

THE BAUHAUS, TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS, AND THE HISTORIANS

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The *Bauhaus* has commanded the attention of scholars and architects since the movement's beginnings in the period immediately after World War I, with its roots even going back to the years before 1914.¹ The contributions to this volume were written in part in an effort to provide fresh insights into this movement and the development of modern architecture more generally. Indeed, this article, too, uses the term *Bauhaus* as an abbreviation for the rise of modernism in design and architecture, as it began to grapple with the emergence of mass production, advanced technology, and the ever more pressing "social question" in the wake of rapid industrialization, population growth, and urbanization since the late nineteenth century.

But the previous authors have also raised other questions of broader interest. As indicated by the title "From Manhattan to Mainhattan," this anthology is ultimately concerned with the migration of people and ideas back and forth across the Atlantic in the twentieth century. Furthermore, it hopes to encourage more dialogue between a variety of historiographical genres and sub-disciplines. This concluding chapter is designed to return to these two larger concerns in an attempt to provide some further support to the considerations that animated the contributors to write their essays on more specific topics in the first place.

As for the first concern, the title "From Manhattan to Mainhattan" gives an incomplete picture of the migratory patterns. The crucial point here is that the Atlantic never was a one-way street, but rather a two-lane highway along which people and ideas constantly traveled in both directions between Europe and North America. By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States and Canada had received millions of European emigrants. They came mostly with few belongings, but often with considerable cultural baggage. They imported and upheld their religious faiths, ethnic traditions, dietary habits, and countless other practices, attitudes, and mentalities that over time blended with those of other immigrant groups to produce hyphenated "American" identities.

However, it was not just family traditions, structures, and local cultures that came with them across the Atlantic. There were also movements, organizations, and institutions that they transplanted and adapted to the new conditions they found. Among many examples, education—and higher education in particular—offers a good case in point. If the

British college system was the main model for American undergraduate education, graduate training came to be inspired by the German tradition of scholarly inquiry and *wissenschaftliche Ausbildung*.²

Still, the migration of ideas and people was not merely from East to West. Remigrants—those who did not “make it” in the New World—constituted an important group that shaped European perceptions of North America, as did novelists and travelers. For a long time these perceptions were dominated by images of trappers and “Red Indians,” of traders and gold-diggers, of cowboys and outlaws. In the eyes of many Europeans, America was a huge and wild continent with unruly and fiercely independent people; a land of “unlimited possibilities” and “rugged individualism.”³

However, by the late nineteenth century, the United States had undergone dramatic changes. While farming remained important, the U.S. had also begun to emerge as a major industrial power. Mining, iron, steel, and textile manufacturing blossomed in the rapidly growing conurbations, first along the East Coast and later in Pennsylvania, Ohio, upstate New York, and Michigan. Earlier on, the flow of technology and ideas on how to organize a modern industrial economy had been mainly from East to West. Thus, Samuel Slater developed his textile mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, by copying machinery whose design he had memorized while living in the industrial centers of northern England.⁴

By the 1880s, this kind of flow had slowly gone into reverse. Even before the turn of the century, European businessmen and engineers traveled across the Atlantic to learn about new steel-cutting machinery and the rationalization projects of the Scientific Management movement. They came to determine the extent to which Frederick Taylor’s ideas on industrial production or Henry Ford’s assembly lines for the mass production of automobiles could be transferred to the industrial milieu of Germany, France, or Britain. Subsequently, the electrical engineering firm of Robert Bosch in Stuttgart and Renault Cars in Paris began to experiment with Taylorism. Significantly, they did so with mixed results. But this is precisely why the exchange of people and ideas across the Atlantic is so intriguing to the historian. It enables us to study how American ideas of modernity were transformed, but also frequently rejected as alien and unsuitable, when they arrived in Europe. America became a symbol of economic, societal, and cultural modernity in the eyes of its European enthusiasts and its European critics alike.⁵

It must be added that this was also the age when scientists and engineers claimed a leading position in the shaping of society and economy and saw themselves as the class of the future. They sought not only to design and craft industrial goods, but also to take the lead in social engineering. The rise of Social Darwinism and the eugenics move-

ment must also be seen in this context, as many looked to the future with hope and optimism that technology and the new industrial system would solve all societal problems. Those who were skeptical of this vision and of the ideas that were now coming to Europe from America in ever larger numbers pointed to the fact that Taylorist efficiency and productivity had been purchased at the price of cheap, poorly designed, and poorly manufactured goods, produced by exploited and unskilled immigrant labor. By contrast, European products were said to be of the highest quality, even if this made them more expensive.⁶

Furthermore, the skeptics realized that mass production challenged traditional notions of consumption in European societies stratified by class, in which the more expensive and “better things in life” were reserved for elites. This is why they also tended to be critical of the idea that the kind of mass consumption heralded by Ford should be the goal of mass production. Indeed, Ford began to pass on the productivity gains in his rationalized factories by lowering his prices. As a result, his “tinlizzies” came within the range of the budgets of a growing number of consumers who were eager to acquire cars as a modern means of individualized transportation.⁷

Other developments also promoted the emergence of mass consumption. For example, the Sherman Act was introduced in the U.S. in 1890 with the avowed aim of protecting the consumer from the power of large corporations that were trying to gain a monopoly position in the market or that prevented a lowering of prices through the formation of cartels, i.e., horizontal price-fixing or production-limiting agreements between a group of independent companies in a particular branch of industry. In this way, certain producer behaviors that worked to the detriment of the consumer were banned and made subject to criminal prosecution. In the meantime, many European countries, much to the chagrin of ordinary consumers and their advocates, permitted the formation of overwhelmingly powerful market positions and cartels. In the case of Germany, the courts even legalized the latter in 1897.⁸

Related to the rise of mass production and mass consumption in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century was the proliferation of mass culture, i.e., a culture that was not merely enjoyed as “high culture” by the elite but that was available to, and affordable for, all.

