philosophische Studien* 6 (1890) 337. It is important to remember here that Wundt's apperceptive psychology was built upon an empiricist distinction between sensation and feeling: the former was transformed into the latter only after being processed by the mind through apperception. Psychologically speaking, one can sense (*empfinden*) green, Wundt explained, but one feels (*fühlen*) its pleasantness.

workings psychology methodically sought to understand.⁸⁵ Lipps only ridiculed attempts to subject embodied experience to such conceptual categories by using the analogy of color blindness:

I must assume, then, that there are two completely different classes of humans: color-blinds, on the one hand, and those who can see color, on the other. Some say, according to the testimony of their experience, that in the wealth of the visible there is only one difference—of light and dark—and if they hear others speak of red and yellow and green and blue, they say that those are only names for different degrees of light or dark. The difference is that those who speak in such a way see—apart from degrees of brightness and the darkness—presentation-elements (*Vorstellungselemente*) of tones, tastes or smells, which they curiously hold to be color-qualities (*Farbenqualitäten*). On the other hand, others say, again according to the testimony of their experience, that red and yellow and green and blue—just like the light and the dark—are real and genuine qualities of the visible and that they would be able to distinguish from color-qualities (*Farbenqualitäten*) the tones, that they would not see but hear, as well as the tastes and the smells.⁸⁶

Nobody had ever seen a “presentation-element” with their eyes after all, Lipps noted, while almost everyone could tell the difference between two colors.⁸⁷ In other words, what set one emotion apart from another one was pure experience, that is, experience free from all conceptual categories as well as from language through which these conceptual categories might be articulated. The random sensations received from the world and registered as experience, according to Lipps, could not be constrained by the apperceptive activity of the mind. Lipps’s logic was therefore inherently tautological: experience was the only witness of experience.

⁸⁵ It was thus not so much Wundt’s experimental techniques as his reliance on conceptual categories, which his opponents found most objectionable. Even a superficial reading of Wundt’s work will show that he never endorsed a psychology that relied exclusively on experimentation. In the methodological section of almost every book he wrote, Wundt explained how experimental techniques needed to be used in conjunction with introspection. Furthermore, some of Wundt’s most vehement critics, such as Carl Stumpf, practiced the experimental method. As the historian Danziger illustrates, much of the misunderstanding of Wundt is due to the translations of his erstwhile student Titchener. Wundt was frequently cast in the role of the archenemy for Gestalt psychology, behaviorism, pragmatism, etc. For more on Wundt’s methodology, see Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁸⁶ Lipps, “Gefühlsqualitäten, cited above, 103.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 83. Lipps did not only refuse to admit to a difference between a sensation and a feeling; he also claimed that there were just as many feelings as there were sensations.

In fact, this seemingly minor controversy about emotions concealed deeper disciplinary concerns. By the turn of the century, the teleology controversy, which had dominated intellectual life for most of the nineteenth century, had fully transformed into a debate about disciplinary concerns.⁸⁸ With Protestant theology having withdrawn its claims about causality in nature, materialism having lost steam, and movements such as monism making their “argument from design” in thoroughly secularized ways, the explicit question was no longer whether there was *telos* in the universe or not but rather how the natural sciences and the human sciences would be organized with respect to each other at the university.⁸⁹ The dichotomy now passionately debated was *Verstehen* (understanding) versus *Erklären* (explaining). This distinction corresponded to an opposition between two different kind of psychologies: a descriptive science anticipating phenomenology (*beschreibende Psychologie*) and Wundtian experimental psychology (*zergliedernde Psychologie*). The opposition was coined by the Austrian philosopher Franz Brentano (1838-1917) in the late 1880s and found its way into the work of many theorists who speculated about psychology at this historical moment.⁹⁰ Particularly attentive to the disciplinary role of psychology vis-à-vis the natural and the human sciences was Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), who also distinguished between an analytical explanatory psychology, which was interested in discovering the laws of causality in mental life, and a descriptive psychology that replaced analysis by description and causality by “intentionality,” the capacity of the mind to direct itself on things.⁹¹

⁸⁸ See Chapter 1 on a more detailed discussion of the teleology debate in the nineteenth century.

⁸⁹ This is not to say that teleological or theological concerns disappeared. It is possible, for instance, to understand the debate between *Verstehen* and *Erklären* or between the human sciences and the natural sciences at the end of the nineteenth century in terms of Catholic and Protestant interpretations of the Bible. In the former, the text has the authority; in the latter the reader.

⁹⁰ What Brentano called “descriptive psychology” (or alternatively “phenomenology”) was meant to be a necessary prelude to its causally oriented counterpart “genetic psychology.” See Franz Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, trans. B. Müller (London: Routledge, 1982). This book was edited from Brentano’s lectures at the University of Vienna during the academic year 1888-89. According to Brentano, the relationship between descriptive psychology and genetic psychology was akin to that between descriptive anatomy and physiology or, in geology, the difference between geognosy and geogony. Drawing from these obscure terms, Brentano invented the term *Psychognosie* for descriptive psychology.

⁹¹ Wilhelm Dilthey, “Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie,” *Sitzungsbeitrag der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften vom 20. Dezember 1894* (1895): 1308-1407. English translation *Ideas concerning Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*. Also see Hermann Ebbinghaus, “Über erklärende und beschreibende Psychologie,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*

Descriptive psychology was exclusively interested in surfaces while analytical psychology tried to understand causality.

Consider again the example of Ernst Mach. As I have already explained in the Introduction, in his influential 1886 book *Die Analyse der Empfindungen*, Mach depicted a universe in which sensations of colors, forms, and sounds did not point to anything “behind” or “beyond” but simply floated within time and space; any attempt to find causes deeper than these fleeting sensations was not only futile but also betrayed highly suspicious metaphysical assumptions.⁹² For Mach, the basis of all knowledge had to be anchored in the immediacy of experience rather than mechanical explanations that concerned themselves first and foremost with causes. Just as Mach refused to go beyond surfaces and appearances into the realm of deeper causes, Endell insisted on concerning himself with the surfaces of architecture and of the human body.

A New Foundation for the Human Sciences

What was the political subtext of these disciplinary skirmishes? We have seen in the previous chapters that within the discourse of the new aesthetics the question of whether or not the intellect played a role in aesthetic experience signaled the social class for which the experience was intended. Contemplative beholding was reserved for the educated middle classes, we have noted, while kinaesthetic experience was usually considered to be appropriate for those whose will and attention had not been strengthened by *Bildung*. Unlike the other figures discussed here, however, Endell was more outspoken about who the imagined recipient of aesthetic effects was. In an essay published in the socialist journal *Neue Gesellschaft* in 1905, Endell did not evoke an

9 (1896): 161-205 and E. B. Titchener, “Brentano and Wundt: Empirical and Experimental Psychology,” *American Journal of Psychology* 32 (1921) 108-120.

Intentionality became a key term in phenomenology. Brentano derived the term from Scholastic philosophy in the 1870s. According to Brentano, intentionality is the property of all psychical phenomena to contain an object as “inexistent,” i.e., immanent, combined with the property of referring to an object. According to Husserl, it is the inclination of consciousness to refer to something. Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* (The Hague, Boston, and London: Martinus Nijhoff, [1960] 1982) 746-47.

⁹² For a discussion of the political implications of Mach’s interest in surfaces, see Theodore M. Porter, “The Death of the Object: Fin de Siècle Philosophy of Physics” in *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870-1930*, ed. Dorothy Ross (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994): 128-51.

elusive *Volk* like many of his fellow intellectuals, but he openly discussed how his theorization of aesthetic experience would impact the working classes.⁹³ Endell began the essay by declaring right away that he was not a socialist. Nevertheless, he continued, he accepted the invitation to write in the journal, because he was convinced that a deeply artistic culture was possible only if the working classes could develop a lively and mature understanding for art.⁹⁴

Endell agreed with those who argued that the lower classes of society could not acquire an appreciation of art overnight. To grasp a symphony, a picture, or a building required schooling and exercise, he acknowledged. Particularly important was the sustained attention necessary to follow each note of music with the ear or each curve of a line with the eye.⁹⁵ However, he disagreed that the masses could not be taught to be attentive. This move necessitated separating the capacity for attention from that for knowledge—faculties which had been inextricably linked by an unitary self in the tradition of *Bildung*. Endell argued that it was not necessary to inculcate the masses with *Wissen*, that is, history and languages; one only needed to instill in them the right kind of habits—including attention—so that they could engage in the enjoyment (*Genuß*) of art.⁹⁶ Furthermore, these habits did not need to be taught by official institutions such as the *Gymnasium* or the museum. An act as simple as walking through a city and learning to observe the theatricality of atmospheric conditions—on which Endell elaborated in *Schönheit der großen Stadt*—could count as an aesthetic education.

Elsewhere Endell dismissed the idea that *Bildung* was conducive to aesthetic experience. This became evident in the text that Endell penned in response to Karl Lorn of Nuremberg, who in an essay published in 1904 in *Zukunft* attacked the art education

⁹³ August Endell, “Kunst und Volk,” *Neue Gesellschaft* 1 (April 1905): 8-9. *Neue Gesellschaft* was a socialist journal published by the couple Heinrich and Lily Braun. The Brauns belonged to a wing of the Social Democrats who did not believe in radical class struggle but, like many liberal reformers, strove to bring about social change by means of culture.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

movement.⁹⁷ According to Lorn, the late-nineteenth-century reform movements' desire to have a broad popular appeal was unattainable, because understanding art was a matter of *Anlage* (pre-disposition) which could not be acquired by the lower classes through education. The masses could only grasp a "naïve, sleep-inducing art," Lorn insisted, while difficult art was reserved for those who had the right kind of cognitive faculties to appreciate it. Endell passionately countered this claim: common people naturally had a feel for beauty, he argued, because they made their living out of their *Können*—literally with their muscles.⁹⁸

Compare Endell's position to Adolf Hildebrand's famous defense of "pure visibility" and neo-classicism in *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (1893).⁹⁹ Distinguishing between a purely visual perception that captured the coherence of forms from a distance and a kinesthetic perception which had to assemble disparate visual impressions by means of movement, Hildebrand prescribed the pure visibility of the former over the disconcerting uncertainty of the latter. "The visual arts alone reflect the active operation of consciousness," he wrote, "artistic seeing... resides in a strong grasp of these sensations of form and not in the mere knowledge of the inherent form as a sum of isolated perceptions."¹⁰⁰ Kinaesthetic vision, he added, had no place in art but could claim importance only in scientific analysis.¹⁰¹ It was with this reasoning that Hildebrand attempted to revive an interest in silhouettes at the end of the nineteenth century and himself turned to relief in his work as a sculptor.¹⁰² Hildebrand's text proved to be

⁹⁷ Endell, "Kunsterziehung: Geschichte oder Psychologie," Freistatt. Süddeutsche Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst (Munich and Vienna) 47 (1904) 919.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 920.

⁹⁹ Adolf Hildebrand, Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst (Strassburg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1893). Translated into English by Max Meyer and Robert Morris Ogden as The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1907) and "The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts," Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-93, introd. and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994) 227-79. I will refer to pages in the latter.

¹⁰⁰ Hildebrand, "The Problem of Form," cited above, 235.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² A decidedly more intellectualist approach can be found in the writings of Konrad Fiedler (1841-1895), who was a teacher of Hildebrand. Fiedler's project was to counter the idealism of the historically privileged philosophical knowledge by establishing art as an equal, if not superior, form of knowledge. If philosophical knowledge was attained through abstract thinking, Fiedler reasoned, artistic knowledge

extremely influential at the turn of the century: from the so-called “relief-stage” to the variations of the relief-ornament many artists followed Hildebrand’s direction. There was an underlying assumption about the capacity of the beholder for aesthetic experience in the idea of relief. In the age of mass culture, it was assumed, the beholder, already prone to distraction, could not be left to roam in the space around a sculpture; the silhouette and the relief both made sure that she would engage in the correct aesthetic experience regardless of her position in space.



Fig. 4.15: August Endell, Interior view of stairs, Elvira Photography Studio, Munich, 1898.

Although Endell was equally alarmed by the consequences of the rise of mass culture, he still urged a kinaesthetic perception that unfolded in space and over time: “See the individual, line for line, surface for surface, follow the forms with the eye, feel them out, experience them, enjoy them.”¹⁰³ Movement was thus seen to be essential to aesthetic reception. “When I grasp a line successively, what I do is similar—if not identical—to what I do when I follow a moving body with the eye. The objective juxtaposition of form will be for the observer a succession, that is well characterized by the image of ‘movement.’”¹⁰⁴

Endell’s ornaments were kinaesthetic even when they were designed as relief: in marked contrast to a compartmentalized understanding

should instead progress to the level of cognition from perceptual experiences. Confronted by the chaotic and inexhaustible mass of matter that the visible world offered, the artist had to utilize the powers of the mind to work through matter and give it creative form. Konrad Fiedler, Über die Beurtheilung von Werken der bildende Kunst (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1876).

¹⁰³ Endell, “Möglichkeit und Ziele einer neuen Architektur,” cited above, 32. Endell repeated elsewhere that architecture could be appreciated only if one engaged in kinaesthetic looking: “To appreciate architecture, one look is not enough, it is always a series of looks.... one must let the eyes linger on a façade, and the impression always consists of a very long series of individual impressions.” Endell, “Architektur-Theorien,” cited above, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Endell, “Formenschönheit und dekorative Kunst,” cited above, 123.

of ornament found in the work of some of his contemporaries, Endell's forms were made up of continuous lines meant to be enjoyed over time. (Fig. 4.15) In other words, although Endell systematically eliminated contemplation from his theorization of aesthetic experience, he retained practices of attentive beholding. Attention was now understood as a habit learned by the musculature of the body and no longer as a faculty integral to the nineteenth-century model of a unitary self.

Despite occupying himself with surfaces, however, Endell did not give up an interest in deep universal laws. He imagined a single exact science, which traced the manifold of the human soul into a few uniform laws, just as physics could be expressed as basic mechanical laws. If the natural sciences were established on the foundation of mathematics, he reasoned, the human sciences needed a psychological base with a strictly scientific orientation, a science whose methods detractors of experimental psychology might have found distasteful. His critique of intellectualism, Endell emphasized, was not to be misunderstood as a call against science:

It is wrong to regard the oft repeated call against intellectualism as a battle cry against science... The battle is aimed at the inadequate science that knows only to explain the intellectual and fails at everything emotional.... It is necessary to succeed in ordering the confusing manifoldness of feeling and in tracing it to a principle. It is necessary to succeed, because without that, history as science (*Wissenschaft*) is not a possibility. Because feeling is the great and only mainspring in the life of man; it is not a lyrical illusoriness, but in reality gives something that is absolutely clear and definite, real and factual. It is feeling that values all things, gives everything meaning and thereby essence; we do everything we do not for the sake of things-in-themselves but for the sake of the value that they receive through our feelings. So long as we do not grasp the essence of feeling scientifically, neither an accurate political economy, neither political science, nor religious science, neither political nor cultural, neither economic nor artistic historiography are achievable.¹⁰⁵

Endell was thus proposing to jettison cognition in the conventional sense only so that a new kind of cognition, which could be achieved by everyone regardless of their level of education, could be constructed out of feelings. Endell's contemporaries understood the contradictory role in which emotions were cast in Endell's theory: the critic Karl

¹⁰⁵ Endell, "Kunsterziehung: Geschichte oder Psychologie," cited above, 941.

Scheffler described Endell's formal method as "mathematics of living feeling."¹⁰⁶ "[His] ornaments are hieroglyphs," he wrote "they seem to be formulas for constellations of interconnected architectural sensations."¹⁰⁷ According to Scheffler, what made Endell so extraordinary among his contemporaries was his unique ability to "produce cognition (*Erkenntnis*) out of sensation (*Empfindung*)," that is, a skill at converting raw stimuli into a kind of knowledge. This ability, Scheffler added, could only be achieved through a "painstaking education of the will."¹⁰⁸

However, Endell's project of converting feelings into cognitions was even more ambitious than Scheffler had foreseen: this was nothing less than an attempt to formulate a new orientation for the human sciences. Since his student days, Endell had been concerned equally with ethics and aesthetics, which he argued, shared a foundational role with epistemology: "These three areas together ask the question: what should we do?" he wrote in a letter in 1892. "On the one hand, ethics as the basis of the interchange between humans; on the other hand, aesthetics as the basis of art and epistemology as the basis of the sciences."¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, like many of his contemporaries, Endell assumed that psychology would guide the way in these disciplinary efforts by furnishing both the natural sciences and the human sciences with methodological footing. Despite all the controversy regarding the specific methods to be used, of course, many turned to psychology at this historical moment for a sound disciplinary project and to understand how their discipline could fit into the existing structures of knowledge. Endell reasoned that a theory of emotions, conceived from a psychologically point of view, would merge the seemingly disparate disciplines into one and serve as a propædeutic science (*Vorwissenschaft*). "The current overestimation of knowing (*Wissen*) has taught us to despise capability (*Können*) and judgment (*Urteil*)," he wrote in 1896.¹¹⁰ What needed to

¹⁰⁶ Karl Scheffler, "August Endell," *Kunst und Künstler* 5 (1907): 317.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 317. Scheffler also wrote the following articles on Endell: Scheffler, "August Endell," *Kunst und Künstler*, 5 (1907): 314-24 and Scheffler, "August Endell," *Die Architektur der Großstadt* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1913) 187-193. Also see Georg Fuchs, "Das 'bunte Theater' von August Endell," *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 9 (Oct. 1901-1902): 275-89; and Ernst Schur, "August Endell," *Die Kunst. Monatshefte für freie und angewandte Kunst* 24 (1911): 374-79.

¹⁰⁹ See the letter from Endell to Breysig K. 5.24-34, dated April 2, 1892.

¹¹⁰ Endell, "Um die Schönheit," cited above, 15.

be done to realize this project was to replace an abstract *Wissen* with embodied *Kennen* in every aspect of life.