This new and “democratic” culture came to be embodied (alongside the “cheap” novel) by the movies, even before 1914. The story of the silver screen began in France and America. But like mass production and mass consumption, cinemas and “film palaces” soon mushroomed everywhere, competing with the older, architecturally splendid opera houses, theaters, and concert halls in the towns and cities of Europe.

Meanwhile, most of the films that were shown were imports from the United States. Millions of Europeans went to see them, while assorted intellectuals and elite groups worried about the dangers of a medium that was inexpensive, did not require evening gowns and dark suits, and was open "to all." To be sure, the practices of enjoying American cultural imports, just as those of industrial mass production, were invariably adapted to indigenous conditions. Local popular cultures were not obliterated by what came from across the Atlantic. They were partly transformed and in many cases even reinforced, as industrialization and urbanization changed the composition and outlook of divergent social groups.⁹

Nor was it lost on both enthusiasts and critics of America that the modernization of the country's industry and patterns of consumption occurred within the constitutional framework of democratic participation in an age of unfolding mass politics. These political shifts also raised hopes in Europe among many, especially on the Left, while the conservative and anti-democratic Right was haunted by fears of the rule of the masses. Alexis de Tocqueville had first drawn attention to this in the 1830s in *Democracy in America*, but was not widely noted at the time.¹⁰ Some seventy years later, however, people began to refer to his book as a warning against the rise of the "masses." These fears were now powerfully articulated by Gustave Le Bon in his bestselling book *The Crowd*.¹¹

All this is to say that, by 1900, with information and goods flowing from West to East, the debate about the character and future of American society and its meaning for other parts of the world was in full swing in Western Europe. In particular, there was the question of the extent to which the United States anticipated the future development of European societies. World War I and the chaos and devastation it left behind temporarily halted the influx of economic and political ideas from across the Atlantic. However, by the mid-1920s, the former links had been restored. Once again, European businessmen, engineers, intellectuals, and trade unionists journeyed to the United States to look at how a country that had meanwhile emerged as the strongest industrial power in the world had developed during a war that had enormously boosted its productive capacity. Conversely, American bankers and industrialists, investors and Hollywood film distributors, entertainers and jazz musicians appeared in Europe in full force. There are a number of very good studies that examine the traffic along the trans-Atlantic highway in the postwar period, and we shall come back to this theme in a moment, inasmuch as it related to the arts and architecture.¹²

While there was, as before 1914, criticism and sharp rejection of America, overall the relationship intensified. At the level of industry,

American firms made direct investments in Europe on an impressive scale. Ford established production facilities in Germany and Britain. General Motors bought a stake in the British Vauxhall Company and in Opel Cars, which produced the first inexpensive German volume automobile, the *Laubfrosch*. The big chemical corporations forged joint ventures with their European counterparts, such as the German conglomerate I.G. Farben and Imperial Chemical Industries in the United Kingdom.¹³

By the late 1920s, millions of Europeans went to the movies at least once a week, and in 70–80 per cent of the cases they would see a Hollywood production. Coca-Cola built a bottling plant in Essen, in the heart of the industrial Ruhr area, to compete with the local beer brewers and soft-drink makers. If we define culture not merely as “high culture,” but broadly as comprising popular culture, education, religious practices, and scientific research, then American influences in the fields of European popular culture, entertainment, technology, consumer durables, and business organization can be found in many walks of life. And yet it would be misleading to say that the flow of ideas, people, and daily practices was an entirely one-sided affair, from the United States to Europe.¹⁴

While European companies and financial institutions also invested in the United States, the cultural interactions are particularly interesting. Partly because America was a society of immigrants who had come primarily from Europe throughout the nineteenth century, and partly because this was a country that was still in the process of self-formation and self-definition and in which many people tried to achieve, and did achieve, rapid upward mobility, the desire to be cultured and more refined caused the growing American bourgeoisie to promote “high culture.” Not surprisingly perhaps, Americans who had become successful abhorred the stereotypes of unshaven cowboys and greedy gold-diggers no less than Europe’s educated elites did. For these families, having learned to play the piano or violin and making “house music” or establishing a school of music and the performing arts was an important sign of cultural “arrival.” While there was an indigenous popular music, often imported and blended with other traditions, including African-American jazz, the pieces played in local concert halls were mostly from Europe’s classical composers.¹⁵

In the field of music, Germany exerted an enormous influence, both in terms of the repertoire and also the conductors and soloists invited to perform in Boston, New York, Washington, or Chicago. As Jessica Gienow-Hecht has shown, not even the Germanophobia generated by World War I was able to destroy the “elective affinities” that had developed since the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The rest of Europe also remained a point of orientation for American “high culture.” However, in the field of lit-

erature and the visual arts, the exchange became increasingly mutual after 1918, as the United States began to develop its own literary tradition and schools of painting. Here, the “Americanization” movement in the United States and the strength of postwar isolationist nationalism also left its mark. Conversely, Europe fell under the spell of jazz. In what came to be called *Zeitoper* in Weimar Germany, trans-Atlantic influences were also striking.¹⁷

When we consider such influences in the field of architecture, the picture is similarly complex. When architects and those who commissioned buildings in the U.S. looked to Europe before 1914, most of them adhered to classical styles. Until the 1870s, Britain was the main influence. Subsequently, the French Beaux Arts school dominated the field, although Georgian and colonial styles were also popular.¹⁸ Overall and notwithstanding the modernity of America’s industrial technologies and methods of mass production, private and public construction remained quite conservative and individualistic. The flow of ideas from Europe remained strong. There were two important exceptions where the Americans took the lead: high-rise structures and the avant-garde design of Frank Lloyd Wright’s buildings and furniture.¹⁹

The emergence of the skyscraper must be related to the growth of the large and powerful corporations. It was the tycoons who felt impelled to give concrete form to their technological and economic optimism and exuberant self-confidence in office headquarters that would impress and overwhelm those who stood in front of them or visited them on the top floor. These were the “cathedrals of capitalism” (or “cathedrals of commerce,” as the Woolworth Building was called), designed to embody power and success. It is true that the façades tended to follow conventional styles, but technically and in terms of statics they posed enormous challenges for the architect and builder. In this sense they were revolutionary and went well beyond what, except for the great cathedrals or the Eiffel Tower, the Europeans had dared to contemplate.

When businessmen from Britain or Germany visited the U.S. before 1914, they studied Taylorist rationalization and Ford’s assembly lines, and also admired the high-rise office buildings that were going up in New York and Chicago. The influence of the Beaux Arts movement found expression in innumerable private dwellings, in commercial buildings and railroad stations, or in New York’s large apartment blocks—“rental palaces,” as they were called in Central Europe—for those middle-class families who were keen to have large spaces for their needs of representation but were not wealthy enough to build or buy their own single, detached residence.²⁰ Parallel to the political Americanization movements inside the United States and in Europe, the “Americanization”

of architecture set in on both sides of the Atlantic. After 1918, the debate on skyscrapers was also in full swing in Europe.²¹

Beyond the shifts that took place in “high-cultural” architecture, especially in the field of office buildings, there was yet another level of European-American interaction that is even more difficult to disentangle: the avant-garde that began to depart quite radically from the stylistic conservatism of the mainstream. As far as the visual arts, music, literature, and theater are concerned, influences moved primarily from east to west. Architecture appears to have been more of an exception, and here it was, of course, Frank Lloyd Wright who proved to be a major inspiration, particularly in Holland, but also in Central Europe. When his work was published by Ernst Wasmuth in Germany, it created a sensation, and his visit to Berlin in 1910 generated plenty of curiosity among the small group of architects and artists, especially those who had come together in the German *Werkbund*.²²

Indebted originally to the Arts and Crafts movement and the ideas of William Morris and others, the *Werkbund* members began to distance themselves from the orthodoxies of cultural production in the Wilhelmine empire. Against the background of radical experimentation in the visual arts in Paris, Munich, and Vienna, the architects among the organization’s founders had for some time been wrestling with the development of a style that would reflect a spirit of innovation and rationalism in industry and modern city living. They wanted to move away from attention to decorative detail and towards bolder and clearer lines. While the Taylorists tried to reorganize work and habits inside the factory with the help of time-and-motion studies, architects began to design modern production halls, such as Peter Behrens’s *Turbinenhalle* built for the German electrical engineering trust A.E.G. in Berlin in 1909, and the Fagus factory in Alfeld (south of Hanover) in 1911. They also took a more comprehensive view of their discipline and included new approaches to town planning and the shaping of the larger physical environment of ever more densely populated areas. Modern architecture was to be open to all experiments and adopted a firmly interdisciplinary outlook.²³

In the limited space at my disposal, I can only allude to the evolution of European-American relations in the field of avant-garde architecture. The striking thing is that there was a certain parallelism. To some extent, they developed independently before 1914, which explains why Wright created such a sensation when he and his work reached Europe. But once again it is also intriguing to see how his ideas on the external structure and interior design of his buildings were adapted by his European colleagues. No less important, this translation process cannot be understood apart from the socio-cultural premises from which the leading lights of the *Werkbund* started, and which they cast into a foundational program

when they established the *Bauhaus* after World War I.²⁴ Bearing in mind the notion of the Atlantic as a two-lane highway, the peculiarities of this process explain in turn why the new ideas were not always received with open arms when a few of its protagonists came to the United States in the 1920s, not merely to study—as European businessmen, engineers, and trade unionists were doing—the evolution of the American industrial system with its rationalized production and “cathedrals of capitalism,” but also to offer their ideas on architecture and modernity that had been transformed during the intervening years.