We should also remember that *Wissen* and neo-humanistic learning in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century were inseparable from the institutions of the Prussian state. Endell was a member of a liberal elite whose relationship to Wilhelmine official cultural institutions was strained at best. Especially after Wilhelm II attacked modern art in a speech that he delivered in 1901 on the occasion of the opening of the Siegesallee, an avenue in Tiergarten lined with historicist sculptures that he had personally commissioned, this antagonism became more pronounced. Endell published *Die Schönheit der großen Stadt* the same year that this opposition reached its pinnacle in the so-called Impressionism crisis: a controversy broke out in 1908 when liberal-minded museum officials bought French Impressionist paintings for public museums despite the Kaiser's objections.¹¹¹ Endell made his cultural position clear in this controversy by acknowledging his indebtedness to Impressionism in the book.¹¹² Elsewhere, Endell openly voiced his opposition to the Wilhelmine cultural institutions by asserting that "our

¹¹¹ In 1908 Wilhelm II tried secretly to replace Hugo von Tschudi, the director of the National Gallery in Berlin, because the latter had insisted on purchasing French art. However, the attempt became public and a scandal followed. See Peter Paret, "The Tschudi Affair," *The Journal of Modern History* 53. 4 (December 1981): 589-618. This scandal initiated a controversy between those who supported foreign art and Impressionism and those who sided with the nationalistic cultural policies of the Kaiser. On Impressionism, see Julius Meier-Graefe, "Über Impressionismus," *Die Kunst für Alle* 25.7 (Jan. 1910): 145-62; Karl Scheffler, "Impressionistische Weltanschauung," *Die Zukunft* 45 (1903): 138-47; Theodore Duret, "Claude Monet und der Impressionismus," *Kunst und Künstler* 2 (1904): 233-44; Jules Laforgue, "Impressionismus," *Kunst und Künstler* 3 (1905): 501-6.

¹¹² *Die Schönheit der grossen Stadt* had only three illustrations, all of which were Impressionistic works: "St. Germain l'Auxerrois" and "River Bank" by Claude Monet and "Canal in Leyden" by Max Liebermann. Endell openly expressed admiration for Manet, Cezanne, Monet, Renoir, and Degas, and positioned himself against Whistler, Böcklin, Feuerbach, Hildebrand, and Klinger. See Endell, "A. Renoir," *Freistatt. Süddeutsche Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst* (Munich) 17 (April 29, 1905): 268 and "Vincent van Gogh," *Freistatt. Süddeutsche Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst* (Munich) 24 (June 17, 1905): 378. For an excellent account of Endell's indebtedness to Impressionism, see Lothar Müller, "The Beauty of the Metropolis: Toward an Aesthetic Urbanism in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin" in *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis*, eds. Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1990): 37-57. Endell continued to support Impressionism and foreign art, even after nationalistic sentiments were on the rise on the eve of WWI. See Endell, "Deutsche Tracht," *Die neue Rundschau* 25.2 (October 1914): 1460. This essay begins with a humorous critique of the Werkbund's call to artists to re-design the German uniform and becomes a critique of Wilhelmine cultural policies.

art does not in any way lead to the palace.”¹¹³ Endell’s efforts to re-orient the human sciences, then, was a critique of the neo-humanistic tradition of knowledge and *Bildung*, the institutions that accompanied them, and the particular model of the self that they propagated throughout the nineteenth century.

What was perhaps more extraordinary about Endell’s work was that architecture had an important role to play in his ambitious project of constructing a completely new brand of knowledge out of emotions. Endell sought to forge a new kind of relationship between architectural forms and the human body, one which did away with “character,” “decorum,” or any other term that had been developed within architectural discourse to arbitrate architecture’s ethical function. What he was thus beginning to outline was an architectural subject whose body was exposed—in all its presumed self-evidence—to the stimulation of forms which were ready to impress themselves without any mediation on its musculature. Endell’s science of emotive effect was actually a precise ‘science of design,’ which would accurately calibrate forms to the bodily response that they would elicit. If the cognitive faculties of this architectural subject were left underdeveloped, it was so that a corporeal knowledge could prosper in its stead—the kind of knowledge with which Endell wanted to replace conventional forms of knowledge. Architecture, then, was the training ground for cultivating this bodily knowledge—a site where ‘mindless habits’ would be acquired. Furthermore, it was only in this bodily knowledge—made possible through architecture—that the model of the self as an isolated fortress could momentarily give way to an oceanic self that could merge with others. Architecture, in other words, proved to be the ultimate utopian medium that permitted an otherwise impossible intersubjectivity.

¹¹³ Endell, “Brief über die Kunstpolitik des Kaisers und die Moderne” [On the occasion of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s speech on December 18, 1901] *Die Zukunft* 10.38 (8.2.1902) 259-62. For Endell’s critique of Wilhelmine cultural institutions, see also “Das Bayerische Nationalmuseum,” cited above. In this text, Endell recounted with humor his visit to the National Museum of Bavaria. As Endell wandered aimlessly into the gallery spaces, a museum attendant stopped and warned him that it was necessary to start the museum tour with the pre-historical hall and to follow a strictly linear route thereafter. Throughout the article, the stifling spaces of the National Museum of Bavaria designed in 1892 by the architect Gabriel von Seidl become equated with its eclectic historicist architectural style as well as the historical education of the public through art.

It must be abundantly clear by now that Endell's table of emotions was an extremely precarious endeavor, even more so than its eighteenth and nineteenth-century precursors. After all, who is to say that "brutal" requires a little more effort than "powerful" but a much faster tempo than "sublime"? Ultimately, within the obsessive logic of the table, each entry qualified as a specific emotion in a specific position only because it had been designated by convention as such. The absurdity of the table became all the more obvious when Endell's vehement attempts to replace conventional knowledge with a bodily knowledge had to rely upon language. What could be more paradoxical than the fact that Endell's escape from language and *Bildung* resurfaced as a table of emotions that was nothing but words?

CHAPTER 4:

BAROQUE IS MODERN: ART HISTORY AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

The Baroque as the Subconscious of Modernism



Fig. 5.1: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Jupiter and Thetis*, 1811.

The art critic Karl Scheffler (1869-1951) recounted in 1947 how he had come to realize the connection between modernism and the Baroque in a very curious manner.¹ Not so long after he had completed a book on nineteenth-century French painting, Scheffler claimed, he had a strange dream, in which a “vertically striving ornament” persisted before his eyes.² The more he tried to fix the form in his mind, the more rapidly the curve changed.. No sooner had Scheffler identified this curve as the profile of Thetis in “Jupiter and Thetis” by Ingres than the form transformed again—this time into a baroque ornament. (Fig. 5.1) The impact of the dream was so powerful that upon waking up, he decided that it must have been an important secret message. The dream signaled to Scheffler, he realized, that a simultaneously “evident and subterranean connection” existed between modern art and the Baroque.”³ It was not as if Scheffler had been completely unaware of such a

¹ Karl Scheffler, Verwandlungen des Barocks in der Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Vienna: Gallus, 1947) 5.

² Ibid. Scheffler is here referring to Scheffler, Die großen französischen Maler des 19. Jahrhunderts (Munich: Bruckmann, 1942).

³ Scheffler, Verwandlungen des Barocks, cited above, 5.

connection, but now he decided that what had hitherto remained unarticulated in his writings deserved a book in its own right.

In the resulting book, *Verwandlungen des Barocks in der Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1947, *Transformations of the Baroque in the Art of the Nineteenth Century*), Scheffler compared Courbet to Caravaggio and Corot to Poussin and argued that the origins of Delacroix were to be found in Rubens. Having been one of the most prominent German art critics who were active in the artistic milieu of the 1890s, he called the work of Hermann Obrist and August Endell “Jugendstil-Barock” and even detected baroque tendencies in twentieth-century Expressionism. He also acknowledged, however, that his discovery was not altogether new. The modernity of the Baroque had always been a subtext in the work of art historians such as Heinrich Wölfflin, Julius Meier-Graefe, Alois Riegl, Franz Wickhoff, and Anton Springer.⁴ The characteristics that these historians attributed to the Baroque—the primacy of emotion and movement (*Affekt und Bewegung*), an unabashed theatricality, a state of turbulence that was in stark contrast to the calmness of classical art, and, above all, a desire to appeal to the senses rather than to the intellect—were parallel to the concerns of modern art. Scheffler was thus suggesting that the Baroque served as the subconscious of modernism. Although it seemed to have been long dead by the nineteenth century, it was always present, playing a quiet yet crucial role in modern aesthetic debates all the way up to the early twentieth century.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 6-7. The works that Scheffler mentions are Heinrich Wölfflin’s *Renaissance und Barock* (1888) and *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915), Julius Meier-Graefe’s *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst* (1904), Alois Riegl’s *Stilfragen* (1893), and Anton Springer’s *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (1895).

⁵ The art historian Siegfried Giedion, who was effectively the spokesman for the Modern Movement, also identified the origins of modernism in baroque architecture and urbanism. In his 1941 book *Space, Time, and Architecture*, based on the Charles Eliot Norton lectures (1938-1939) at Harvard University, Giedion juxtaposed the dome of Borromini’s Sant’Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome with a painting of a female head by Picasso and the Eiffel Tower. Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge and Oxford: Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 1941) 115. On modernism and the Baroque, also see Christof Thoenes, “Die Formen sind in Bewegung geraten. Zum Verständnis der Architektur Borrominis,” *Daidalos* (March 1998): 63-73 and the excellent essay by Joseph Imorde, “Barock und Moderne. Zum Problem zeitgebundener Geschichtsschreibung” in *Barock als Aufgabe*, ed. Andreas Kreul (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005): 179-212.

The Baroque was invented during the heyday of neo-Classicism as a primarily negative stylistic category, associated with excessive sentimentality and ornamental frivolity. J. J. Winckelmann's (1717-1768) dismissal of baroque taste (*Barockgeschmack*) and use of Bernini as a counterexample in his writings set the tone for understanding the afterlife of the Renaissance in the nineteenth century.⁶ At the end of the eighteenth century, Winckelmann's enthusiasm for Classicism was understood to be making a political statement. The "noble simplicity and serene grandeur" of ancient Greece, as he famously formulated it, were meant to challenge Germany's purportedly Frenchified and baroque courtly culture.⁷ However, the negative associations of the so-called *Zopfstil* remained even after bourgeoisie's ascendancy to power seemed certain in the nineteenth century. The stigma was detectible even in the work of those who are usually credited with redeeming the Baroque as a style in its own right. The Swiss cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) famously described baroque architecture as speaking "the same language as the Renaissance but in a dialect that has gone wild" (*ein verwilderter Dialekt*), while his student Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) remained at best ambivalent about the style.⁸ After Wölfflin published the influential *Renaissance und Barock* as his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1888, a host of publications—by such prominent art historians as Cornelius Gurlitt (1850-1938), Alois Riegl (1858-1905), and August Schmarsow (1853-1936)—followed.⁹ By the 1890s the Baroque had become a legitimate object of art historical research.

⁶ See J. J. Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Leipzig and Dresden: Waltherische Handlung, [1755] 1756) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Dresden: Waltherische Hof-Buchhandlung, 1764). On Winckelmann, see the study by Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁷ See the excellent study by Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down From Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁸ Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone. Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Basel: Schweighauser'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1855) 368.

⁹ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock. Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: T. Ackermann, 1888). Translated by Kathrin Simon as *Renaissance and Baroque* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966). The English translation is at times very misleading. Although I will use these translations when I cite from these works, I will make corrections based on the German originals.

However, as the art historian Cornelius Gurlitt noted in 1911, art history's new fascination with the Baroque seemed to have little to do with the historical period designated as such. Reviewing the vast literature that had accumulated on the subject over the past twenty five years, Gurlitt expressed exasperation at the increasing elusiveness of the term 'Baroque.'¹⁰ A hint of nostalgia was also detectable in Gurlitt's tone. In the 1880s, equipped with nothing more than a map and a copy of Burckhardt's *Cicerone*, Gurlitt reminisced, he had painstakingly searched every street in Rome in order to gather examples of baroque architecture. These explorations had become the basis of his *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien* (1887, History of the Baroque Style in Italy), one of the first scholarly examination of Italian Baroque.¹¹ However, despite the proliferation of scholarly publications on the topic since then, there seemed to be consensus on neither the geographical nor the temporal boundaries of the Baroque. Even the formal qualities that would make the Baroque into a more or less coherent style seemed to be contested at the end of the century. Furthermore, Gurlitt lamented, none of the historical conditions under which the style had come into being—neither the Counter-Reformation nor the Council of Trent, neither liturgical practices nor Jesuit patronage—seemed to matter much to his fellow art historians any more.¹² The concreteness of his early endeavors, Gurlitt suggested in the review, stood in stark contrast to contemporary discussions, which seemed to concern themselves exclusively with modern aesthetic questions. In the context of Wölfflin's influential definition of the Baroque as “massiveness and movement” (*Massigkeit und Bewegung*), August Schmarsow's emphasis on the role of space and movement, and the confusing and contradictory ways

¹⁰ Cornelius Gurlitt, “Zum Wesen des Barock. Eine Auseinandersetzung,” *Berliner Architekturwelt* 14.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (1911): 40, 82, 124, 165, 249, and 292. Gurlitt reviews twenty five books on the Baroque in this review. On Gurlitt, see the autobiographical sketch in Johannes Jahn, ed., *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924): 1-32.

¹¹ Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien*, vol. 5 of *Geschichte der neueren Baukunst*, eds. Jacob Burckhardt and Wilhelm Lübke (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert (Paul Neff), 1887). Gurlitt's work is one of the first monographs on the Baroque to precede Wölfflin's *Renaissance und Barock*. Other early studies, according to Wölfflin, included Adolf Zahn, “Barock, Rococo und Zopf,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 8 (1873): 1-11, 33-44; Robert Dohme, “Studien zur Architekturgeschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 13 (1878): 289-304, 321-333, 364-375; Gustav Ebe, *Die Spät-Renaissance: Kunstgeschichte der europäischen Länder von der Mitte des 16. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1&2 (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1886); and Amico Ricci, *Storia dell'architettura in Italia*, 3 vols. (Modena: Regio-Ducal Camera, 1857-1859).

¹² Gurlitt, “Zum Wesen des Barock. Eine Auseinandersetzung,” cited above, 292.

in which the term “painterly” (*malerisch*) was being repeatedly defined and re-defined by an array of art historians, it was impossible to answer the seemingly simple question: what is the Baroque?

What Gurlitt failed to see was that since the days he had gone hunting for it in the streets of Rome in the early 1880s, the Baroque had transformed from being a stylistic designation to a concept crucial to art history’s attempts to define its disciplinary project and its role at the university. In this sense, questions about the origins of the Baroque or its geographical and temporal boundaries, were always inflected by disciplinary concerns and anxieties. The controversy surrounding the Baroque in German-speaking countries at the end of the nineteenth century—involving such important art historians as Heinrich Wölfflin, August Schmarsow, and Alois Riegl among others—could therefore be just as easily understood as a debate regarding the methods and tasks of art history, its position with respect to the other disciplines at the university, and how it was going to define its cultural role within a modern society.

Consider the transformation from Wölfflin’s 1888 *Renaissance und Barock* to his widely influential *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915, *Principles of Art History*). The pair of oppositions that Wölfflin used in the former to distinguish a linear style from a painterly style and Renaissance art from the Baroque had quietly transformed by 1915 into “principles of art history,” which were meant to serve as the foundation of art historical analysis regardless of time and place.¹³ The entire history of art after the Middle Ages, Wölfflin argued in the later book, could be understood in terms of this opposition.¹⁴ Given how central this book remained in art historical pedagogy throughout the twentieth century, the Baroque must have therefore occupied as important a place in the subconscious of modern art history as it did in modern art. Even when

¹³ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der Neueren Kunst* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1915). Translated by M.D. Hottinger as *Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* (New York: Dover, 1950). This translation is more reliable.

¹⁴ Wölfflin, “Vorwort” in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, cited above, vi. The foreword to the first edition of the book does not appear in the English translation.

Wölfflinian formalism was vehemently rejected, one could argue, twentieth-century art history was haunted by the Baroque in its methodologies.¹⁵

But why the Baroque? If Wölfflin's primary motivation was to make an argument about stylistic change, as he claimed in both books, why did he not write about more dramatic transformations in the history of art, but went to pains to contrive a contrast between the Renaissance and the Baroque? The boundaries between the two, as subsequent art historians have frequently reminded us, are too unstable to merit such forceful contrast.¹⁶ The artists who were considered representatives of the Baroque certainly did not perceive of a break as dramatic as the one imagined by Wölfflin and his contemporaries. The answer to why the Baroque occupied a central role in the art historical discourse at the end of the nineteenth century is to be found in what art historians believed to be the nature of the Baroque and how it related to the question of experience in modern society. These historians theorized the Baroque in terms that were strikingly similar to those devised by the new aesthetics that I have examined in the previous chapters. Germanic art history was simultaneously fascinated and repulsed by the Baroque—particularly by

¹⁵ The literature on Wölfflin is vast. I will limit myself here to the intersection of Wölfflin and the Baroque: Michael Ann Holly, "Imagining the Baroque" in Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996): 91-111; Michael Ann Holly, "Wölfflin and the Imagining of the Baroque" in Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations, eds. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994): 347-64; Martin Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," Representations 27 (Summer 1989): 172-187; Marshall Brown, "The Classic is the Baroque: On the Principle of Wölfflin's Art History," Critical Inquiry 9.2 (December 1982): 379-402; Joan Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," Art Journal 42.4 (Winter 1982): 292-300; Margaret Iversen, "Politics and the Historiography of Art History: Wölfflin's Classic Art," Oxford Art Journal 4.1 (July 1981): 31-34; and the dated but still interesting Carlo Antoni, "Heinrich Wölfflin" in From History to Sociology. The Transition in German Historical Thinking (Detroit: Wayne University Press, [1940] 1959): 207-245.