When Walter Gropius published his “Art and Technology—A New Unity” in 1923, his title summarized an essential element of the *Bauhaus* project. However, we would miss another essential element if we left out the “social” and the related search for a more humane and genuinely democratic future. This search is already present as a motivating factor before 1914; but it was the catastrophe of World War I, its trauma, and its socio-economic consequences that brought the social into sharper relief in German life more generally and in *Bauhaus* thinking in particular. During the past two decades, social and economic historians have explored in detail the expansion, complexities, and inconsistencies of the Weimar welfare state.²⁵ The debates that it generated were manifestations of Germany’s “classical modernity” and its growing crisis, as it impacted material life and pervaded the thinking of contemporaries. Accordingly, social concerns came to constitute the heart of the educational work of the *Bauhaus* in Weimar, and later in Dessau, as long as Gropius was the school’s director. It may be said to have been an even stronger force during Hannes Meyer’s relatively short leadership, when the *Bauhaus* turned further left in its ideology. These were also the early years when the movement was not merely interested in developments across the Atlantic, but, significantly, also in the cultural experimentation in pre-Stalinist Russia.²⁶

There was something inescapable about this focus on the social during the early phase. The misery of the postwar years, with hyperinflation and a virtual state of permanent civil war, challenged intellectuals and in particular those who viewed themselves as the avant-garde to think radically about the relationship between their cultural production and their political aspirations. When, during the mid-1920s, a measure of economic and political stability returned to Weimar Germany, and Americans appeared on the European stage as investors and industrial modernizers who promised prosperity, mass production, and mass consumption, the concern for the social took on some American features. But it did not become “Americanized” in the sense of a pervasive ethos of individualism. Solidarity and the welfare of the larger community, including support for those in poverty continued to undergird the *Bauhaus* project, even

more so after national elections in 1928 produced a leftist Reich government led by the victorious Social Democrats.²⁷ It is hardly a coincidence that it is in this period that, next to individual buildings, public and private, there emerged those large housing projects which were developed as model new living environments for the working “masses,” including the *Hufeisen-Siedlung* in Berlin and the flat-roofed settlements in Celle, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe-Dammerstock, and Red Vienna.²⁸

It was when Ludwig Mies van der Rohe succeeded Meyer that social concerns began to fade, and the *Bauhaus* became depoliticized. The new director had always preferred to design individual private houses and futuristic high-rise office buildings. Now, the stress was more on careful architectural training and less on urban planning and the humanization and democratization of the city environment. If his predecessors had thought in terms of a broad education and in this sense had been anti-academic, Mies redefined the school’s mission more narrowly, perhaps also in the hope of taking the *Bauhaus* out of the political firing-line when, in the political hot-house atmosphere of the early 1930s, it was attacked by the extreme Right. When the Nazis seized power in January 1933 and Hitler established a one-party dictatorship with astonishing speed and cunning, Mies’s strategy had reached the end of the road. He closed the *Bauhaus* in the summer of 1933, pre-empting a ban by the new regime.

Gropius had been guided by larger visions. If we now turn back to the question of trans-Atlantic relations, it is not surprising that even the American avant-garde had difficulties connecting with his societal utopia. True, they were fascinated by the boldness of Mies’s sky-scraper sketches. They also felt inspired by his coolly functional interior designs and Marcel Breuer’s tubular chairs. The popularity of the Swiss Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) or the Dutchman J.J.P. Oud must also be seen in this context. The avant-garde on both sides of the Atlantic was agreed that this was an age of modern technology. The machine that enthused Henry Ford was also much in evidence at the International Style Show at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1932. But when it came to the social that was frequently perceived as socialist, American enthusiasm began to evaporate. Indeed, it completely waned among those Americans who, like many European intellectuals and educated people, upheld elitist notions of culture within their own society against the “trashy vulgarity” of mass culture and entertainment. When it came to jazz, a racist element was added to their rejection.²⁹

In these circumstances, the *Bauhaus* found it difficult in the 1920s to gain wider recognition in the United States. It was not just that anti-German feeling persisted after 1918. Nor was it the nationalism of the indigenous Americanization movement. Before the Great Depression of

1929, it was also reservations about the social message that was at variance with American self-images of their country as a modern industrial and urban society. Too many educated people had bought into the American Dream at a time when a liberal-capitalist economy delivered the goods. They saw themselves as one large middle-class society in which they were free to work and assert themselves as individuals. Accordingly, participation was also individual, be it as consumers of increasingly affordable mass-produced goods or as voters in a liberal-democratic system that in theory, though not necessarily in practice, gave the vote to all adult citizens.

It is against this background that the resistance of a large number of architects to *Bauhaus* modernism becomes plausible. They were the ones who, especially during the building boom of the prosperous mid-1920s, catered to the often idiosyncratic decorative tastes of their wealthy clients. In this climate of liberal individualism and aesthetic conservatism, the American architectural avant-garde faced enough of a struggle. At the time, it would have been even more difficult to absorb and transmit the social democratic messages of the *Bauhaus* on top of their advocacy of modern structures and materials.³⁰ This is why the public's imagination was more easily captured by a daring vision of sky-scrapers or a sketch of a futuristic metropolis, especially after Fritz Lang's film with its fantastic expressionist backdrops. Modernity was also acceptable when it came to factories, like the huge halls of Ford's River Rouge glass plants in Dearborn, Michigan. However, there was also plenty of criticism on both sides of the Atlantic from those who viewed Lang's *Metropolis* and similar utopias of future living with horror, fearing the destruction of the individual by the Moloch of the collective and by icy-cold machines which devour the humans who worship them.³¹

During the 1930s, the forces which supported the kind of all-embracing architectural modernity conceived in Central Europe after World War I gained strength. It is a shift that has been examined many times before and related to what Europeans had first experienced in the early 1920s and went through again after the Wall Street crash of October 1929: economic collapse, mass unemployment, political radicalization, loss of confidence in the capitalist system. If the boom years had seen a strengthening of the credo of individualism and self-reliance, with only a few lonely voices, such as Lewis Mumford's, advocating community solidarity and action, then the depression pushed millions of Americans into abject poverty. There was virtually no safety net to halt their fall into destitution and despair. This experience was bound to have a profound effect. Its reflections can be found in the above-mentioned 1932 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, which featured work by Gropius, Mies, Oud, and Le Corbusier. It contained an extensive presentation of Euro-

pean housing, curated by Mumford, featuring Otto Haessler's Celle project and Oud's work in Rotterdam.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal reflected a shift towards a political climate in which the first corner-stones of the modern American welfare state could be established.³² The strategy was to pump public funds into the depressed economy to support programs that would give people work and renewed spending power. Jobs were created through public works programs in the hope of stimulating production in the private sector and thereby getting the economy as a whole back onto a path of growth and expansion. Proto-Keynesian deficit-spending was the recipe for achieving the turnaround.

As the American political system confronted the "social questions" of mass unemployment and poverty, the slums in the big cities attracted serious attention and debate for the first time. If the poor had hitherto received little or no public help and had to rely on private charity, now those most deeply affected by the crisis began to make their voices heard. They formed organizations and unions to demand improvement, if not even radical change. It was in this atmosphere of social criticism that the question of cost-efficient and publicly financed low-cost housing appeared on the agenda. Exhibitions and books reinforced the trend. Greenbelt, Maryland, was put on the drawing-board, and with all this came a greater appreciation of the larger ideas of the *Bauhaus* movement that had fallen on deaf ears in America in the 1920s. There was one contributing factor that dated back to those years and that now assumed additional importance: the expansion of mass production techniques during the booming 1920s had also led a few enterprising minds in the construction industry to take up Fordist ideas of rationalization and to begin to produce standardized building materials and other pre-fabricated elements.³³

Against the background of these developments, American architects and planners became interested in the German *Siedlung* experiments as well as in the broader considerations of modern industrial and urban living that were underlying these and other Weimar public building projects. Gropius and his colleagues later reinforced this interest when they came to the United States as refugees from Nazism. In the 1920s, contact had been sporadic at a time when a trip across the Atlantic was expensive and cumbersome, further exacerbated by language barriers and unfamiliarity with another society and its professional culture. After 1933, many members of the *Bauhaus* movement, having been forced to flee from Hitler's dictatorship, found shelter in the U.S. Even if not all of them immediately obtained positions inside and outside the academy, at least they now lived in the country and were able to explain in detail their ideas on "art and technology," architecture, and modern living.³⁴

Meanwhile Hitler and his favorite architect Albert Speer pursued their own grandiose plans for metropolitan reconstruction, monumental public buildings designed to overawe, suburban settlement, and ultimately mass “resettlement” through ethnic cleansing in the conquered territories in the east.³⁵ What is significant about these plans is that American buildings and engineering feats served as models time and again, just as the American system of Fordist mass production and mass consumption became blueprints for Hitler’s future Thousand-Year Reich. Except, of course, that it was built not on the principle of a diverse and multicultural society, but on that of a racist one from which all “non-Aryans” were to be excluded by deportation and mass murder. Traffic across the Atlantic highway stopped only after the beginning of World War II. This also applies to the earlier eugenics movement that in Germany merged with biological racism, leading to the attempted elimination of entire social groups that were declared “inferior” and “superfluous.” As designers of the granite embodiments of brutal power, men like Speer played an important role in this utopia.³⁶

If we now move again from Europe across the Atlantic, the life and work of Gropius at Harvard, Mies at Illinois, or Josef Albers at Black Mountain College in North Carolina has been covered in a variety of studies of the migration of the *Bauhaus* to America. There, they transformed the training of architects, but were also transformed by their experience of American education, society, and culture. Beyond this chapter in the history of European and American cultural interaction, this volume contains a number of contributions on how the trans-Atlantic “highway” was rebuilt, physically and intellectually, after World War II. People and ideas about industrial production and consumption, social and political organization, culture, and modern living had traveled in both directions along this route prior to World War II. After the war, the human and conceptual traffic resumed in equal measure. At first, the movement was primarily from west to east, and later in both directions. And as one of the above essays demonstrates there was, as before, also cultural resistance.³⁷

We have now reached the point where we can turn to the second theme of this concluding article and examine the implications of our analysis for the discipline of History, its institutions and structures of research and teaching. Considering the evolution of the discipline since the mid-nineteenth century, there have been several attempts to reintegrate its various strands and to restore what might be called its “inner interdisciplinarity” with the aim of overcoming the fragmentation that occurred in the late nineteenth century.