¹⁶ Panofsky noted, for example, that compared to Mannerism, which Wölfflin completely ignored, the Baroque signaled "a new tendency towards clarity, natural simplicity, and even equilibrium." According to Panofsky, "...the Baroque is not the decline, let alone the end of what we call the Renaissance era. It is in reality the second great climax of this period and, at the same time, the beginning of a fourth era, which may be called 'Modern' with a capital M. It is the only phase of Renaissance civilization in which this civilization overcame its inherent conflicts not by just smoothing them away (as did the classic Cinquecento), but by realizing them consciously and transforming them into subjective emotional energy with all the consequences of this subjectivization.... [The Baroque] lasted, roughly speaking, up to the time when Goethe died and the first railroads and industrial plants were built.... The rise of these new forces, not the Baroque movement, means the real end of the Renaissance, and the same time the beginning of our own epoch of history, an epoch that is still struggling for an expression both in life and in art, and that will be named and judged by the generations to come—provided that it does not put an end to all generations to come." Erwin Panofsky, "What is Baroque?" (Unpublished lecture notes) in Three Essays on Style, ed. Irving Lavin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995) 88, before 23.

baroque architecture's, ability to both depict and awaken effects (*Wirkungen*). Note how Wölfflin employs of the terminology of the new aesthetic discourse in comparing three paintings in his book *Renaissance und Barock*:

...[Baroque's] massiveness is complemented everywhere by movement that is heightened to a state of tumultuousness and violence. In fact, the art concerns itself exclusively with the representation of the animated (*Bewegten*). In this movement an increasing hastiness and an acceleration of action is to be observed. One need only compare representations of the Ascension. In Titian Christ is gently lifted upwards; in Corregio he rushes heavenwards; while Agostino Caracci makes him almost bolt to Heaven. The ideal is no longer a contented Being (*befriedigtes Sein*) but rather a state of agitation (*Erregung*). Everywhere emotional action is demanded. What was previously the simple and effortless utterance of a strong, living nature must now be expressed with passionate exertion (*leidenschaftliche Anstrengung*).... How characteristic is the transformation of Michelangelo's Sistine Slaves into those of Carracci in the Galleria Farnese. What restlessness, what contortions! Any voluntary movement becomes cumbersome and sluggish and requires extraordinary energy. At the same time the individual members are not independent and free but the rest of the body is also partially drawn into the movement. The emotion, heightened to the point of extreme ecstasy and wild rapture cannot be expressed uniformly by the whole body. The sensation breaks out with violence in certain organs while the rest of the body remains subjected only to gravity. However, this enormous expenditure of energy is by no means a sign of powerful corporeality. On the contrary, the action of the voluntary organs of movement is deficient; the mental impulses cannot master the body. The two instances, the body (*Körper*) and will (*Wille*), have parted company. It is as if these persons are no longer masters of their own body (*Leib*), they can no longer permeate them with their will.¹⁷

The Baroque, according to this description, was tumultuous, violent, and overwhelming; it created powerful emotions and a state of intoxication and ecstasy. Its theatrical effects impacted the musculature of the body while the conscious mind became paralyzed. If Renaissance was the art of calm and beautiful Being, Wölfflin argued, the Baroque "wants to carry us away with the force of the affect—immediate and overwhelming."¹⁸ The Baroque suspended voluntary action, severed the harmonious union between mind and body, weakened the will, and thereby made the self subject to the whims of

¹⁷ Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, cited above, 65-66. I will refer to the page numbers in the German original throughout this chapter.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

unconscious bodily movements. Wölfflin's self-declared motivation for writing the book was to "observe the symptoms of decline" in the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque and to identify the laws, if there were any, in the Baroque's "wildness and arbitrariness" (*Verwilderung und Willkür*).¹⁹ The Baroque, Wölfflin concluded at the end of a chapter, was "a search for the intimidating and overwhelming" and an instance of the Sublime (*das Erhabene*). Its desire for the colossal had a pathological effect.²⁰ For these reasons, Wölfflin noted, one could hardly fail to recognize the affinities between the Italian Baroque and the modern age: the manner in which Richard Wagner's music appealed to the emotions, he claimed, proved his point.²¹

Similarly, Gurlitt argued in his earlier study that the emotions (*Gemütsbewegungen*) that baroque architecture sought to awaken in the churchgoers were the same as those stirred up by its sister art of music. According to Gurlitt, the Baroque "affect[ed] the sensations of the nerves more than the deliberations of the brain"; it was marked by the "prevalence of disposition (*Stimmung*) over form, a capability to surround the spirit without stimulating it to individual observation, the dreamlike universals."²² Lecturing on the Baroque in Vienna a few years later, the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl compared Italian art to Germanic art along similar lines:

Like all Christian art, Italian art depicts acts and consequences of inner movements (*innere Bewegungen*) and psychic impulses, but it places the main emphasis on the outer acts. Germanic art depicts the same, but it stresses the psychic movement; it describes psychic movements as the motives of corporeal acts. That means from the outset that the psychic in Germanic *Kunstwollen* is the stronger. The psychic is the incorporeal, intangible, immaterial.... Now this psychic is heightened in Italian Baroque art—an approximation of the Nordic. However, the corporeal activity is heightened in equal measure. This is indelibly Italian: the stronger the inner excitement, the stronger it must vent its steam. We perceive the co-existence of the two elements as contradiction. Praying figure [in the Baroque]: inner psychic excitement heightened compared to

¹⁹ Ibid., iii.

²⁰ Ibid., 30. The last sentence of this chapter curiously disappeared from the English translation: "One could speak of the *pathological effect* of the colossal." (Emphasis in the original)

²¹ Ibid., 73.

²² Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien*, cited above, 227.

the Renaissance but so is outer movement—hence, convulsive twitchings. Compare this to Rembrandt: the more heartfelt his figures pray, the calmer they become on the outside, and the less outer activity, the less corporeal movement.²³

Riegl was no less ambivalent about the Baroque than his colleagues. “The extraordinary that the Baroque represents,” Riegl observed, “we do not understand it, it does not convince us, it contains a contradiction, has an untrue effect, and hence we find it miraculous.”²⁴ According to Riegl, one encountered a similar extraordinariness in the art of antiquity and the Renaissance, but the Baroque repelled the viewer, in the same way that a praying figure whose compulsive movements were perceived as being repugnant. Finally, placing nationalism before Catholicism, Riegl concluded: “We see [in the Baroque] only an effect and no corresponding cause, and that disturbs us Northerners.”²⁵ Still, Riegl explained, baroque art was worth studying not only because the Viennese architecture, with which he was surrounded, had its roots in its Italian counterpart but also because he saw the Baroque as the precursor of modern art.²⁶

The fascination of German-speaking art historians with the Baroque at the end of the nineteenth century, I will argue, was part and parcel of the new aesthetics that re-defined aesthetic experience as kinaesthetic response. These art historians’ characterization of the Baroque as disorderly, overly emotional, and irrational was a cautionary tale in disguise: although stated only indirectly, the Baroque presented obvious parallels to academic elites’ perception of mass culture at the turn of the century. As my discussion

²³ Alois Riegl, Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom, eds. Arthur Burda and Max Dvorak (Vienna: Anton Schroll & Co., 1908) 4. The book was prepared posthumously from lecture notes taken during the 1894/1895 winter semester. The section surveying the existing literature on the Baroque (“Literatur,” p. 9-16) is also very useful. For Wölfflin’s review of the book, see Heinrich Wölfflin, “Alois Riegls Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom,” Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft 31 (1908): 356-357. It would be an interesting project to analyze Riegl’s canonical text on monuments through the same lens of “effects.” See Alois Riegl, “Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen und seine Entstehung” [1903] in Gesammelte Aufsätze (Augsburg and Vienna: B. Filzer, 1929): 144-193.

²⁴ Riegl, Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom, cited above, 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.* There is much historical work to be done to understand what role perceptions of Catholicism played in cultural debates in German-speaking countries during this period. Almost all of the German art historians writing about the Baroque were Protestant and middle class. (Riegl was Austrian and Catholic.) It is significant that these historians were simultaneously fascinated by the Baroque and repulsed by it at a time when the consequences of the *Kulturkampf* were still felt.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6, 1.

of the role of the painterly (*malerisch*) in baroque architecture should make clear, particularly alarming was the deterioration of the intellect that seemed to characterize both baroque and modern modes of perception. This was a moment when universities were becoming relatively more accessible to those outside of the *Bildungsbürgertum* and when art was consumed by an ever-growing public who traveled, visited museums and galleries, and bought books, journals, and prints of artworks. As we will see, on the one hand, the academic elites of Imperial Germany were displeased that the attentive and contemplative mode of beholding, which was associated with *Bildung*, were disappearing in this process of democratization. On the other hand, however, they invented new techniques of beholding, which were borrowed from mass culture but which sought to ‘tame’ the ‘wildness’ (*Verwilderung*) that they associated with new forms of experience. As I will illustrate through the example of the art historical slide lecture, first introduced in the 1870s, these new techniques were designed to reverse the intellectual damage which, it was believed, was being done by modern mass culture. The Baroque, in other words, was the guise under which art historians at the end of the nineteenth century debated and tried out new forms of experience that would be adequate to modernity.

On the *Malerisch*: Schmarsow and Wölfflin

The simple seeing (*Sehen*) is always a relatively unconscious process, for the impression received is still undifferentiated.... It is necessary to break up this dull mass of the impression and find our bearings amid its relationships. We achieve this by muscular activity, by moving the eye while looking at the object: that is, by scanning (*Schauen*). Scanning is a much more active process than seeing, because it does not simply rely on the natural impulse to seek a relative whole; instead, our eye wanders up and down, left and right, making contact with the individual dimensions. In this process we can distinguish two approaches: the first is linear, whereby I define the contours with my fingertips, so to speak; the second (this is the natural and less reflective approach of the two) is a mapping of the masses, whereby I run my hand, as it were, over the planes, convexities and concavities of the object, the paths of light, the slopes, ridges, and hollows of the mountain.²⁷

²⁷ Robert Vischer, *Über das optische Formgefühl. Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik* (Leipzig: Hermann Credner, 1873). Translated as “On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics” in *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-93*, introd. and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994) 93-94.

It was thus that Robert Vischer (1847-1933), art historian and aesthetician, differentiated between linear and planar modes of optical scanning, which he associated with the sense of touch, and contrasted with a passive, unresponsive seeing. The linear related to drawing, he wrote, while the planar was best manifested in the silhouette and the relief.²⁸ Claiming to draw their arguments from contemporaneous physiological research, other theorists of aesthetic perception in the last decades of the nineteenth century repeated a similar set of oppositions.²⁹ Most frequently cited was the sculptor Adolf Hildebrand's (1847-1921) distinction between a near view (*Nahbild*), which was perceived kinaesthetically over time, and a far view (*Fernbild*), perceived instantaneously and preferred by Hildebrand for its graphic clarity.³⁰ At the turn of the twentieth century, Alois Riegl would use very similar categories to make an historical argument about the progression of architecture through centuries: the three modes of seeing—haptic (*Nahsicht*), haptic-optical (*Normalsicht*), and optical (*Fernsicht*)—corresponded to the spatial conceptions inherent in the Egyptian pyramid, the Greek temple, and the Roman Pantheon respectively.³¹

It was Wölfflin's ingenuity in *Renaissance und Barock* to take the term "painterly" (*malerisch*)—an adjective which had been used intermittently by Burckhardt to describe baroque architecture—and integrate it into a discourse of psychological aesthetics. *Malerisch* became one pole in Wölfflin's system of oppositional pairs, which simultaneously described different modes of perception and different styles.³²

²⁸ Vischer, "On the Optical Sense of Form," cited above, 94.

²⁹ Although these aestheticians often marshaled evidence from the natural sciences to support their arguments, it would be incorrect to claim that they used the most recent findings of scientists. Stereoscopic vision, for example, was frequently brought up in such texts although the idea that the eye perceived stereoscopically had been discredited at least since Helmholtz's widely influential treatise on optics. See Hermann von Helmholtz, *Handbuch der physiologischen Optik*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: L. Voss, 1867).

³⁰ Adolf Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg: Heitz & Mündel, 1893). Translated as "The Problem of Form" in *Empathy, Form and Space*, cited above, 227-279. See Chapter 3 for a longer discussion of Hildebrand's aesthetics.

³¹ Alois Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* (Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1901). Translated into English by Rolf Winkes as *Late Roman Art Industry* (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985).

³² The term *malerisch* was used by Burckhardt in *Der Cicerone*, cited above, and in *Cultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860). However, Burckhardt was by no means the only scholar using the term. See, for example, Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842) 639. For later elaborations on the *malerisch*, see Albert Erich Brinckmann, *Die Baukunst des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin-Neubabelsberg: Akademische

Throughout Wölfflin's writings, the painterly (*malerisch*) was opposed to the linear (*linear*, sometimes *zeichnerisch*) style, represented by the Baroque and the Renaissance respectively.³³ Of the four baroque qualities that Wölfflin enumerated in *Renaissance und Barock*—the painterly style, the grand style, massiveness, and movement—*malerisch* was the most comprehensive category, which subsumed all the other categories and took up the most space in the book.

Paradoxically, the argument for the painterliness of the Baroque was made primarily through architecture. "The essential characteristic of baroque architecture," Wölfflin wrote, "is its painterly quality." By this he meant architecture's ability to produce effects (*Wirkungen*), which in fact belonged to the medium of painting.³⁴ Renaissance architecture pursued tectonic and *plastisch* forms, which were always apprehended through the sense of touch in reference to solid volumes. Baroque architecture, by contrast, sought to dissolve its tectonic nature and strove after lighting effects (*Beleuchtungseffekte*) and atmospheric dispositions (*Luftstimmungen*). In the typical Wölfflinian style, *malerisch* was best explained through its assumed opposite, the linear. The sketch was the most unmediated expression of artistic intention in the Baroque:

Where the linear style employs the pen or the silver-point, the painterly uses charcoal, red chalk, or the broad water-color brush. The earlier style is entirely linear: every object has a sharp unbroken outline and the main expressive element is the contour. The later style works with broad, vague masses, the contours are barely indicated; the lines are tentative and are made of repetitive strokes, or do not exist at all. In this style, not only individual figures but the entire composition are made up of areas of light and dark; a single tone serves to hold together whole groups of objects and contrast them with other groups. While the old style was conceived in terms of line and its purpose was to express a beautiful and flowing linear harmony, the painterly style thinks only in masses, and its elements are light and shade. Light and shade contain by nature a very strong element of movement. Unlike the contour, which gives the eye a definite and

Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1915) and Paul Frankl, *Die Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1914) 139-142. Also see Heinrich Wölfflin, "Ueber den Begriff des Malerischen," *Logos. Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur* 4 (1913): 1-7.

³³ In the nationalistic context of the 1930s, the set of dichotomies describing the Renaissance and the Baroque were transformed into Italian and German form for feeling respectively. See Heinrich Wölfflin, *Die Kunst der Renaissance. Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1931).

³⁴ Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, cited above, 15.

easily comprehensible direction to follow, a mass of light tends to a movement of dispersal, leading the eye to and fro...this, basically, is how the painterly style evokes an illusion of constant change.³⁵

The distinguishing mark of the painterly style for Wölfflin, in other words, was the wanderings of the eye. While the linear style guided the eye by offering it a clearly delineated track to follow, the painterly ignored all rules of regularity and caused the eye to move back and fro in a disorderly fashion.³⁶ “The *malerisch* style first begins when the contour lines recede for the attention,” Wölfflin wrote. In the Baroque “the eye no longer runs along the contour but rather jumps from light to light from darkness to darkness.”³⁷ Confronted with the painterly, the eye was thrown into a state of disarray; half-closed, it was no longer receptive to the charms of a line, Wölfflin noted, but demanded vague effects instead.³⁸ Consequently, the Baroque failed that “wonderful intimacy of re-experiencing (*nacherleben*) of every form that was unique to the Renaissance.”³⁹ This was how the Baroque produced its distinctively painterly “impression of movement” (*Eindruck der Bewegung*). In the Baroque, Wölfflin continued, the erratic movements of the eye created a sense of spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*) that was alien to the linear style, which achieved three dimensionality by layering planes as if in a stereoscope. By contrast, “in the painterly style... all flat areas acquire[d] a round plasticity (*körperliche Rundung*) with a view to effects of light and shade.”⁴⁰ More alarmingly, however, the eye quickly grew tired of what it could not fully grasp at first glance. The erratic movements of the eye ultimately led to a deterioration of attention and mental skills. The Baroque, then, resulted in the disintegration of the will-centered, attentive, unitary self. It sacrificed the clear *Anschauung* of the Renaissance for

³⁵ Ibid., 17.

³⁶ Ibid., 22.

³⁷ Wölfflin, “Ueber den Begriff des Malerischen,” cited above, 2.

³⁸ Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, cited above, 73.

³⁹ Ibid., 71. As we have seen in Chapter 2, *nacherleben* (as opposed to *nachahmen*) was a critical term at the Debschitz School.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

atmospheric effects and *Stimmung*.⁴¹ It was no wonder, Wölfflin concluded, that “all important baroque artists suffered from nervousness.”⁴²

In his 1897 book *Barock und Rokoko*, August Schmarsow (1853-1936), who taught Renaissance art history at the University of Leipzig, openly took issue with Wölfflin’s account of the Baroque.⁴³ After Schmarsow praised Wölfflin for furthering an understanding of the Baroque as a style in its own right, he disagreed with him on several points. Firstly, Schmarsow believed that Wölfflin had overstated the differences between the “calmness of being” (*Ruhe des Seins*) attributed to the Renaissance and the Baroque’s

⁴¹ Ibid., 71.

⁴² Ibid., 30.

⁴³ August Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung über das Malerische in der Architektur* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897). A much less familiar name than Wölfflin and Riegl today, Schmarsow was one of the most prominent German art historians at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1877 he started working at the Prussian engraving collection *Kupferstichkabinett* in Berlin on the construction of a photographic archive. After spending some time in Italy, he completed his *Habilitationsschrift* in Göttingen, which resulted in 1880 in the book *Raffael und Pinturicchio in Siena*. In Göttingen he got involved in a controversy with Anton Springer and Giovanni Morelli on the authenticity of a Renaissance sketchbook. In 1885 he was invited to succeed Robert Vischer at the University of Breslau. Because he found the teaching conditions there unbearable, he started to take regular trips with a group of students—among them Aby Warburg—to Florence, where he subsequently founded the *Deutsches kunsthistorisches Institut*, based on the model of the German archeological institute in Rome. In 1893 he was invited to teach at the University of Leipzig, where he delivered the inaugural lecture, “Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung” (The Essence of Architectural Creation), arguably his best known essay today. While his early work focused primarily on the *Quattrocento*, in his later work at the University of Leipzig Schmarsow devoted more attention to aesthetic questions. In 1919 he was forced to resign from his position because of accusations of plagiarism. What remains from his papers at the University of Leipzig mostly concerns this plagiarism case. Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, PA 0933.