There arose, it is true, the threat of further fragmentation after World War II with the rise of new genres, such as social and labor history,

gender history, the histories of memory and identity, and other more recent approaches to the field. In retrospect, it may be chalked up as an achievement that this diversification by and large did not result in the setting up of new academic departments. Nor did existing departments disintegrate along the lines of the major geographic regions. Accordingly, most history departments around the world, despite their numerical expansion during the 1970s and the attendant lure of secession, unite under one roof different genres of historical writing and major regions. To make this arrangement work productively may not always be easy and there have been repeated threats of secession. On the whole, they can be said to have failed.³⁸

At the same time, it is well to remember that History has not always been as successful at preserving its unity as it was after World War II. This is why to this day there continue to be three sub-disciplines that lead a separate departmental existence and that have, inevitably, created institutional walls: economic history, the history of science, and the history of art and architecture. These walls have generally made it difficult to engage in conversations across them. The reasons for these divisions are found in the late nineteenth century and are most clearly identifiable in the case of economic history. When this sub-discipline developed in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent urge of scholars to study the rapid changes it had brought, the established political, constitutional, and intellectual historians, already firmly ensconced in what the Germans called *historische Seminare*, refused to accept their economic history colleagues. Conservative in outlook and methodology, the opponents of integration denigrated them, declaring their work to be unimportant to the actual tasks of the discipline, namely to study politics, power, diplomacy, and great men. Consequently, economic historians moved more closely toward economics, which was then in the process of establishing itself as an independent academic discipline with its own departments. And this is where, with some exceptions, economic historians have remained to this day.³⁹

The experience of the history of science as a sub-discipline has been similar, leading to the creation of separate departments at institutions large enough to be able to afford a group of historians of science or anxious to have them because of their broader interest in science and technology, for example, at technical universities and institutes. But the story of why art and architectural history did not become part of expanding and multiplying history departments seems to be more complicated. Here it was more a peculiar interactive process in which it was not just the influential representatives of the history of politics, diplomacy, statesmen, and great political ideas who considered their scholarship superior to that of their colleagues interested in art and architectural history;

rather, it was also the latter group's desire to establish themselves as practitioners of a rigorous sub-discipline that asked different, but equally important questions about culture. This quest for autonomy was reinforced by the progressive professionalization and specialization that affected all spheres of life in the nineteenth century. There was also the expansion of teaching positions that followed the demographic explosion of the eighteenth century and the rising demand for higher education.

If the first scholar to be appointed as professor of art history was Johann Dominic Fiorillo who, born in Hamburg, assumed his position at Göttingen University in 1813, other positions were quickly established thereafter, including one in Bonn in 1818.⁴⁰ However, it was not just that the early art historians labored hard to develop and refine their methods of investigation, often in close cooperation with archaeologists and architectural historians; there was also the perennial problem of scarce resources and conflicts among faculty over their distribution. Working and teaching in the field of art and architectural history could not be done without large collections of drawings and expensive books. Thus, Hermann Grimm complained that he had great problems in Berlin in obtaining the necessary materials for his lectures in recent art history.⁴¹

It is in this context that the sub-discipline found the newly-created polytechnic schools and later technical *Hochschulen* and institutes more open than the venerable universities, which were often paralyzed by vicious infighting and bureaucratic inertia. And so art history began to establish itself at first in the polytechnic schools of southern Germany. In 1854, the Zürich Polytechnic created a special chair in the subject. The Technische Hochschulen of Stuttgart and Karlsruhe followed suit in 1865 and 1868 respectively. There were, of course, also affinities with the technical disciplines whose rise had led to the founding of these institutes in the first place, especially with engineering and architecture. It was only in the 1890s and after the turn of the century that the universities, among them Heidelberg, Tübingen, and Freiburg, finally gave up their hostility. Berlin and Leipzig also fell into line. Reeling under the condescension of their colleagues in the traditional fields of historiography, architectural historians sought salvation in the creation of institutional enclaves. The art history institute at Bonn University, evidently not fully appreciated among colleagues, even went so far as to collaborate with the Dresden Technische Hochschule in the study of medieval monuments.

With the growth of scholarship came the training of small groups of graduate students who were initiated into the methods and analytical techniques of what had by then become a serious *Wissenschaft*. Meanwhile, the British universities continued their education of gentlemen in the liberal arts more broadly, ending with a non-professional first degree, the bachelor of arts. A professional education came only thereafter, em-

phasizing engineering and mathematical skills that did not pay much attention to the history of buildings and monuments. It was only in the 1930s that art history became a sub-discipline in its own right when refugees from Nazi Germany arrived in the United Kingdom, bringing with them their knowledge and understanding of art history as a *Wissenschaft*. The United States had a similar experience. After having adopted and adapted the British college system for its undergraduates and educating the young in a liberal arts tradition, art history as a separate sub-discipline with autonomous departments came with the introduction to the U.S. in the second half of the nineteenth century of the Central European model of graduate education and advanced scholarly training.

The first American professional school was established in 1865, at the more innovative Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was charged with complementing the training that future architects had traditionally been given as apprentices in architectural firms. Institutes similar to that in Boston were soon founded at Illinois, Cornell, Columbia, and Syracuse. More universities followed in the 1890s. Finally, in 1893 and largely under the leadership of Columbia's William A. Boring, the Society of Beaux Arts Architects and the American Academy launched a campaign for uniform standards in all American architectural schools, based on the model of the Parisian school as it was interpreted by these select groups of New York-based architects. The Beaux-Arts course was *de rigueur* in all existing schools; it also provided the pedagogical context for new professional schools founded at this time, including the University of California at Berkeley, Michigan, Georgia Tech, Carnegie Tech, Texas, Rice, Virginia, and Princeton. In these schools, as in the older institutions, students turned to Julien Guadet's *Eléments et Théorie de l'Architecture* (1902) as their new Bible. Even those who could not read French studied the drawings, "with their emphasis on universal laws of composition and their elegant style of rendering."⁴² Beyond the formalism, "there were continuing efforts to think about other histories, especially in the evolution of building technologies," creating a greater awareness of historical specificities and an opening for architectural historians.