For secondary literature on Schmarsow, see Jasper Cepl, “August Schmarsows Barock Und Rokoko—Ein Beitrag zur ästhetischen Erziehung des Modernen Architekten” in *Barock und Rokoko. Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung über Das Malerische in der Architektur* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2001): 1-22; Eleftherios Ikonou, “August Schmarsow: Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft. Nachwort” in *Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft. Am Übergang vom Altertum zum Mittelalter* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1998): 351-364; Mitchell W. Schwarzer, “The Emergence of Architectural Space: August Schmarsow’s Theory of *Raumgestaltung*,” *Assemblage* 15 (1991): 48-61; Ernst Ullmann, “Die Ersten fünf Dezennien der Kunstgeschichte an der Alma Mater Lipsiensis” in “...Die Ganze Welt Im Kleinen.” *Kunst Und Kunstgeschichte in Leipzig* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1989): 285-96; Ernst Ullmann, “August Schmarsows Beitrag Zur Architekturtheorie,” in *Künstlerisches und kunstwissenschaftliches Erbe Als Gegenwartsaufgabe* (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 1975); Ernst Ullmann, “Der Beitrag August Schmarsows zur Architekturtheorie,” *Habilitationsschrift*, Karl-Marx Universität, Leipzig, 1967; Ernst Ullmann, “August Schmarsow” in *Bedeutende Gelehrte in Leipzig*, ed. Max Steinmetz (Leipzig: Karl-Marx Universität, 1965): 109-15. For older secondary literature, see Johannes Jahn, “August Schmarsow zum Gedächtnis,” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 30 (1936): 179-82; Oskar Wulff, “August Schmarsow zum 80. Geburtstag,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 2 (1933): 207-09; and Oskar Wulff, “Zu August Schmarsows Rücktritt,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* (Leipzig) 55 (1919/1920): 318-20.

“restlessness of becoming” (*Unruhe des Werdens*). For Schmarsow these two conflicting elements co-existed in the Baroque: the restlessness could not be present without the calmness.⁴⁴ If there were indeed such radical differences between the two styles, Schmarsow argued, they needed to be understood independently of any ethical value judgments. The Baroque, he maintained, was not a degeneration of the classical ideal, as Wölfflin had proposed, but rather a modification (*Abwandlung*) of Classicism.⁴⁵ Secondly, Schmarsow argued that the transition from the Baroque to Rococo was a much more dramatic change than that from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Rococo not only dissolved the massiveness of baroque architecture into the playful lightness of interiors, but also did away with the self-idolatry inherent in both Renaissance and baroque architectures, a tendency which was best illustrated in the palaces designed for the *Roi Soleil*.⁴⁶

Schmarsow’s sharpest critique, however, was reserved for Wölfflin’s use of the term *malerisch* to describe the essence of baroque architecture.⁴⁷ To understand the true meaning of the term and to correctly distinguish it from the term *plastisch*, he maintained, it was necessary to appreciate Schmarsow’s tri-dimensional system of the arts. Schmarsow claimed that Wölfflin was simply mistaken and confused about the differences between *malerisch* and *plastisch*. Since the 1890s Schmarsow had been developing an aesthetic theory which was predicated on the distinctions between what he considered to be the three primary arts (painting, sculpture, and architecture), which were determined, above all, by how they corresponded to the three axes of the human body.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko*, cited above, 102-103.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 316-374.

⁴⁷ For Wölfflin’s critical review of Schmarsow’s work, see Heinrich Wölfflin, “Theorie und Technik der Kunst” (Review of *Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung* by August Schmarsow), *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 17 (1894): 141-142.

⁴⁸ After Schmarsow started teaching at the University of Leipzig, he wrote three books on aesthetics as part of the series *Beiträgen zur Aesthetik der bildenden Künste*. In addition to *Barock und Rokoko* already mentioned above, these are as follows: *Zur Frage nach dem Malerischen. Sein Grundbegriff und seine Entwicklung* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1896) and *Plastik, Malerei und Reliefkunst in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1899). One could add to this trilogy his *Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft. Am Übergang vom Altertum zum Mittelalter* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1905). Each book was written as a polemic against an influential text: *Barock und Rokoko* against Wölfflin’s *Renaissance und Barock*, *Zur Frage nach dem Malerischen* against Max Klinger’s article “Malerei und Zeichnung,” and *Plastik*,

The first (vertical) dimension was the realm of sculpture, the second (horizontal) of painting, and finally the third dimension, which involved movement and direction, of architecture.⁴⁹ According to this system, a change in style occurred every time there was a change in the relationship between these three arts and the three axes: when the horizontal became dominant in French rococo landscaping, for example, or when Michelangelo's architecture verged on sculpture in his work at St. Peter's. "Whoever does not recognize the value of dimensions in the arts of spatial *Anschauung*," Schmarsow argued (undoubtedly with Wölfflin in mind), "has to navigate in the sea of art history without a compass."⁵⁰ According to Schmarsow, it was necessary to distinguish between the two phases of the Baroque. In the first phase Michelangelo's work displayed a *plastisch* tendency and in the second phase Bernini showed signs of a *malerisch* style, but it was not until the Rococo that architecture became truly *malerisch*. The relationship between the Rococo palace and garden revealed a renunciation of the vertical and an affirmation of the horizontal, which for Schmarsow was the very definition of *malerisch*.⁵¹

By his own account, Schmarsow drew his theories from the architectural theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-1879). Earlier in the century, Semper had developed an influential system for the arts, linking the principles of proportion, symmetry, and

Malerie und Reliefkunst against Hildebrand's Das Problem der Form. Schmarsow wrote his Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft before Wölfflin wrote his Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe, but a comparison is instructive. The former is organized according to ahistorical categories such as symmetry, proportions, rhythm, and monumentality whereas the latter's structure is determined, as explained above, by the contrast between the Renaissance and the Baroque. Schmarsow's tendency to direct his arguments against a colleague won him many enemies. Consider the review written by the Austrian art historian Franz Wickoff. Wickoff not only found Schmarsow's Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft unreadable but he also argued that "[Schmarsow had] no idea about historical research" and that he should be left alone "to live in his little house of aesthetics." According to Wickoff, Schmarsow concerned himself, like scholastics, only with concepts. Franz Wickoff: "Besprechung von August Schmarsow: Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft," Kunstgeschichtlicher Anzeiger 2 (1905): 103-106.

⁴⁹ August Schmarsow, "Ueber den Werth der Dimensionen im menschlichen Raumgebilde," Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften 48 (Leipzig: 1896) 44-61. Here too Schmarsow attacked Wölfflin by arguing that architecture had less to do with architectural masses (*Körper*) and more to do with a conception of space.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵¹ Schmarsow, Barock und Rokoko, cited above, 334

direction to the three dimensions.⁵² Schmarsow placed the organization of the human body in the center of all art: “corporeal feeling,” he wrote, “is, above all, the source of sensation and the final state assumed by form.”⁵³ According to Schmarsow, the expressive capabilities of the body (*Ausdrucksbewegungen*)—facial gestures, bodily gestures, postures, pantomime, dance, and ultimately language—were the source of all artistic activity.⁵⁴ This thesis worked best in the case of architecture. Starting with his 1893 inaugural lecture at the University of Leipzig, Schmarsow repeatedly argued that the entire history of architecture could be understood as the history of space.⁵⁵ In his writings Schmarsow described architecture as the creator of space (*Raumgestalterin*) originating from an elusive “precious kernel”:⁵⁶

⁵² Schmarsow was clearly influenced by Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder praktische Aesthetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860). Schmarsow worked with Semper’s ideas at a time when the alleged “materialism” of the so-called “Semper school,” if not Semper himself, was censured by many of his art historian colleagues, including Riegl and Wölfflin. However, despite the similarity of some of Schmarsow’s key concepts to those of Semper, the flavor of their writings and, one could argue, their ultimate goals are strikingly different. In Semper, one always finds an interest in the arts’ social occupations (in his elaboration on crafts, for example); Schmarsow’s aesthetic theorizations, by contrast, are abstract and usually devoid of such concerns except in the most general sense.

⁵³ Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko*, cited above, 259. Schmarsow’s dissertation, completed in 1877, was a linguistic study of the works of Leibniz and Schottelius.

⁵⁴ See Schmarsow, *Unser Verhältnis zu den bildenden Künsten. Sechs Vorträge über Kunst und Erziehung* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903).

⁵⁵ The argument was first made in Schmarsow’s inaugural lecture at the University of Leipzig but was subsequently repeated in a variety of ways in a series of subsequent articles and books. See Schmarsow, *Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung*, (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1894). Translated as “The Essence of Architectural Creation” in *Empathy, Form and Space*, cited above, 281-297. Also see Schmarsow, “Raumgestaltung als Wesen Der Architektonischen Schöpfung,” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 9.1 (1914): 66-95.

⁵⁶ Today Schmarsow is remembered less by art historians and more by architectural historians, who credit him for being among the first to formulate the concept of space in modern architecture. Schmarsow, along with Riegl, is seen to have come up with ideas, which were later developed by the likes of Paul Frankl and Siegfried Giedion. See Akos Moravanszky, “Die Wahrnehmung des Raumes” in *Architekturtheorie im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine kritische Anthologie*, ed. Akos Moravanszky (Vienna and New York: Springer, 2003): 121-46; Anthony Vidler, “Space, Time, and Movement” in *At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture*, ed. Russell Ferguson (New York: Harry Abrams and Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Arts, 1998): 100-125; Bettina Kohler, “Architekturgeschichte als Geschichte der Raumwahrnehmung,” [Architecture History as the History of Spatial Experience] *Daidalos* 67 (1998): 36-43; Cornelius van de Ven, *Space in Architecture: The Evolution of a New Idea in the Theory and History of Modern Movements* (Assen, Maastricht, and Wolfeboro, NH: Van Gorcum, 1987); and Paul Zucker, “The Aesthetics of Space in Architecture, Sculpture, and City Planning,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 4.1 (September 1945): 12-19.

The intuited form of space, which surrounds us wherever we may be and which we then always erect around ourselves and consider more necessary than the form of our own body, consists of the residues of sensory experience to which the muscular sensations (*Muskelgefühle*) of our body, the sensitivity of our skin, and the structure of our body all contribute. As soon as we have learned to experience ourselves and ourselves alone as the center of this space, whose coordinates intersect in us, we have found the precious kernel (*wertvoller Kern*), the initial capital investment so to speak, on which architectural creation is based—even if for the moment it seems no more impressive than a lucky penny. Once the ever-active imagination takes hold of this germ and develops it according to the laws of the directional axes inherent in even the smallest nucleus of every spatial idea, the grain of mustard seed grows into a tree and an entire world surrounds us. Our sense of space (*Raumgefühl*) and spatial imagination (*Raumphantasie*) press toward spatial creation; they seek their satisfaction in art. We call this architecture; in plain words, it is the creatress of space (*Raumgestalterin*).⁵⁷

The root of the disagreement between Schmarsow and Wölfflin ultimately lay in their understanding of the nature of aesthetic reception in the Baroque. Whereas Wölfflin accounted for the painterly exclusively in terms of optical activity, Schmarsow considered the entire body to be engaged in the experience of the Baroque.⁵⁸ Wölfflin's visual bias would become more evident as his career progressed: in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* he would declare that the transition from the tactile picture (*Tastbild*) to the visual picture (*Sehbild*) was the “most fundamental reorientation that art history knew.”⁵⁹ By contrast, looking back on his book *Barock und Rokoko* at the end of his career, Schmarsow still maintained that a *Kunstwissenschaft*, which refused to pay attention to bodily movements and tactile sensations but insisted on approaching art through the sense of sight alone, would never understand things in relationship to the space surrounding them.⁶⁰ For Schmarsow, the spatial and kinaesthetic experiences of the world received through the whole body was irreducible; for Wölfflin the third dimension could always be reproduced—as in a stereoscope—in two dimensions. It is no coincidence that Wölfflin's books, especially the later ones, were richly illustrated while

⁵⁷ August Schmarsow, “The Essence of Architectural Creation,” cited above, 286-287.

⁵⁸ Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko*, cited above, 43-45.

⁵⁹ Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, cited above, 24.

⁶⁰ Schmarsow, “Rückschau beim Eintritt ins siebzigste Lebensjahr” in *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, ed. Johannes Jahn (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924) 18.

Schmarsow never included images in his texts. As Riegl argued in his comparison of the two art historians, Wölfflin argued with clarity in the Renaissance style while Schmarsow's long-winded arguments followed the logic of the Baroque.⁶¹

Bodily Experience in the Age of Mass Culture

Whether out of youthful fervor or intellectual inexperience, Wölfflin was much more enthusiastic about the body's kinaesthetic response to forms at the beginning of his academic career.⁶² His 1886 dissertation *Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur* (Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture) openly questioned the visual bias deeply embedded in Western aesthetics.⁶³ Everyone knew that each building created a different impression (*Eindruck*), Wölfflin observed in the opening sentences of the dissertation, but how was it possible that architectonic forms could be the expression of something psychic, of a disposition (*Stimmung*)?⁶⁴ Wölfflin suggested that such a question could be answered only by means of a psychology of form, whose task would be to describe and analyze the psychic effects (*Wirkungen*) of artworks. "Were we only optically sentient beings," Wölfflin wrote, "then the aesthetic judgment of the physical world of bodies (*Körper*) would fail us."⁶⁵ Forms achieved their effects not by means of an "inexplicable self-projection" (*Selbstversetzung*) according to the young Wölfflin, but through a sympathetic response, a re-experiencing of forms (*nacherleben*).⁶⁶ Arguing that the intellectual factor in an artwork was meaningless for the expression of character, he pointed out in the dissertation that the effects of architecture worked with equal power on the layman and the educated alike.⁶⁷ He assumed that the ability to express and

⁶¹ Riegl, *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom*, cited above, 16.

⁶² For an intellectual biography of Wölfflin, see Joan Goldhammer Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography," Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

⁶³ Heinrich Wölfflin, "Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur" [1886] in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Joseph Gartner (Basle: Benno, Schwabe & Co., 1946): 13-47. Originally the text was Wölfflin's dissertation at the philosophy faculty of the University of Munich, completed in 1886. Translated as "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture" in *Empathy, Form and Space*, cited above, 149-190. I will refer to the German version.

⁶⁴ Wölfflin, "Prolegomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur," cited above, 13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 26, 13.

understand gestures was both universal and inborn: children cried when they saw someone else crying, because they were yet devoid of a will, and “the impression [was] so hard upon them.”⁶⁸ It was only later with education and rational contemplation that one learned to assert one’s will, sustain one’s attention, and not give in to the influence of such impressions.

Wölfflin furthermore argued in his dissertation that because expressions were not limited to the surfaces of the body but permeated the entire body, when one imitated an expression, one felt it.⁶⁹ Wölfflin then went on to discuss the effects of buildings upon the human body: he described at length how bodies breathed unevenly in Baroque churches, stretched upwards in Gothic cathedrals, and relaxed in front of Greek temples. According to the text, the eye did not simply enjoy architectonic forms from a distant fixed point, but the body that entered architecture’s field of influence was shaken to its bones and stimulated throughout its muscles. The encounter with architecture delineated by Wölfflin in the text was thoroughly kinaesthetic. Penetrating deep into the inner organs, architectonic irregularity could disrupt blood circulation while asymmetry could inflict pain as severe as amputation:

Powerful columns bring about energetic innervation in us; our respiration conforms to the expansiveness or narrowness of spatial relations. We are stimulated (*innervieren*), as if we ourselves were the supporting columns and breathe as deeply and fully as if our chest were as wide as these halls....And when Goethe once remarked that we ought to sense the effect of a beautiful room, even if we were led through it blindfolded, he was expressing the very same idea: that the architectural impression, far from being some kind of “counting by the eye,” (*Zählen des Auges*) is essentially based on a direct bodily feeling.⁷⁰

This kind of direct encounter with an artwork, passionately advocated by the young Wölfflin and repudiated later in life, was of utmost importance to Schmarsow throughout his career. It was with faith in an unmediated interaction with artworks that Schmarsow established the Deutsches kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence in 1897 and was

⁶⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 18.

frequently in conflict with the institutions where he was teaching about taking leave for research trips.⁷¹ Looking back on his career in 1924, Schmarsow described this kind of face-to-face interaction with art—particularly with architecture—as being more important than any other art historical research method. He gave several examples for the usefulness of a direct encounter: one had to be physically present in situ, he claimed, to recognize the rhythmical organization of the nave of the upper church of St. Francesco in Assisi, to understand the ceiling and wall paintings by Sodoma in Subiaco, or to identify the *Biblia Pauperum Weigeliana* as the work of Konrad Witz.⁷² In a manner reminiscent of Fechner’s theory that beauty and authenticity were identical, Schmarsow maintained that the original artwork revealed itself exclusively through the bodily sensations that it caused and that, therefore, the art historian had to experience the work in a direct manner. He acknowledged that years of inner maturation and training were required for this kind of illuminating experience, but still the revealing insight (*Einsicht*) came instantaneously in a flash.⁷³ Referring once again to a valuable kernel, familiar from his descriptions of spatial feeling, Schmarsow described this corporeal experience as a religious revelation (*Offenbarung*):

[A fruitful knowledge of the essence of a monument would be made possible] not with a cursory glance or with an inquisitive examination; not with iconographic memory-work which would pigeonhole the present example in some manner; not with antiquarian scholarship, which would determine the date of origin or the school of influence. Rather it would depend—in devoted conformity to the existing specifications of the place and the task—on coming to terms with the idiosyncrasy of this artistic creation, on heightening the exchange with it or repeating ever new approaches until an *insightful experience* is carried out so happily and satisfactorily that one can be certain to have grasped the *valuable kernel*

⁷¹ For the history of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, see Hans W. Hubert, Das Kunsthistorische Institut in Florenz. Von der Gründung bis zum Hundertjährigen Jubiläum, 1897-1997 (Florence: Il Ventilabro, 1997). The institute is today part of the Max Planck Gesellschaft.

⁷² Schmarsow, “Rückschau beim Eintritt ins siebzigste Lebensjahr,” cited above, 14.

⁷³ “Insight” (*Einsicht*) was a phenomenological term used by Edmund Husserl to differentiate between an instantaneous seeing of essences and a kinaesthetic step-by-step following of motivation and causation. He used the term *Einsicht* for the former and *Einführung* for the latter. Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations (London and New York: Routledge). Originally published in German in 1900 as Logische Untersuchungen.