Increasingly, students could also rely on influential historical textbooks, pointing them to different epochs and cultures that had produced the artifacts pictured. Texts, but above all images, were used to describe continuity and change in the field of art and architectural history. From this emerged in turn a claim that could also be heard from other new fields of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. Now it was supposed to be the approaches and tools of analysis of these new fields that offered deeper insights into the deeper structures and the spirit of the age. Similar arguments circulated among the natural sciences that were

revolutionizing contemporary understanding of the micro- and macrocosmos with correspondingly large assertions about the implications of their discoveries for modern society.⁴³

In the course of the often sharp competition over which discipline would retain or gain a hegemonic position in the world of scholarship and the interpretation of the universe, it eventually became clear that the time was over when one academic discipline would permanently occupy the central place, as theology or philosophy had done in the West in previous centuries. Modern societies had become just too complex and diverse for one perspective to be able to dominate. It was this realization that now produced a peculiar back-and-forth between two positions in art and architectural history, as it did in other disciplines. On the one hand, there was the trend toward an ever more meticulous examination of cultural objects. Practitioners developed into highly specialized experts of more and more sub-sub-fields. Very close technical inspection became the *sine qua non*, and this is also what the training of the next generation of scholars was assumed to involve.⁴⁴

Others, while acquiring this expertise as earnestly as everybody else, raised larger questions that led them not to make fresh claims of disciplinary superiority, but instead to throw themselves into other disciplines. Their aim was to take the scholar out of his/her "*selbstgewählte Isolierung*" [self-imposed isolation].⁴⁵ Accordingly, they began to look for connections between art and architectural history and psychology, philosophy, semiotics, or political economy. Already before the twentieth century, historians of philosophy such as Wilhelm Dilthey searched for links between the disciplines. Whereas Jakob Burckhardt (and, even more so, Anton Springer) had tried to integrate the "study of art and of social life" in a particular period, Dilthey believed even more strongly that knowledge that was purely descriptive and classificatory was too limiting to investigate more fundamental issues of the human predicament.⁴⁶ Accordingly, he embarked upon a search for humankind's inner structures and the movements of entire cultural systems, including their rational as well as irrational wellsprings. As Dilthey put it, "the task of our generation is clearly before us: following Kant's critical path, but in cooperation with researchers in other areas, we must found an empirical science of the human mind. It is necessary to know the laws which rule social, intellectual, and moral phenomena. This knowledge of laws is the source of all the power of man, even where mental phenomena are concerned."⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Aby Warburg, in his own quest to advance art history as a *Kulturwissenschaft*, labored to define it with the help of a "theory of symbols" and a "psychological theory of expression by imitation and by the use of tools."⁴⁸ The "underlying theme of his work" was "the fight" which he saw "the artist as waging against superstition and repressive

social convention." Heinrich Wölfflin, who had studied under Burckhardt, moved along a similar path, arguing that art and architectural history must be more than fact-finding and "rhapsodizing" about cultural artifacts.⁴⁹ He wanted to find out how objects reflected the spirit of an age. And "because the awareness of each age differs from preceding and succeeding ages, artists," he asserted, "are beholden to their periods and cannot freely choose how to paint."

Finally, there was the impact of Marxism upon the discipline after 1918, which postulated that "the ideological superstructure of society, with all its manipulations, disruptions, and pathologies, is to be found in the social practices, such as etiquette, and in laws, institutions, education, and art."⁵⁰ The task was "to unmask and display the system of ideas (ideologies) hidden by the social practices of the culture at large." Or, to quote Arnold Hauser, a protagonist of this approach, "all factors material and intellectual, economic and ideological, are bound up together in a state of indissoluble interdependence."⁵¹ Gropius, as we have seen, was similarly motivated by large concerns and proposed to link the *Bauhaus* project with the social sciences.

Since then, art and architectural history have continued to sway back and forth between the particularist and the positivist in a technical sense, on the one hand (for example, Nikolaus Pevner's faithful recordings of all of Britain's architectural monuments), and the universalist and trans-disciplinary, on the other (controversial theorizing, whether in a Marxist or, more recently, in a postmodernist mode). There is the teaching of "pure" architecture that does not wish to see urban planning included in the curriculum next to inter-disciplinary conceptualizing on a grand scale, just as there are advocates of the broad sweep.

However, this essay is not advocating the pursuit of those latter, very large ambitions. All it proposes is to make the boundaries within a single discipline, History, more permeable again. This is not to suggest that art and architectural history departments at institutions of higher learning be absorbed into the generally larger history departments. Such a merger would be unrealistic and counter-productive. But considering that history departments now contain a wide range of genres and that political historians work side-by-side with practitioners of social, gender, or cultural history, there is plenty of scope for dialogue and mutual sharing of specialized knowledge across departmental boundaries. This cooperation is made all the easier because all historians share similar ways of viewing the past and looking at evidence. There is no need to begin from zero and immerse oneself in the time-consuming and daunting task of mastering the quite different traditions of thought and methodologies of the non-historical disciplines.