(*wervoller Kern*) and to be enjoying this organized form (*Ausgestaltung*) purely from all sides.⁷⁴

Compare Schmarsow's revelatory encounter with an artwork to the description of a similar experience by the American art historian and connoisseur Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) in Italy:

In the first place, many of the finest pictures left upon the altars for which they were painted are practically invisible. Even at the hours at which Baedeker advises or the local guide takes you to see them, they are often mere dim outlines, hidden in the gloom of overhanging arches or deep cornices. Or else the restorer's brush has converted them into sparkling mirrors of dusty varnish which are far more tantalizing than enjoyable. Every one will remember the impossibility of getting a good look at the great Bellini in San Zaccaria, and the Titian in the Gesuiti, the miseries of dazzling lights and obscuring shadows that make a visit to the Scuola di San Rocco a mingle cup of delight and discomfort, and the disappointments that attend the attempt to peer through the darkness that hides such pictures as the Bellini at San Francesco della Vigna, or the Sebastianos in San Bartolommeo in Rialto.⁷⁵

In other words, the direct, private, and insightful enjoyment of an artwork "from all sides"—an experience, which Schmarsow valued so highly—seemed to emerge at the very moment that others complained of this experience's demise. On the one hand, it was undeniable that artworks had become more accessible since the middle of the century. More members of the German middle classes could now take trips to Italy and Greece—with Winckelmann, Burckhardt, or more frequently, with the ubiquitous Baedeker guides in hand. By the turn of the century there were public museums and galleries in almost every major German city.⁷⁶ At home and abroad German middle

⁷⁴ Schmarsow, "Rückschau beim Eintritt ins siebzigste Lebensjahr," cited above, 13. (Emphasis added)

⁷⁵ Bernard Berenson, "Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Pictures," *Nation* 57.1480 (November 1893) 346; reprinted in *Art History Through the Camera's Lens*, Helene E. Roberts, ed. (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1995) 127.

⁷⁶ The numerous editions of the Baedeker guides is proof for how wide-spread tourism became in Germany after the middle of the nineteenth century. These guides claimed to appeal to an educated public: the art historians Cornelius Gurlitt and Anton Springer as well as the well known historian Theodor Mommsen were among those who contributed to the books. In the early twentieth century, German guidebooks started showing more variation in order to appeal to widening audiences: one could now find specialized guidebooks for hikers, women who were interested in shopping, aristocrats, or the working classes. See Rudy Koshar, "What Ought to Be Seen" Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33.3 (July 1998): 323-340; Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford: New York: Berg, 2000); Burkhart Lauterbach, "Baedeker und andere Reiseführer:

classes could now see original artworks as well as engravings, etchings, lithographs, and plaster casts of originals.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the purported immediacy of artworks seemed to be compromised by this process of democratization. One now had to stand with a crowd to view a poorly lit painting or, as Berenson recounted, endure tourist guides, Baedeker books, or simply the presence of other visitors, who disrupted the assumed privacy of the aesthetic experience.

It was for these reasons that Berenson seemed delighted to find out that professional photographers such as the Alinari Brothers from Florence and Domenico Anderson from Rome were undertaking projects to systematically document Italian monuments. He assumed that photographic reproduction—even with a technology that did not perfectly capture the gradations of color—could provide the scholar not only with better views but also with the possibility of replicating the on-site experience in the tranquility of his study.⁷⁸ Berenson’s views on photography, however, had little to do with enthusiasm for the democratizing potential of the medium. What he had in mind was certainly not the popular forms of photographic reproduction—the cheap prints collected by tourists, illustrated monographs, or popular journals such as *Kunst für Alle*—which might make the experience available to a larger audience, but high-quality photographs to be used by those who were engaged in serious art historical research at museums or universities.⁷⁹

Eine Problemskizze,” *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 85 (1989), 206-34; and Ulrike Pretzel, *Die Literaturform Reiseführer im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen am Beispiel des Rheins* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1995). On the cultural phenomenon of tourism in Germany and in general, also see Hermann Bausinger, Klaus Beyrer, and Gottfried Korff, eds. *Reisekultur. Von der Pilgerfahrt zum modernen Tourismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991); Christine Keitz, *Reisen als Leitbild. Die Entstehung des modernen Massentourismus in Deutschland* (Munich: Dt. Taschenbuch, 1997); Jozsef Böröcz, “Travel-Capitalism: The Structure of Europe and the Advent of the Tourist,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39.4 (1992), 708-41; and the influential study by Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976).

⁷⁷ For the history of museum reform movement at this time, see Alexis Joachimides, *Die Museumsreformbewegung in Deutschland und die Entstehung des modernen Museums 1880-1940* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 2001); Volker Plagemann, *Das deutsche Kunstmuseum, 1790-1870* (Munich, 1976); and Thomas W. Gaehtgens, *Die Berliner Museumsinsel im Deutschen Kaiserreich. Beiträge zur Kulturpolitik der Museen in der wilhelminischen Epoche* (Berlin: Dt. Kunstverlag, 1992).

⁷⁸ Berenson, “Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Pictures,” cited above, 346.

⁷⁹ Until the 1880s, photographs were harder and more expensive to reproduce than engravings which could be printed in large numbers. By contrast, during this early period, photographs had to be produced one by one; if they were used in a book, they were pasted by hand. See Trevor Fawcett, “Plane Surfaces and Solid

The use of photographs within art historical research as an alternative to first-hand experience with artworks had been common since the 1850s. Firms such as Alinari in Florence, Naya in Venice, and Braun in Dornach photographed original artworks and frequently held exclusive rights to reproducing them. Many museum officials, curators, conservators as well as critics and historians—the director of the National Gallery in London Charles Eastlake, the connoisseur Giovanni Morelli, and the historian Jacob Burckhardt among them—privately collected and used photographs in order to record the physical state of artworks and to determine their authenticity. As early as 1865, Hermann Grimm (1828-1901), professor of art history in Berlin, proposed establishing photographic libraries at universities for art historical research. Grimm was optimistic about the use of photography in art history. He argued that photography would do for paintings what plaster casts had done for sculpture. At the risk of infuriating the officials at Berlin's ever expanding museums, Grimm maintained that such study collections consisting of photographic reproductions were potentially more important than museums whose galleries were filled with originals. Here too what seemed appealing, above all, was the possibility to surpass the experience of the original: photographs allowed the scholar to “spread [them] out on the same table” Grimm noted, and “to compare them in a calm and unperturbed fashion.”⁸⁰

During the first Congress of Art Historians, which convened in Vienna in 1873, Anton Springer (1825-1891), who then taught art history in Leipzig, spearheaded the founding of the *Kunsthistorische Gesellschaft für photographische Publikationen* (Art Historical Society for Photographic Publications). One of the first activities of the *Gesellschaft* was to publish folios of high-quality photographic reproductions. Springer argued that “only when the infinitely rich treasure of drawings and sketches, which have hitherto remained buried within collections and have been inaccessible, are salvaged by photography can the historical-genetic method be emphatically emphasized and art history be given a

Bodies: Reproducing Three-Dimensional Art in the Nineteenth-Century” in *Art History Through the Camera's Lens*, cited above, 71.

⁸⁰ Hermann Grimm, “Werth der neueren Kunstgeschichte—Eine der wichtigsten historischen Hilfswissenschaften,” *Über Künstler und Kunstwerke* 1 (1865) 38.

deeper scientific basis.”⁸¹ Springer compared photography to the microscope: just as scientific activity had transformed from a mere description to a deeper understanding of nature with the microscope, photography would now elevate art history to a truly historical discipline.⁸² More controversial was the use of photographs for art historical instruction. The question came up during the aforementioned 1873 congress, but the issue was more comprehensively debated in the 1893 meeting in Nuremberg.⁸³ At a moment when the value of *Anschauungsunterricht* (visual instruction) was being discussed within other pedagogical circles, art historians started reflecting on ways to visually complement art historical instruction with plaster casts, engravings, and, above all, photographs.⁸⁴

All the enthusiasm about the *anschaulich* possibilities of photography notwithstanding, many art historians and museum officials also expressed reservations about the use of photographs in art historical research and instruction.⁸⁵ Such objections were not always motivated by hostility towards the new technology; the concern was that the mechanical passivity of photographic reproduction would result in the intellectual deterioration of the viewer.⁸⁶ Consider Wölfflin’s views on photographing sculptures, published in a series

⁸¹ Anton Springer, *Raffael und Michelangelo* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1883) ii- iii.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Offizieller Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Kunsthistorischen Kongresses zu Nürnberg 25.-27. September 1893 (Nendeln, Liechtenstein :Kraus Reprint, [1893] 1978).

⁸⁴ Compare these efforts with those of Richard Hamann who in 1913 founded the Photographische Gesellschaft, which then became Bildarchiv Foto Marburg. From the beginning, Hamann strove to make the holdings of this archive available to circles outside of academia. See Angela Matyssek, “Fotografieren ist Sehen. Kunsthistorische Forschung und Bildpraxis bei Richard Hamann und Foto Marburg,” *Fotogeschichte* 25.97 (2005): 69-79.

⁸⁵ See, for example, the passionate defense of engravings against photographs as a reproduction method by the director of the Wiener Kupferstichkabinett Albertina, Moritz Thausing, “Kupferstich und Photographie,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 1 (1866): 287-294. Also see Robert Stalla, ed. ‘...wird die schöne Kupferstichsammlung zweckmässig benutzt werden...’: *Die Funktion der Druckgraphik im universitären Kunstunterricht des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2001).

⁸⁶ Photography was exalted and mistrusted during this period for the same reasons. According to Galison and Daston, not only photographic prints but also x-rays, lithographs, photoengravings, and camera obscura drawings among others, reassured scientists that their images were “objective” because the mediating presence of the observer had been erased by methods of mechanical reproduction and their subjectivity had been appropriately curbed. “Objectivity” for Galison and Daston is not an ahistorical term but an epistemic virtue that became dominant in the nineteenth century. See Peter Galison and Lorraine Daston, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations* 40, Special Issue on Seeing Science (Autumn 1992): 81-128.

of essays in 1896-97.⁸⁷ “Whoever concerns themselves with the history of sculpture,” Wölfflin began the essay, “is in the greatest dilemma about good illustrations.”⁸⁸ The problem was not that there was any shortage of commercially available images but that most of them were taken from the wrong angle. The public, who traveled to Italy and who collected photographs of artworks, bought these shots in good faith, he wrote, because they were under the false impression that there was little difference between the original and a mechanically reproduced image of it.

Wölfflin then made a blatantly paradoxical statement: it was not right, he claimed, that a sculpture be seen from all sides.⁸⁹ Although contemporary artists frequently produced three-dimensional works which could be fully comprehended only after being viewed from a series of different viewpoints around an artwork, the tradition of sculpture dictated only one valid viewpoint from which the work should be seen. Anyone with an educated eye (*das gebildete Auge*) was familiar with this fact: in a gallery one moved around a sculpture until one found the correct point of view, whereby the eye peacefully rested on the artwork. Demonstrating his point with three examples—David by Donatello, Verrocchio, and Giovanni—he asserted that the most important task of the photographer was to find this correct moment. Wölfflin referred the reader to Adolf Hildebrand’s text “Das Problem der Form,” in which the relief was defended out of a similar anxiety about the eye’s and the body’s erratic movements.⁹⁰ Wölfflin repeated Hildebrand’s assertion that the challenge was to bring the three-dimensional content of a sculpture onto a flat surface; what was in reality apprehended as a series of successive perceptions had to be

⁸⁷ Heinrich Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen Aufnehmen Soll,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* N.F. 7 (1896): 224-228 and N.F. 8 (1897): 294-297. Reprinted in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* N.F. 26 (1915): 237-244. Also see by Wölfflin “Über Abbildungen und Deutungen” in *Gedanken zur Kunstgeschichte. Gedrucktes und Ungedrucktes* (Basle: Benno Schwabe, 1941). Wölfflin later wrote on the issue of reversing slides and once again came to the conclusion that there was only one correct way of viewing artworks. See Wölfflin, “Über das Rechts und Links im Bilde,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* N.F. 5 (1928): 213-224 and “Das Problem der Umkehrung in Raffaels Teppichkartons,” *Belvedere* 9 (1930): 63-65.

⁸⁸ Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen Aufnehmen Soll,” cited above, 224.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁹⁰ Wölfflin wrote the following essays on Hildebrand: “Ein Künstler über Kunst,” [1893] “Adolf von Hildebrand zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag am 6. Oktober,” [1918], “Zur Erinnerung an Adolf von Hildebrand,” [1920], “Adolf Hildebrands ‘Problem der Form,’” [1931] in *Kleine Schriften*, cited above, 84-106.

given to the eye in one effortless view.⁹¹ As Wölfflin would declare in a later essay, it was not a matter of “how one can see but rather a matter of how one *must* see.”⁹²

Although Wölfflin never mentioned the Baroque in the essay, the incorrectly taken photographs were described throughout the text with adjectives that Wölfflin had attributed to the Baroque in his earlier writings. Photographers chose the wrong angle, he argued, out of a desire to produce artistic and *malerisch* effects.⁹³ As in baroque architecture, incorrectly taken photographs did not offer the eye a clear path to follow but instead caused it to run amok. We have already seen that Burckhardt described the Baroque as a “*verwilderter Dialekt*” (a dialect that has gone wild) while Wölfflin himself discussed the “*Verwilderung und Willkür*” (wildness and arbitrariness) in baroque architecture. Now Wölfflin argued that in photographs taken from the wrong angle “the savaged eye (*das verwilderte Auge*) of today’s man enjoy[ed] the most unfavorable obscurities and unclarities.”⁹⁴

Wölfflin strongly objected to retouching photographs, but it was essential that the contrast between sculpture and background be maximized so that the contours of the artwork could be intelligible. Wölfflin made it clear that the original artwork itself did not always provide a better experience either: in the case of the famous Apollo Belvedere, Wölfflin complained, it was just as impossible to come across an appropriately taken photograph of it as it was to find the correct viewpoint in the uncomfortably narrow galleries of the Vatican.⁹⁵ Paradoxically, according to Wölfflin, a much better experience of the sculpture was offered by an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi. (Fig. 5.2) Of all the available ways of beholding an artwork, then, the most preferable was neither encountering the original face-to-face nor viewing copies that had been photographed in a *malerisch* manner, but rather a two-dimensional representation, in which the sculptural figure was finally depicted with clarity as it was ideally meant to

⁹¹ Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen Aufnehmen Soll,” cited above, 294.

⁹² Wölfflin, “Das Problem der Umkehrung in Raffaels Teppichkartons,” cited above, 65.

⁹³ Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen Aufnehmen Soll,” cited above, 224, 294.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 295.



Abb. 1. Apollo vom Belvedere. Photographie Altner.
(Unrichtige Aufnahme.)



Abb. 2. Apollo vom Belvedere.
Nach dem Stich von Marc Anton Raimondi.

Fig. 5.2: Comparison from Heinrich Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen Aufnehmen Soll,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* N.F. 8 (1897) 295. (Left) Photograph of the Apollo Belvedere, c. 117-138, Vatican Palace (Right) Engraving of the Apollo Belvedere by Marcantonio Raimondi, 1530-34.

be seen.⁹⁶ The Renaissance and the Baroque, then, did not only correspond to different perceptual modes but also to different modes of reproduction. Preventing the “stray[ing] of the eye without discipline,” as Wölfflin put it, was fundamentally a pedagogical project. It entailed taking measures to ensure that artworks were correctly photographed and installed at public institutions, but it also meant educating the viewers to develop the right kind of

beholding.⁹⁷ As the example of the Apollo Belvedere made clear, according to Wölfflin, this goal was better realized through the linear style of the Renaissance rather than the *malerisch* style of the Baroque.⁹⁸

When a decade later Wölfflin elaborated on the pedagogical role of art in modern society, he was even more skeptical about the democratization of aesthetic experience and the cognitive habits that this process had produced.⁹⁹ In an article titled “Über kunsthistorische Verbildung” (1909, On Art Historical Mis-education), he called for a separation between art history as a discipline and a general art education intended for the larger public. “The ambitiousness of the modern ‘educated’ tourist is a psychological monstrosity,” Wölfflin wrote.¹⁰⁰ Throngs of tourists went through churches and

⁹⁶ Wölfflin’s preference for the engraving seems similar to Goethe’s drawing of the *Urpflanze* as described in the article by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” cited above.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 296-297.

⁹⁸ On the pedagogical efficiency of drawings, see Heinrich Wölfflin, “Über das Zeichnen” [1910] in *Kleine Schriften*, cited above, 164-165. Here Wölfflin makes the argument that drawing should have as central a position in both secondary and higher education as writing.

⁹⁹ Heinrich Wölfflin, “Über kunsthistorische Verbildung,” *Die neue Rundschau* 4 (April 1909): 572-576.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 572.

museums in Italy with the self-confidence that, having consulted their Baedeker guides, they could now claim art historical expertise. But even this kind of first-hand experience with original artworks failed to produce a deep impression on them. The same was true of the proliferation of illustrated books. In this modern age of “collecting, inventorying, and registering,” Wölfflin observed, the public preferred to buy a “trashy” book containing all of Rubens’s paintings rather than one authentic, well-executed Rubens engraving.¹⁰¹



Fig. 5.3: Wölfflin in his study, frontispiece from Franz Landsberger, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, 1924.

According to Wölfflin, the danger of this dilettantism was that it eroded the attention and weakened the will—not being able to focus their attention on a single thing for a long time, the public displayed only intermittent attention for a lot of things. Consider a photograph showing Wölfflin in his study, surrounded by bourgeois knick-knacks and absorbed in an artwork—possibly an original. (Fig. 5.3) It was exactly this kind

of attentive, contemplative appreciation of artworks—once the distinguishing mark of the *Bildungsbürgertum*—that was becoming extinct in the age of mass culture. What the public needed to learn was not a pseudo-connoisseurship or a piecemeal historical education, Wölfflin argued, but a strong aesthetic perception, which would allow them to apprehend the manifold and synthesize it into “singular calm *Anschauung*.”¹⁰² Having mastered this kind of perception, the public could then hope that artworks produce a powerful, immediate reaction or a distinctive *Stimmung* on them. Only this, he claimed, was *Kultur*. Once again, Wölfflin argued that the clarity of the linear style was much more appropriate for achieving this pedagogical goal than the visual ambiguities of the painterly.¹⁰³ Wölfflin was firmly against introducing classes of art history in secondary

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 575.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

schools, but he supported the idea of instituting *Anschauungsstunden*, that is, classes devoted to developing children's sense for visuality rather than knowledge of art history. He even suggested that every student be equipped with a *Bilderbuch* (picture-book) along with the usual *Lesebuch* (reading book).¹⁰⁴

Notice how Wölfflin's terminology both affirmed and rejected the new aesthetics of effects (*Wirkungen*). On the one hand, he was clearly disappointed that the techniques of attentive contemplation, acquired through neo-humanistic training and an appreciation of Classicism, seemed to be waning in the age of the so-called 'mass university' and mass culture. On the other hand, he understood and accepted that a new type of aesthetic experience, which involved the involuntary reception of effects, was necessitated by modernity. Wölfflin chose come to terms with this dilemma in a manner that was typical of liberal bourgeoisie: since neither returning to the older model of the self nor submitting to mass culture would be acceptable to him, he found a solution in between. The question was how to invent pedagogical techniques that would 'tame' the *malerisch* experience of modernity. An ingenious solution was provided by the invention of the art historical slide lecture between the 1870s and 1890s.

The Art Historical Slide Lecture

Although the practice of projecting slides was new to the incipient discipline of modern art history, the technology itself had existed for over two centuries.¹⁰⁵ In the 1650s the Dutch inventor Christiaan Huygens fitted a candle and a concave mirror inside a box that had a tube with a lens at each end and used the resulting device to project life-like images upon a wall. By the end of the eighteenth century the magic lantern had become a

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 576.

¹⁰⁵ On the magic lantern, see Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak, eds., "Magic Lantern" in *Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001): 297-306; Stephane Bauer, ed., *Dia/ Slide/ Transparency: Materialien zur Projektkunst*, Catalogue for an exhibition at the Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, Berlin (Berlin: Kunstamt, 2000); Elizabeth Shepard, "The Magic Lantern Slide in Entertainment and Education, 1860-1920," *History of Photography* 11.2 (April-June 1987): 91-108; *Laterna Magica—Vergnügen, Belehrung, Unterhaltung* (Frankfurt am Main: Historisches Museum Frankfurt, 1981); and Detlev Hoffmann and Almut Junker, eds., *Laterna Magica. Lichtbilder aus Menschenwelt und Götterwelt* (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1982). The recent study by Ruchatz is possibly the most comprehensive survey of photographic projection from its beginnings in the seventeenth century to the present. See Jens Ruchatz, *Licht und Wahrheit. Eine Mediumsgeschichte der fotografischen Projektion* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003).

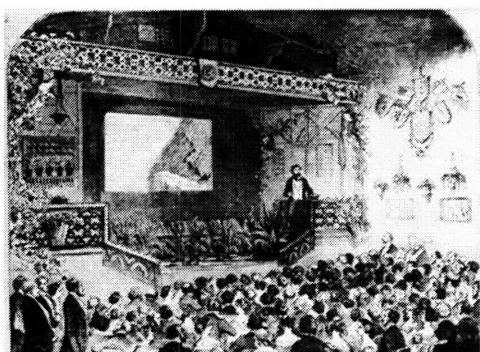


Fig. 5.4: A Slide Lecture on Mont-Blanc in a hall decorated as a Swiss chalet, 1852-58.

popular instrument which combined entertainment with instruction. The instrument itself remained more or less the same while the effects achieved varied: by changing the mechanism of the device slightly, it was possible to project still images, stereoscopic images, or images that simulated movement, images with abrupt breaks or dissolving views (*Nebelbilder*), colored or black and white images, drawings or engravings that could be transferred upon glass plates, etc.¹⁰⁶ The magic lantern was ubiquitous both in private and public settings. Not only was it a fashionable a parlor toy but it was also frequently used by ‘showmen,’ who made a living by lecturing large audiences on scientific, religious, or historical topics and wanted to impress the public with the ‘reality effect’ of the magic lantern’s illusions. (Fig. 5.4) A mid-nineteenth-century account, which emphasized the magic lantern’s remarkable ability to re-construct reality from flat images, claimed that those who had been fortunate enough to see a particular slide show:

....will not soon forget the impression produced by the marvelous fidelity and clearness with which every architectural detail was reproduced, from the delicately carved enrichments around the doors, windows, and pillars, down to the very chisel-marks upon the unpolished stone-work; whilst the wonderful perspective which was obtained, presenting all the effect of the stereoscope without its littleness, the *solidity* and *reality* which characterized some of the photographs would almost make us doubt whether the instrument which produced these wonderful effects was not a resuscitated Aladdin’s Lamp, which, as in days of old, had brought bodily before our eyes the very building; of which, in truth, a picture only was presented to us, but one, the marvelous truthfulness of which was owing to a light far more potent than that which it up the dingy old lamp of Aladdin—the light of science.¹⁰⁷

Given the pedagogical effectiveness of the magic lantern’s illusion of “solidity and reality,” projecting slides quickly became appropriated at natural sciences departments at universities. The device was even used at institutions such as the Kunstgewerbemuseum

¹⁰⁶ Photographic lantern slides, however, did not become a commercially applicable medium until the 1850s.

in Berlin to teach drawing. The incorporation of the technology into art history, however, followed a more protracted route.¹⁰⁸ It was Bruno Meyer, professor of art history at the polytechnic school in Karlsruhe, who first promoted the use of the technology within art historical circles in German-speaking countries, albeit with little success. In September 1873, during the first international congress of art historians in Vienna, Meyer invited his colleagues to view especially prepared glass plates be projected upon a wall with the aid

¹⁰⁷ J. J. Mellor, "Shadows in a New Light," Chambers's Journal 12 (July 12, 1859) 29.

¹⁰⁸ The literature on the relationship between photography and art history is too vast to be listed here. I will cite only the following, which are relevant to the issues handled in this chapter: Frederick N. Bohrer, "Photographic Perspectives: Photography and the Institutional Formation of Art History" in Art History and Its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2002): 246-259; Matthias Bruhn, "Abbildungen der Kunstgeschichte"; Katja Amato, "Skizze und Fotografie bei Jacob Burckhardt"; and Petra Roettig, "'Das verwilderte Auge': Über Fotografie und Bildarchive in der Kunstwissenschaft" in Darstellung und Deutung. Abbilder der Kunstgeschichte, ed. Matthias Bruhn (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2000): 13-46, 47-59, and 61-87; Dorothea Peters, "Photographie als Lehr- und Genussmittel. Zur frühen Kunstreproduktion durch Fotografien. Wilhelm Bode und die Photographische Kunstanstalt Adolphe Braun in Dornach," Fotogeschichte 20.75 (2000): 3-32; Annette Tietenberg, "Die Fotografie—eine bescheidene Dienerin der Wissenschaft und Künste? Die Kunstwissenschaft und ihre mediale Abhängigkeit" in Das Kunstwerk als Geschichtsdokument, ed. Annette Tietenberg (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1999): 61-80; Helene E. Roberts, ed., Art History Through the Camera's Lens, cited above; and Mary Bergstein, "Lonely Aphrodites: On the Documentary Photography of Sculpture," Art Bulletin 74.3 (September 1992): 475-498. In comparison, the literature on slide projection within art history is relatively small. See Angela Matyssek, "'Entdecker' und 'Finder': Über die fotografische Wissensproduktion der Kunstgeschichte und die Probleme der Reproduktion von Kunstwerken," Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte 28 (2005): 227-235; Darsie Alexander, ed. SlideShow, Catalogue of the exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 2005); Wiebke Ratzeburg, "Mediendiskussion im 19. Jahrhundert. Wie die Kunstgeschichte ihre wissenschaftliche Grundlage in der Fotografie fand," Kritische Berichte 30.1 (2002): 22-39; Robert S. Nelson, "The Slide Lecture, or The Work of Art History in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Critical Inquiry 26 (Spring 2000): 414-434; Silke Wenk, "Zeigen und Schweigen. Der kunsthistorische Diskurs und die Diaprojektion"; Friedrich Tietjen, "Projektion und Präsenz"; and Jens Ruchatz, "Per Dia reisen. Wie Projektion und Reise zueinander fanden" in Dia/ Slide/ Transparency: Materialien zur Projektkunst, cited above, 139-144, 162-165, and 183-195; Silke Wenk, "Zeigen und Schweigen. Der kunsthistorische Diskurs und die Diaprojektion" in Konfigurationen. Zwischen Kunst und Medien, eds. Sigrid Schade and Georg Christoph Tholen (Munich: Fink, 1999): 292-305; Wiebke Ratzeburg, "Die Anfänge der Photographie und Lichtbildprojektion in ihre Verhältnis zur Kunstgeschichte," Magisterarbeit, Freie Universität, Berlin, 1998; Robert P. Spindler, "Windows to the American Past: Lantern Slides as Historic Evidence" in Art History Through the Camera's, cited above, 133-149; Donald Preziosi, "The Panoptic Gaze and the Anamorphic Archive" in Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 54-79; Howard B. Leighton, "The Lantern Slide and Art History," History of Photography 8.2 (April-June 1984): 107-118; Trevor Fawcett, "Visual Facts and the Nineteenth-Century Art Lecture," Art History 6.4 (December 1983): 442-460; Heinrich Dilly, "Lichtbildprojektion—Prothese der Kunstbetrachtung" and Wolfgang Beyrodt, "Diareihen für den Unterricht" in Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung, ed. Irene Below (Gießen: Anabas, 1975): 153-172, 173-188. In German by far the most important work in this area has been undertaken by Heinrich Dilly. In addition to the article cited above, also see Heinrich Dilly, "Die Bildwerfer. 121 Jahre kunstwissenschaftliche Dia-Projektion" in Zwischen Markt und Museum. Beiträge der Tagung "Präsentationsformen von Fotografie" (Göppingen: Museumsverbands Baden-Württemberg, 1995): 39-44 and the very important study Kunstgeschichte als Institution. Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979).

of a sciopticon, an early version of the modern slide projector. Meyer's performance was a failure: the limelight used in the sciopticon seemed impractical, the dissolving view apparatus (*Nebelbildapparat*) made the images appear and disappear too slowly, and consequently the art historians present in the experiment were not completely convinced by the use of this particular technology in art history.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, although sciopticons were already used at other departments of the university, the high-minded scholars of art who saw themselves as the inheritors of the nineteenth-century neo-humanistic tradition, found the sciopticon's past as a device of popular entertainment dubious.

Still Meyer did not give up. Convinced that the technology was of utmost importance to art history, he installed a sciopticon in his own lecture hall in Karlsruhe in 1880. When he realized that the reproduction rights for many artworks had already been bought by photography firms, he embarked upon a project to photograph on his own the holdings of Berlin museums, which had not yet sold the copyright to their collections.¹¹⁰ In 1883, Meyer published a catalogue, in which he not only offered over 4,000 glass photograms for art historical instruction, but also explained the technology of the projection apparatus and how it would revolutionize art historical instruction.¹¹¹ The primary advantage of the sciopticon, according to Meyer, was the scale of the projected image. Furthermore, the device made it possible to synchronize word with image in the lecture. The concern that the inevitably darkened room would result in the slackening of discipline, he stated, was unfounded.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Bruno Meyer, "Die Photographie im Dienste der Kunstwissenschaft und des Kunstunterrichts," *Westermann's illustrierte Monatshefte* 47 (October 1879-March 1880): 196-209, 307-328.

¹¹⁰ Photographs taken from original artworks became commercially available in the 1850 through such firms as the Alinari Brothers in Florence, Giacomo Brogi in Florence, Carlo Naya in Venice, Adolphe Braun in Dornach, and Frederick Bruckmann and Franz Hanfstaengl in Munich. By the 1860s some of these firms had become large international businesses. See Anthony Hamber, "Photography in Nineteenth-Century Art Publications" in *The Rise of the Image: Essays on the History of the Illustrated Book* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003) 221.

¹¹¹ Of the glass photograms that Meyer offered in his catalogue, roughly half of the images were of antiquity, a quarter of medieval art, and the rest of the Renaissance. See Bruno Meyer, "Die Photographie im Dienste der Kunstwissenschaft und des Kunstunterrichts," cited above, and *Glasphotogramme für den kunstwissenschaftlichen Unterricht* (Karlsruhe: Bruno Meyer, 1883).

¹¹² Meyer, *Glasphotogramme für den kunstwissenschaftlichen Unterricht*, cited above, xxxii.

Meyer's attempts to integrate the sciopticon into art historical instruction ultimately failed to attract the attention that he had hoped for. It was not until the cause was taken up in the 1890s by another professor of art history, Hermann Grimm (1828-1901), that projecting images would become an indispensable practice of art history. Grimm had been teaching at the Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Berlin since 1870, when art history was not yet an independent department but was a sub-division of the archeological section (*archäologischer Apparat*) founded in 1851. In 1875, at a time when independent art history departments were being established throughout the German-speaking world, Grimm founded the *Apparat für neuere Kunstgeschichte*, a separate section for the history of art after antiquity.¹¹³ Grimm not only donated a sciopticon to the newly founded *Apparat* but also started a photographic collection and a laboratory for the exclusive use of the department. In 1893 the collection of the department had approximately 2,400 lantern slides; between 1901 and 1912, an average of 1,000 more slides were added to the collection annually so that, according to a report by Grimm's successor Heinrich Wölfflin, by 1911 the department had a collection of 15,000 images, 250 folios, and a library of 1,300 volumes.¹¹⁴ These 'attachments' to the now autonomous department of art history were meant to support not only art historical research but a new way of teaching art history: the art historical slide lecture.

Starting in 1891, Grimm started teaching his lecture classes, including one on the Florentine fourteenth and fifteenth-century art and another on sixteenth-century art, with the aid of the sciopticon and glass photograms. As the historian Heinrich Dilly has convincingly demonstrated, the failure of Meyer's endeavors and the subsequent success of Grimm's slide lecture could be attributed to several factors: to the improvement of the sciopticon in the 1880s (primarily through the addition of an electric light instead of

¹¹³ The following universities had their independent art history professorships on the following dates: Bonn 1860, Vienna 1863, Leipzig 1873, and Basle 1874.

¹¹⁴ See Peter H. Feist, "Hundert Jahre nach Hermann Grimm, dreißig Jahre seit der Befreiung vom Faschismus—Die Entwicklung der Kunstwissenschaft an der Berliner Universität 1375-1975" in *Künstlerisches und Kunstwissenschaftliches Erbe als Gegenwartsaufgabe* (Berlin: Humboldt University, 1975): 1-38; Waltraud Luft, "Die Entwicklung des Kunstgeschichtlichen Instituts der Berliner Universität von seiner Gründung bis zum Jahre 1945," Diss., Humboldt-Universität in Berlin, 1957; as well as Heinrich Wölfflin, "Der Apparat für Vorlesungen über neuere Kunstgeschichte" in *Geschichte der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität zu Berlin*, vol. 3, ed. Max Lenz (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1910): 265-266 and Wölfflin, "Zur Erinnerung an Hermann Grimm," *Kunstchronik* N.S. 12 (1901): 481-484.

limelight), to the fact that Grimm, coming from the prominent Grimm family and teaching at a more prestigious university, managed to make a better impression on fellow art historians prone to skepticism, and, perhaps, above all, to a changed social and cultural context two decades later.¹¹⁵ However, it is undeniable that Grimm did exactly what Meyer failed to do: he understood the sciopticon not simply as a technological innovation that would facilitate art historical instruction but as one that offered a radically different ‘experience’ that could surpass the presence of the original.

In a series of reports that he published between 1892-93, Grimm explained how the technique of slide projection might transform the discipline and university education in general.¹¹⁶ The slide lecture, according to Grimm, was necessitated by changes in the composition of the student body and the public role that the university was expected to play in modern society. The German university of the nineteenth century had provided education primarily for those who were meant to become teachers, civil servants, theologians, physicians, or lawyers—in other words, for the children of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. University instruction in the student’s chosen field of specialization was always mixed with a general study of *Humanitas*, for which the students had already been prepared at the *Gymnasium* with the ideals of Classicism and neo-humanism. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, when the enrollment at the university seemed to be constantly on the rise, the consensus was that specialized training left no time for *Humanitas*. Besides, more and more students were coming from the *Realgymnasien* and the *Oberrealschulen*, with the result that university professors could no longer assume a common foundation of neo-humanistic knowledge. Despite all these factors, Grimm observed, those who completed the university and entered public service were expected to demonstrate the refinement and taste that *Bildung* once provided.¹¹⁷ This kind of

¹¹⁵ Dilly, “Die Bildwerfer,” cited above, 39-40.

¹¹⁶ Hermann Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen über neuere Kunstgeschichte durch die Anwendung des Skioptikons,” [1892-1893] in *Beiträge zur deutschen Culturgeschichte* (Berlin: Wilhelm Herz, 1897): 276-395. The reports were originally published in *Nationalzeitung* and *Deutsche Rundschau*. Also see by Grimm on the discipline of art history, “Ist die moderne Kunstgeschichte eine auf solider Grundlage ruhende Wissenschaft?— Gründe, warum nicht— Nothwendigkeit einer Änderung,” *Über Künstler und Kunstwerke* 1 (1865): 1-8 and “Werth der neueren Kunstgeschichte— Eine der wichtigsten historischen Hilfswissenschaften,” cited above.

¹¹⁷ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 342-343.

aesthetic education could not be undertaken at museums, because one had to be trained in understanding art before truly appreciating museum collections.¹¹⁸ Grimm argued that it was up to art history to fill this gap in education.

There is no doubt that Grimm's attempts to define such a broad cultural role for art history was motivated by a desire to justify the existence of a now autonomous department. Art history was now to actively participate in the project of teaching students about "German intellectual existence" and "national visual fantasy" by complementing the German achievements in literature and music with those in the visual arts. Furthermore, since the rise of the so-called "public instruction" (*öffentlicher Unterricht*), which allowed not only students from all departments of the university but also guest students from outside, and even women (!) to attend lectures, art historical instruction was faced with the challenge of appealing to a larger audience outside of those who were training to become future museum officials and academics.¹¹⁹ The sciopticon proved to be an indispensable instrument at a time when professors of art history found themselves teaching hundreds of students gathered in large lecture halls.¹²⁰

However, the sciopticon did not only solve the practical problem of presenting an image to hundreds of students at once. More importantly, it changed the assumed relationship between the original artwork and its reproduced copy. Before the sciopticon, Grimm explained, art historical instruction had relied mostly on verbal description and a limited

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 338, 348. Comments such as these caused Grimm to get involved in debates with museum officials. On the debate between Grimm and the Berlin museum director Wilhelm Bode. See August Schmarsow, *Die Kunstgeschichte an unsern Hochschulen* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1891) 6-10.

¹¹⁹ Grimm, "Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen," cited above, 344. Dilly made the argument that the increased audience also meant a larger income for the professor, since it was customary for the professor to receive *Hörergeld*, a fee from those who attended the lectures. Dilly, "Lichtbildprojektion—Prothese der Kunstbetrachtung," cited above, 163.

¹²⁰ According to Alfred Neumeyer, who studied art history in Germany in the 1920s, Wölfflin attracted over a thousand listeners in his famous lectures. Alfred Neumeyer, "Four Art Historians Remembered: Woelfflin, Goldschmidt, Warburg, Berenson," *Art Journal* 31.1 (Autumn 1971) 33. When one takes into account that fees from students constituted an important part of a professor's income, it becomes clear why professors wanted to attract more students. As enrollment at the university increased in the 1890s, the salary that professors received from the state decreased, putting more pressure on the professors to lecture to larger audiences. See Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969) 52-53.

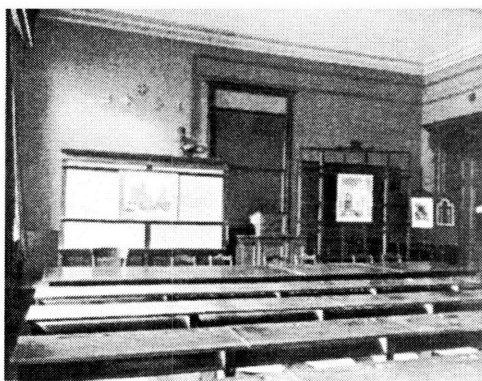


Fig. 5.5: Lecture hall of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Leipzig, c. 1909.

amount of visual material.¹²¹ Depending on the wealth of the collections from which the professor could draw, the visual material could be original artworks, but more frequently reproductions were used—plaster casts, etchings, engravings, lithographs, and more recently, photographs, which would typically be passed from one hand to another in a seminar setting.¹²² (Fig. 5.5) Intense attention was required of the students at all times, since image and word rarely synchronized during these lectures. Furthermore, this particular pedagogy was predicated on the assumption that the student had seen the originals either in a museum or during the requisite travels to Italy or Greece. In the old model of art historical instruction, reproduction served as a mnemonic device: its purpose was not to create a complete impression of an artwork for those who had never seen the original but to help reconstruct the experience for those who had already experienced it firsthand. After all, Grimm noted, a hand-colored photograph of a wall painting bought by a tourist as a souvenir in Italy conjured up the original fully *only* for those who had been in situ to witness the artwork directly.¹²³ A photographic print was useless, Grimm insisted, if the student had not already been there to see the artwork personally.¹²⁴

¹²¹ For a description of art historical instruction before and after slide projection, see the account written by Adolph Goldschmidt, who succeeded Heinrich Wölfflin at the University of Berlin in 1912. Adolph Goldschmidt, “Kunstgeschichte” in Aus Fünfzig Jahren Deutscher Wissenschaft. Die Entwicklung ihrer Fachgebiete in Einzeldarstellungen, ed. Gustav Abb (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1930): 192-197. According to Wölfflin’s student Franz Landsberger, the novelty of the modern art historical lecture was the use of slides. Previously only a few illustration would go from hand to hand, Landsberger reminisced, but it was “an eternal torture” to see picture long after the word had been spoken. The sciopticon made it possible to synchronize word with images, making the artwork the center of attention. Franz Landsberger, Heinrich Wölfflin (Berlin: Elena Gottschalk, 1924) 92-93.

¹²² Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 285.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* See Trevor Fawcett, “Graphic versus Photographic in the Nineteenth Century Reproduction,” Art History 9.2 (1986): 185-212, Anthony Hamber, “The Use of Photography by Nineteenth-Century Art Historians” in Art History through the Camera’s Lens, cited above, 89-122; Trevor Fawcett, “Plane Surfaces and Solid Bodies: Reproducing Three-Dimensional Art in the Nineteenth-Century,” cited above, 59-88; Wolfgang M. Freitag, “Early Uses of Photography in the History of Art,” Art Journal 39.2 (Winter 1979/1980): 117-123.

Grimm also acknowledged, however, that this particular role of the reproduced image as a mnemonic device had become untenable at the end of the nineteenth century. A professor had to assume that he was lecturing to an audience who had never made any trips, never visited any galleries or museums, or never collected photographs—in short, from what Grimm called the “pictureless half of Germany” (*bilderlose Hälfte Deutschlands*).¹²⁵ The slide lecture, then, was directed primarily toward those who had never been fortunate enough to make the Grand Tour—the equivalent of the ‘uncultured’ that we have seen in the previous chapters.¹²⁶ However, when an image—in this case a Cimabue painting—was projected upon the wall, the effect (*Wirkung*) was so powerful that it took even Grimm, the seasoned art historian, by surprise:

I have frequently seen Cimabue’s paintings at the Uffizi, I have owned photographs of them for several years, and still now as [the painting] stood again before me in its true proportions and as it rested on my eyes at the same time that it did on the eyes of so many young people, what lessons this image held for me too! These paintings appeared to me for the first time, as it were, and it was as if the attendance of my listeners heightened the sharpness of my own perception (*Auffassung*). Obligated to speak, I found richer words than I could have without this ambience. Regardless of what I might say, however, the main effect (*Hauptwirkung*) emanated from the sights of things themselves.¹²⁷

The effect that Grimm was thus describing surpassed even the uncanny ‘reality effect’ of projected images. The atmosphere was not created by the illuminated image alone; more important was the presence of an audience, which “sharpen[ed] the [art historian’s] own perception.” The slide lecture, according to Grimm’s description, was an extraordinary experience which made *sensus communis* palpable.¹²⁸ With the introduction of the sciopticon into the art historical lecture, Grimm continued, the connection between literary texts and the visual arts, which had previously been art history’s primary

¹²⁵ Grimm cited in August Schmarsow, *Kunstgeschichte an Hochschulen*, cited above, 33.

¹²⁶ For the histories of tourism in the nineteenth century, see footnote 76.

¹²⁷ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 290.

¹²⁸ Compare this with the following statement: “A small picture, seen by passing it from hand to hand, seems comparatively tame; but when represented to all eyes at once, enlarged to life size and to life-like appearance, it is viewed with cumulative enthusiasm.” Edward L. Wilson, “The Magic Lantern in its Relation to Photography,” *Photographic Mosaics*, 118-119. Also compare Grimm’s description of this experience with Endell’s description of the fortress-like and oceanic selves in Chapter 3.

occupation, was relegated to the background. As the director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle Alfred Lichtwark put it, this amounted to talking “not about things but from things and in front of things.”¹²⁹ When a visual work was brought directly in front of the students’ eyes, the impact on the viewer was overwhelming, but this forceful impression was made by neither the literary connections made in the student’s mind nor the art historian’s accompanying words, but rather by “the direct view of forms, to which the sciopicon lent such a radiant visibility.”¹³⁰ With Raphael’s *Sposalizio* (1504, The Betrothal of the Virgin) projected on the wall, Grimm observed:

The lecture hall becomes dark and the work appears on the wall, larger than it is in reality, presented to the listeners—even those in the back rows—as it would appear to an observer who stood very close in front of the original in the Brera Gallery in Milan. The view that we find here outdoes by far the effect (*Wirkung*) of the engraving despite the fact that the glass plate used was produced from an engraving. A feeling (*Gefühl*) of the living present of a great artwork overcomes us.... Isolated by the darkness, every listener receives—individually in a completely undisturbed fashion—the explanation of the works from the works themselves.... The listener feels that it is in these works, which force their way into him with violence (*mit Gewalt in ihn eindringt*), as it were, that Raphael’s artistic career began.¹³¹

In the now obsolete form of art historical instruction, the reproduction of the artwork triggered the memory of the original for the student who was assumed to have already seen it. The function of the reproduction in the slide lecture was wholly different: the projected image performed its role by simulating the “effect” (*Wirkung*) of the artwork and by “awakening in [the viewer] a feeling of the original.”¹³² This particular kind of *Anschauungsmaterial* forced itself upon the students in an unmediated manner. This was similar to the impact of the so-called *Schreckensbilder* (terrible visions, nightmares) conjured up by magic lanterns to entertain and overwhelm an audience. (Fig. 5.6) The

¹²⁹ Alfred Lichtwark, “Die Aufgaben der Kunsthalle” in *Drei Programme* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1902) 26.

¹³⁰ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 306.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 301. It was held by many of Grimm’s contemporaries that projecting photographs restored the objects depicted therein into their original fullness: “By magnifying these new slides through the magic lantern the representation is nature itself again.” Robert Hunt, *Manual of Photography. A Treatise on the Chemical Changes Produced by Solar Radiation, and the Production of Pictures from Nature by the Daguerreotype, Calotype, and Other Photographic Processes* (London: John Joseph Griffen, 1851) 102.

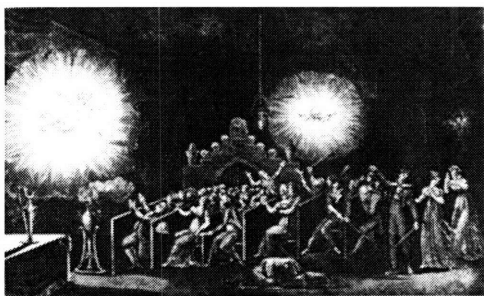


Fig. 5.6: An example of the slide lecture as *Schreckensbild*, “Phantasmagoria” from E. G. Robertson (Etienne Gaspard), *Mémoires récréatifs scientifiques et anecdotiques*, 1831.

employment of the terminology of the new aesthetics was no accident: the projected image was the source of powerful effects (*Wirkungen*) and impressions (*Eindrücke*), enjoyed individually and face-to-face with the image although the experience of enjoyment also united all. Furthermore, these effects were meant to fall outside of the thought and language matrix, educating the students on the level of feelings.

The sciopticon thus made art history matter within the larger framework of the university. Grimm used the example of the *Divine Comedy* to explain how the art historical slide lecture conveyed more than art historical expertise. It could no longer be assumed, Grimm noted, that the students came to the university having studied the *Divine Comedy*. It was also unrealistic to expect that these students, who were to specialize in their chosen fields, to listen to long lectures about Dante at the university. In the era of specialization, the sciopticon filled the gaps in the general *Bildung* of the university student: a history of Renaissance painting would teach the *Divine Comedy* both efficiently and in an *anschaulich* manner.¹³³ Furthermore, projecting images seemed to have some clear cognitive advantages as well. The darkened lecture hall sharpened the diminishing attention by directing it to the only light source in the room while the projected image brought out “the ideal content of the work in a vivid manner,” with the result that vision and thought were linked in an unprecedented way.¹³⁴

According to Grimm, the slide lecture had other advantages made possible by the peculiarities of the sciopticon technology. The unexpected ‘magical’ effect of the slide lecture was mostly created, according to Grimm, by the sciopticon’s ability to amplify images.¹³⁵ The enlarged image almost always had a more profound effect than the

¹³³ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 298.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 282. As Bohrer notes, the darkening of the lecture hall during art historical lectures coincides with a similar cultural practice, the darkening of the auditorium at the Wagnerian theatre in Bayreuth, which opened to the public in 1876. Bohrer, “Photographic Perspectives,” cited above, 250.

¹³⁵ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 301.

original artwork itself. In this sense, the sciopticon was like the microscope: it enabled the human eye to perceive things—a detail high up on the façade of a cathedral, for example—that would be impossible to discern with the naked eye.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the isolation of the image on the wall and its aura made the artwork uncannily ‘present’ in the lecture hall, making it seem like a contemporaneous work rather than a past one.¹³⁷ Grimm added that the sciopticon offered comparative as well as sequential possibilities. Already in 1865 Grimm had anticipated how photography would usher in a comparative outlook by allowing the scholar to “spread [artworks] out on the same table and be able to compare them in a calm and unperturbed fashion.”¹³⁸ Now Grimm suggested that the sciopticon’s ability to present images sequentially promised to make up for the gaps in students’ education: “views that quickly follow one another coalesce in the memory and produce a familiarity with artworks in a way that an actual observation of an artwork could hardly bring about.”¹³⁹ Students who were not versed in the humanities, he concluded, could grasp the continuities of history in a much more effective manner when presented with a sequence of projected images.

Principles of Art History

“This book was actually meant to be something else.” With these words began Heinrich Wölfflin the foreword to his 1915 book *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Principles of Art History), arguably the most influential art historical text of the twentieth-century.¹⁴⁰ Wölfflin had initially wanted the book to be a picture book (*Bilderheft*) which would outline an “art history without names,” a book that would allow the reader to “follow the emergence of modern Seeing step by step, an art history that [did] not only discuss individual artists but rather [showed] in a progression without any breaks how a painterly (*malerisch*) style came out of a linear one, an atectonic style out of a tectonic one, etc.”

¹³⁶ Ibid., 352, 359-360. For a similar comparison between the magic lantern and the microscope, see Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, “Die gegenwärtigen Leistungen der Photographie” in *Lichtbilder nach der Natur. Studien und Skizzen* (Berlin: 1879) 129-130.

¹³⁷ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 318.

¹³⁸ Grimm, “Der Werth der neueren Kunstgeschichte,” cited above, 38.

¹³⁹ Grimm, “Die Umgestaltung der Universitätsvorlesungen,” cited above, 283.

However, Wölfflin lamented, no publishing house could afford to print such a richly illustrated book in the midst of a war. He had therefore been forced to do with fewer images, systematically juxtaposed throughout the book to facilitate visual comparison—exactly as they would have been arranged in his famous double-slide lectures at the university. (Figs. 5.7, 5.8)



Figs. 5.7, 5.8: Spreads from Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 1915.

Not only the images but also the main concepts were arranged as pairs of opposites throughout the book: linear versus painterly (*malerisch*), planarity (*flächhaft*) versus depth (*tiefenhaft*), closed form (*geschlossene Form*) versus open form (*offene Form*), multiplicity (*vielheitlich*) versus unity (*einheitlich*), and absolute versus relative clarity (*Klarheit*). As already mentioned above, Wölfflin had used a similar set of oppositions to contrast Renaissance art with the art of the Baroque in 1888. Now the much more clearly defined pairs were meant to become the universal basis of art historical research and instruction, regardless of time and place. Although Wölfflin repeated throughout the book that the Baroque, used interchangeably with

“modern art,” was “neither a rise nor a decline from the classical,” the form of his argumentation—its clarity, linearity, and desire for closure—betrayed a preference for what Wölfflin would describe as the classical.¹⁴¹

Notwithstanding his unfulfilled desire to narrate the history of art exclusively through images, Wölfflin still seemed guarded about photographic modes of image reproduction in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. Once again, his sporadic comments in the book

¹⁴⁰ Heinrich Wölfflin, “Vorwort” in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, cited above. This foreword to the first edition does not appear in the English translation.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14. See Brown, “The Classic is the Baroque,” cited above, 379-404.

betrayed a curious parallel between photography and the Baroque. This time, he described the hazards of photographing paintings: “One can photograph classical paintings and they will not correspond to the original but they will not contradict it either,” he wrote. “By contrast, for Baroque pictures, photography almost always means a distortion of facts.”¹⁴² Just as Baroque art preferred appearances over essences, photography—unlike older modes of reproduction such as engraving—could hope to capture only the accidental. Wölfflin suggested that photography produced a painterly effect: the modern tendency to apprehend the world in a blurred fashion, best exemplified by Impressionism, was exacerbated by photographic reproduction. The modern perception of the world amounted to always approaching forms in a “lax” and disorderly fashion. The modern viewer was so accustomed to apprehending forms in a painterly manner that his eyes failed to follow a disciplined route even when confronted with linear works of art.¹⁴³ Wölfflin complained—more than once—how the size of photographic reproductions in the book was to blame for an undesirable painterly blurring effect. Comparing Dürer’s St. Jerome to Ostade’s rendering of the same subject matter, for example, he decided once again to turn to an engraving “to make clear how the spirit of clear-cut corporeality asserts itself beyond the single figure on the deep stage.”¹⁴⁴

According to his students, Wölfflin’s preference for the classical was evident in the way that he carried himself in the lecture hall as well. Even when the students expected the artwork to throw the beholder into a state of ecstasy, Wölfflin retained his composure, refusing to leave his usual *largo tempo*:

Wölfflin, the master of improvised speaking, places himself in the dark, with his side turned to his students and his eyes, like theirs, directed at the image. He coalesces with them into a unity and represents the ideal beholder, his words condensing the experience common to all. For a while Wölfflin lets the work produce its effect, draws near to it—following Schopenhauer’s advice—as one draws near a prince, waiting until the work speaks to him. Then slowly come out the sentences, almost hesitatingly. When some of his students mimic these pauses in his speech, they mimic not only an external mannerism but because they feel that this

¹⁴² Wölfflin, “Vorwort” in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, cited above, v.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

viscosity hides something positive. Wölfflin's speaking never creates the impression of something that was prepared in advance and then projected onto the artwork but rather seems to be produced on the spot by the image. The artwork maintains its dominant position throughout. His words do not drown the artwork but display it like pearls.... this tall, sinewy man, who confronts the artwork with a firm, upright posture, reverential toward the work. He is moved internally but does not submit to this inner movement. Rather he faces it with a clear and productive understanding (*Verstehen*).¹⁴⁵

The notion of 'restraint,' then, was as essential to Wölfflin's carefully cultivated public persona as it was to the aesthetic experience that he staged in his double-slide lectures. In Grimm's theorization of the slide lecture, the experience of the artwork in the lecture hall was still close to its origins in mass entertainment: the projected image's effect of "solidity and reality" and its "radiant visibility" impacted the viewers' emotions in an immediate and violent manner—at times even engendering a heightened mood of *sensus communis*. Wölfflin's double-slide lecture was designed to 'tame' the traces of sensual gratification left in this experience. When presented with two rather than one slide, the viewers' perception was already steered in a definite direction. If the experience of Grimm's slide lecture was akin to that of the Baroque, that of Wölfflin's lecture was closer in spirit to his theorization of the Renaissance. Just as the contour of the linear style was imagined to guide the "savaged" eye's movements and prevent it from erratically roaming about in space without discipline, the double slide format channeled the viewers' easily diverted attention into the direction deemed right by the art historian. Hence, despite his reservations about photography, Wölfflin was able to use the medium profusely in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. If photography, like the Baroque, misguided the eye with its painterly effects, arranging photographs in pairs brought the eye back into focus.

In other words, the slide lecture was meant to correct the destructive effect of the kinds of experience found in modern mass culture. We have seen in the first chapter how the educated middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century construed the popular entertainment of film as the sign of a declining *Bildung*: the abrupt breaks inherent in the medium were imagined to cause the intellect to deteriorate, the will to weaken, and the

¹⁴⁵ Landsberger, Heinrich Wölfflin, cited above, 93-94 and 96-97.

attention to be easily diverted. As the historian Ruchatz has demonstrated, slide projection was seen by many at the turn of the century as the solution to the problem of film. If film damaged the intellectual capabilities of the *Volk*, the slide lecture compensated for that damage while still using the *anschaulich* language of images.¹⁴⁶ According to Ruchatz, advocates of the film reform movement (*Kinoreformbewegung*) tried to incorporate the slide lecture format into cinemas in an effort to create an experience that was sensual and yet could be kept under strict control.

The slide lecture had another peculiar consequence. The experience of an image being projected upon the wall did not supplant the experience of the original but seemed to transcend it. We have seen in this chapter how one scholar after another, disillusioned with the direct encounter with an artwork in the age of mass tourism, preferred the copy to the original. The original might be inaccessible, shoddily repaired, poorly lit, incorrectly installed, and surrounded by tourists, but once a photographic reproduction of it was projected upon the wall, it could be restored to a state of perfection that may have never existed in reality. The aura, in other words, did not emanate from the original, but literally from its projected copy. But a curious reversal occurred here: the more the artwork was re-presented through its copy, the more present it seemed. Hence the illusion recounted by Wölfflin's students: when Wölfflin spoke in the lecture hall, it seemed as if the artwork itself was speaking through him. It was the discipline of art history, then, that endowed the artwork with authenticity and uniqueness—with qualities that made Wölfflin approach the slide of an artwork as if he were approaching a prince. What made the artwork seem inimitable, then, was not some inherent "precious kernel," as it was theorized by Schmarsow. Rather it was the invisible 'appendages' of art history—techniques such as the slide lecture and formal analysis or institutions such as the museum and the image collection—practices, with which we still live today.

¹⁴⁶ Ruchatz, *Licht und Wahrheit*, cited above, 397-402.

CONCLUSION

Crowd Control

It will be remarked that among the special characteristics of crowds there are several—such as impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of the sentiments, and others besides—which are almost always observed in beings belonging to inferior forms of evolution—in women, savages, and children, for instance.... [The crowd] is guided almost exclusively by unconscious motives. Its acts are far more under the influence of the spinal cord than of the brain. In this respect a crowd is closely akin to quite primitive beings. The acts performed may be perfect so far as their execution is concerned, but as they are not directed by the brain, the individual conducts himself according as the exciting causes to which he is submitted may happen to decide. A crowd is at the mercy of all external exciting causes, and reflects their incessant variations. It is the slave of the impulses which it receives.¹

Thus portrayed the French physician Gustav Le Bon (1841-1931) the masses in his widely influential book *Psychologie des foules* (Psychology of the Crowd) in 1895. The book was written, at least in part, as a cautionary tale: having witnessed the rise of the masses during the Paris Commune of 1871, Le Bon, like many members of his class, was worried about the resurrection of Socialism. Le Bon approached the phenomenon of the “crowd” from a psychological point of view: he was interested in how the consciousness of distinct individuals gave way to the completely different “unconscious personality” of the masses.² According to Le Bon, having lost the ability to reason, judge, and to exercise his will, the individual in a crowd fell prey to the sensations that were inflicted upon him. He reacted to them not with his mind but—as in a reflex—with his spinal

¹ Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1895), translated into English as *The Crowd* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1995) here 55-56. The book was immediately translated to a number of languages and appeared in Germany under the title *Psychologie der Massen*.

² Le Bon, *The Crowd*, cited above, 43-44.

cord. Because he was “very susceptible to being keenly impressed,” as if hypnotized, he became an automaton, which was no longer guided by his will but by whoever directed him.³ The figurative imagination of this individual was particularly developed. Once he was part of a crowd, it was possible to “arouse in his mind... images of extreme intensity.”⁴

Compare Le Bon’s description of the masses to the subject delineated by the aesthetic discourse examined in this dissertation. Waning intellectual faculties, an impaired judgment and a weakened will characterized both. “Inferior beings” such as women, children, and savages—what Le Bon called the “slaves of the impulses”—were also the ideal subjects of the new aesthetics. Hence the ostensibly feminized traits found in both: a state of irritability, a propensity for excessive sentimentality, and, above all, an increased impressionability. The transition from being an individual to being part of a crowd, Le Bon suggested, was accompanied by a heightened aesthetic sensibility—that is, by the eclipsing of the conscious, cognitive faculties of the mind by the unconscious and instinctual capacity of the body for sensation and emotion. Unruly masses were imagined to be made up of “irritable” subjects, who could be stirred to political action on the spur of the moment. By Le Bon’s account, for example, an intoxicated crowd in a dance hall could spontaneously transform into a mob ready to take down the government, if left unchecked.⁵ Given the history of countless revolutions and counter-revolutions in the nineteenth century, the bourgeois anxieties and paranoia behind this description become all too apparent. However, Le Bon’s psychological portrait inadvertently also pointed out that the masses could be kept under control in ways other than brute force. If the crowd was governed less by its mind and more by its senses, then it was possible that it could be kept under control simply through ‘aesthetic’ means.

³ Ibid., 52 and 88.

⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁵ According to the historian Lynn Abrams, this fear was unfounded—at least in Imperial Germany. In her study of workers’ culture, she argues that workers’ entertainment was rarely politicized, particularly because organizations such as the Social Democratic Party (SPD) were as keen on curbing the excesses of workers’ leisure activities as the middle classes were. Lynn Abrams, Workers’ Culture in Imperial Germany. Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

This was the kind of project taken up by the educated middle classes in Imperial Germany in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As we have seen, a group of Wilhelmine intellectuals developed a new aesthetic discourse to ‘tame’ what they imagined to be the ‘vulgar’ experience of the lower echelons of society. This was a historical moment when mass politics, mass culture, and the so-called ‘mass university’ were becoming forces to reckon with. The educated middle classes were particularly alarmed by what they perceived to be the crass gratification of the senses found in mass culture. This represented to them the disintegration of the neo-humanistic tradition of *Bildung*, which defined aesthetic experience as an attentive, contemplative, and intellectual beholding that was cultivated through the appreciation of Classicism. In response to what they saw as a crisis of education and knowledge at the turn of the century, the liberal-minded members of the educated middle classes invented what I have called the kinaesthetic model of experience. Like its counterpart in mass entertainment, the kinaesthetic model was meant to produce enjoyment and sensual gratification and thereby appeal even to those without a proper education. At the same time, however, it was accompanied by pedagogical techniques to keep this corporeal pleasure under strict control. We have seen several examples of these control techniques: Obrist’s kinaesthetic sketching and comparative looking, Endell’s table of emotions, and the art historical slide lecture had in common a desire to tame, channel, and guide the excesses of bodily experience.

In the discourse of the new aesthetics, then, two contradictory ambitions coexisted. On the one hand, it was undeniable that the kinaesthetic model democratized aesthetic experience by theorizing it as an immediate, instinctual response to forms—a response that was not unique to an elite but was hypothetically available to anyone in possession of a body. The democratizing effect of this idea was manifested in numerous ways—from museum programs designed for children to the establishment of art classes in secondary schools and from art history’s efforts to appeal to a larger public to the inclusion of more women in specialized art schools. Furthermore, once aesthetic perception was understood to be associated with the unconscious movements of the body, the definition of artistic production was also broadened to include the activity of those who were previously considered to be outsiders to art—women, children, and the mentally ill. On

the other hand, however, although the kinaesthetic experience was supposed to have escaped the strictures of the disciplined beholding prescribed by *Bildung*, it was managed meticulously in other ways by the new aesthetics. The idea of *Wirkung* (effect), a theme repeated throughout this dissertation, illustrates this best: from Fechner to Endell the body's kinaesthetic response to forms was analyzed, supervised, and re-configured by means of effects.

The End of the New Aesthetics

An eloquent critique of the new aesthetics, written in 1892 by the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), precociously foretold the end of this discourse.⁶ In an essay titled "*Die drei Epochen der modernen Ästhetik und ihre heutige Aufgabe*" (The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and Its Present Task), Dilthey argued that an aesthetic discourse which sought to analyze aesthetic effects and impressions was not a panacea to speculative aesthetics, as its advocates claimed, but rather its equally insufficient counterpart.⁷ Exemplified best in the work of Fechner and the eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher Lord Kames, according to Dilthey, the aesthetics of effects was inextricably linked to the rise of a bourgeois order in Europe.⁸ The rationalist aesthetics that preceded it had come into being when absolutism in politics and deduction in mathematics had the upper hand. Rationalist aesthetics therefore accounted for beauty by means of metaphysical principles and Leibniz's principle of pre-existing harmony.⁹ Rationalist aesthetics and analysis of effects thus approached aesthetics from diametrically opposed extremes but with equally little success. The former assumed a transcendental point of view which understood beauty as an intelligible unity that was distinguished from logical unity only by a lower degree of distinctness. The latter, by

⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey, "Die drei Epochen der modernen Ästhetik und ihre heutige Aufgabe," *Die deutsche Rundschau* 18 (1892): 267-303. Translated into English by Michael Neville as "The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and Its Present Task" in *Selected Works*, vol. 5, *Poetry and Experience*, Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, eds. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985): 175-222. I will be citing the English translation.

⁷ The work in question is by Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (Edinburgh, 1762).

⁸ For Dilthey's discussion of Fechner and *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, see "Die Einbildungskraft des Dichters: Bausteine für eine Poetik" [1887], translated as "Imagination of the Poet," in *Poetry and Experience*, cited above, 86-92.

⁹ Dilthey, "Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics," cited above, 181-187.

contrast, examined simple sensations but was unable to explain how the artwork was more than a heap of impressions.¹⁰ In other words, rationalistic aesthetics failed at approximating the particular while sensualistic aesthetics was equally unsuccessful at approaching the universal:

Even when I experimentally isolate a particular component such as a line or a shape, a chord or a sequence of tones, the effects I experience are conditioned by acquired habits. At first I experiment with myself. As a person educated and historically conditioned in a certain context, something affects me aesthetically in a particular way. The impression embodies the results of a considerable amount of cognitive sense experience. The immediacy and simplicity of the impression is a psychological illusion. It stands in relation to the dim mass of representations, drives, and feelings of my acquired psychic nexus; it is oriented and conditioned by this nexus.... Now I extend my procedure; I test the aesthetic impression of the state of affairs on other persons as well. But here too, the range of the experiment remains geographically and temporally limited, and it remains so of necessity. Longstanding cognitive usages are embodied in our sense experience, and this can, over generations, produce judgments of taste which then appear to be simple and immediate....I do not know whether this difficulty can be resolved as such. But insofar as it can, this can only occur through a broadening of our horizon by means of historical considerations.¹¹

Dilthey maintained that in experimental aesthetics what should have been an experiential analysis of sensations had turned into a futile experimentation, in which a mechanical relationship of causality was sought between stimulus and sensation.¹² More importantly, Dilthey noticed, the analysis of aesthetic effects moved in a circle from which it could not free itself. The idea of pure sensations untouched by intellectual faculties was an illusion: analyzing sensations already supposed a certain concept of what was aesthetically effective. Thus, in an attempt to avoid metaphysical speculation, the new aesthetics had become incapable of critically understanding its own operations. The result was a confusion about the boundaries of art: psychophysics treated 'true' aesthetic feelings and crude and sensuous feeling-effects in exactly same manner. Dilthey's critique also betrayed anxieties about mass culture: the "territory of beauty," hitherto

¹⁰ Ibid., 205.

¹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹² Ibid., 198.

guarded by German aesthetics, which had “interpreted and defended genuinely great art over against the crude or sentimental instincts of the masses,” Dilthey argued, was now in danger.¹³

A decade later Dilthey’s criticism of the new aesthetics was repeated by others. Evaluating the current state of experimental aesthetics in 1914, neurologist and psychologist Theodor Ziehen identified several problems with the field. The boundaries of the aesthetics was problematic: when one attempted to define the objects of experimental aesthetics—that is, sensation, aesthetic effect, pleasure, etc.—one found oneself in a vicious circle from which there was no escape. Related to this, according to Ziehen, was the problem of distinguishing between direct and indirect (associative) aesthetic effects and the impossibility of measuring sensations.¹⁴ Paul Moos, one of the earliest historians of the new aesthetics, announced in 1919 that the movement was dead. The future of German aesthetics depended on its ability to free itself from the weight of psychology and draw its strength once again, Moos maintained, “from its true source... the German spirit.”¹⁵ The British philosopher Edward Bullough agreed with this verdict in 1921: he noted that no work of experimental aesthetics was carried out after 1914.¹⁶ By the end of WWI, the new aesthetics’ reformist project of configuring experience had completely fallen apart.

Although the line of critique initiated by Dilthey aptly revealed the internal contradictions of this aesthetic discourse, it was not theoretical weakness that ultimately brought about

¹³ Ibid., 201. Dilthey argued that both rationalist and empiricist aesthetics could be redeemed only if employed in combination with historical-sociological considerations. This was the foundation upon which Dilthey hoped to establish the entirety of the human sciences: historical embeddedness, ordinary experience of human subjects, reliance on a descriptive (as opposed to an analytical and explanatory) psychology, and, above all, *Verstehen* (understanding) as a mode of explanation were to be the basis of this science. The new aesthetics had purportedly embarked upon a similar project of producing a form of knowledge that placed the human body in the forefront, but, according to Dilthey, had failed. Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1883). Translated by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi as *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

¹⁴ Theodor Ziehen, “Über den gegenwärtigen Stand der experimentellen Ästhetik,” *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 9.1 (1914): 16-46.

¹⁵ Paul Moos, *Die deutsche Ästhetik der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, [1914] 1919) 478.

¹⁶ Edward Bullough, “Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics,” *British Journal of Psychology* 12 (1921) 76.

its end. Just as its emergence had to do with anxieties about mass culture, its demise was caused by changes in mass politics. Several historical forces coalesced to render the new aesthetics obsolete. First of all, by the early twentieth century, German politics had become much more polarized both on the right and the left, leaving little room for middle-of-the-road, liberal reformist thinking, which had produced the new aesthetics a few decades before. Secondly, it became increasingly clear in the new century that it was naïve of the educated elites to believe that they could control the experience of the masses by devising a series of liberal pedagogical strategies. As the case of cinema made abundantly clear, mass entertainment was becoming increasingly more commercialized. It was no longer a group of liberal-minded reformers but capitalists who made decisions about the nature of the masses' aesthetic experience. Finally WWI was a radical break: the war disrupted every realm of social life, effectively putting an end to the culture of the nineteenth century.

The Afterlife of the New Aesthetics

Although the interruption of WWI was decisive, several pedagogical practices that had been established within the framework of the new aesthetics found their way into the twentieth century. Although my intention here is neither to reduce this Wilhelmine aesthetic discourse to a mere precursor to twentieth-century modernism nor to endorse a teleological account of the Modern Movement, I will still remind the reader of some connections to subsequent developments. It is possible to argue, for example, that the curriculum of the Debschitz School anticipated the form that art pedagogy would take in the twentieth century. Through figures such as Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Paul Klee (1879-1940), and Johannes Itten (1888-1967) many pedagogical principles of the new aesthetics were transmitted to the Bauhaus. There were striking similarities between Debschitz's *Elementarunterricht* and the *Vorkurs* at the Bauhaus; Obrist's kinaesthetic sketch anticipated Johannes Itten's rhythmical studies; while traces of Schmarsow's idea of a "precious kernel" became manifest in Oskar Schlemmer's theorizations about the body two decades later. More remarkably, some of the practices that were devised at the turn of the twentieth century are well and alive today. Programs similar to the one that Alfred Lichtwark designed for children at the Hamburg Kunsthalle, for example, are

found in every major museum these days, while art historians still adhere to the double-slide format in the age of Powerpoint. This, after all, was the ingenuity of kinaesthetic practices: once established as habits, they could be easily reproduced and transmitted.

However, the new aesthetics made its most enduring impact in a much less noticeable manner. As we have seen, the kinaesthetic model of experience, which was devised within this discourse, partook in the modernist project of dismantling the nineteenth-century will-centered and unitary self, which was propagated through the institutions of *Bildung*. The self inherent in conceptions of *Bildung* was determined *from within* by an immutable core of consciousness. By contrast, the new aesthetics suggested a model of the self, which could be imprinted *from without* by external stimuli. It was for this reason that the kinaesthetic model of experience proved amenable to liberal reformist thinking at the turn of the twentieth century. This change signaled another important one: if the self was not immutable but was an adaptable entity, which was produced and re-produced by its sensations, then the environment, from which these sensations were received, should acquire new importance. Supported by different versions of Darwinism, the concept of the environment—along with a constellation of related terms including space, atmosphere, and milieu—proved to be a powerful idea in the second half of the nineteenth century. William James described the new relationship between the body and the environment as follows:

As surely as the hermit-crab's abdomen presupposes the existence of empty whelk-shells somewhere to be found, so surely do the hound's olfactories imply the existence, on the one hand, of deer's or foxes' feet, and on the other, the tendency to follow up their tracks. The neural machinery is but a hyphen between determinate arrangements of matter outside the body and determinate impulses to inhibition or discharge within its organs.¹⁷

This understanding of the environment as having an immediate and physical impact on an impressionable subject also became the basis for understandings of 'design' in the twentieth century. Modern design was predicated upon a new assumed relationship between forms and the physiology of the human body: it refused to make reference to

¹⁷ William James, "What is an Emotion?" *Mind* 9.34 (April 1884) 190.

normative criteria such as customs, morals, character, or *convenance* but referred all questions to the physiological structure of the body. Take the example of architecture: modern architecture in the twentieth century would claim that it no longer depended on classical orders, proportions, and the principle of imitation but was conceived around the themes of rhythm, movement, and, above all, space. As methods used by Obrist and Endell should have made clear, the theory of modern design consisted of calibrating forms to the effect that these forms would produce on the human body. The assumption, created by the new aesthetics, that there was an immediate relationship between form and affect would soon transform into the twentieth-century conviction that behavioral patterns could be altered by means of design. The new aesthetics at the turn of the twentieth century theorized forms of experience, which promised intersubjectivity and liberation from the boundaries of class and gender—all the while inventing techniques that would curb this new-found freedom. It was this paradox, above all, that was passed on to the twentieth century: modern design would consistently generate utopias—of collectivity, intersubjectivity, etc.—on the one hand, and continue to be a tool of social control, on the other.

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