The *Bauhaus*, broadly defined as it has been in this contribution, provides a most promising field of inquiry for this kind of integration of scholarship within a single discipline. To be sure, there exists an extensive literature on this subject, but in order to understand fully this highly influential movement it is not enough to study Gropius's program or Mies's curricula at Dessau, Berlin or, later, Illinois. Today's syllabus of a course on the *Bauhaus* should also include as required reading, for example, Mary Nolan's *Visions of Modernity*, William McNeil's *American Money and the Weimar Republic*, and Kaspar Maase's *Grenzenloses Vergnügen*; and for the 1930s, it should list the most important works on the New Deal.⁵² The transatlantic two-lane highway and the study of the encounter between two continents with their societies and cultures will also have to be an inseparable part of it.

Notes

¹ I would like to thank Barry Bergdoll, Cordula Grewe, and Dietrich Neumann for their most helpful advice and comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

² See, for example, Daniel Fallon, "Deutsche Einflüsse auf das amerikanische Erziehungswesen," in Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, eds., *Deutsch-amerikanische Begegnungen* (Stuttgart, 2001), 91–102.

³ See John F. Sears, "Bierstadt, Buffalo Bill, and the Wild West in Europe," in Rob Kroes et al., eds., *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions* (Amsterdam, 1993), 3–14.

⁴ See Sean D. Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age* (New York, 1993); John R. Killick, "Die industrielle Revolution in den Vereinigten Staaten," in Willi P. Adams, ed., *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (Frankfurt/Main, 1978), 125–83.

⁵ See Robert Kanigel, *The One Best Way* (New York, 1997); Patrick Fridenson, *L'Usine Renault* (Paris, 1971); Anita Kugler, "Von der Werkstatt zum Fließband," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 13 (1987), 304–39.

⁶ See the telling statement by Daimler-Benz, quoted in A. Kugler (note 5), 315ff.: "Over here we are still a long way from the American situation where every Mr. Jones owns a car. With us the automobile is for the most part a vehicle for the better-off classes." And: "Here [we do things] meticulously and thoroughly; over there [in America it is] skimping and rushing."

⁷ See Henry Ford's bestselling *My Life and Work* (New York, 1922). See also Robert Sobel, *The Life and Times of Dillion Read* (New York, 1991), 144ff.

⁸ See Richard B. Heflebower, "Monopoly and Competition in the United States of America," in Edward H. Chamberlin, ed., *Monopoly and Competition and Their Regulation* (London, 1954), 110–40; Volker Hentschel, *Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1978), 99ff.

⁹ See Kaspar Maase, *Grenzenloses Vergnügen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1997); Charles Musser, *The Emergence of the Cinema* (Berkeley, 1994).

¹⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1945).

¹¹ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd* (London, 1910).

¹² See Werner Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland, 1921–1932* (Düsseldorf, 1970); Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity* (Oxford, 1994); Frank Costigliola, *Awkward*

Dominion (Ithaca, 1984); William C. McNeil, *American Money and the Weimar Republic* (New York, 1986).

¹³ See, for example, Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology* (Cambridge, 1987).

¹⁴ See Thomas Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin* (Berkeley, 1996); Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* (New York, 1992), pp. 174ff.

¹⁵ Jessica C. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy* (Chicago, 2004), chap. 1–4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 7.

¹⁷ See, for example, Walter Laqueur, *Weimar. Die Kultur der Republik* (Frankfurt, 1974), 139ff. See also Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture* (London, 1974).

¹⁸ See Gwendolyn Wright and Janet Parks, eds., *The History of History in American Schools of Architecture, 1865–1975* (New York, 1990), 8ff. See also Neil Levine, ed., *Vincent Scully. Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, (Princeton, 2003).

¹⁹ See Brendan Gill, *Many Masks. A Life of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York, 1987).

²⁰ See Carl Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Cambridge, 1961).

²¹ Dietrich Neumann, *Die Wolkenkratzer kommen* (Braunschweig, 1955). See also Kenneth T. Gibbs, *Business Architectural Imagery in America, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor, 1984).

²² Ernst Wasmuth, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright. Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe* (Berlin, 1911); Joan Campbell, *The Werkbund* (Princeton, 1968); Frederic Schwartz, *The Werkbund. Design Theory and Mass Culture Before the First World War* (New Haven, 1996).

²³ See, Matthew Jefferies, *Imperial Culture in Germany, 1871–1918* (New York, 2003), 216ff.

²⁴ See, for example, Marcel Franciscano, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar* (Chicago 1971).

²⁵ See Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State, 1919–1933* (Princeton 1998); David Crew, *German on Welfare. From Weimar to Hitler* (Oxford, 1998).

²⁶ See Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia* (Bloomington, 1978).

²⁷ See Volker R. Berghahn, *Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1987), 87ff.; Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

²⁸ The *Weissenhof-Siedlung* in Stuttgart is also occasionally referred to in this context. But it was more a project for the middle-classes than a settlement for workers. It is significant that Mies did not escape this influence either. His municipal building project at *Afrikanische Strasse* in Berlin (1925–27) was small in scale, but constituted one of the earliest. At the same time he “began to explore—first in his personal notebooks and soon after in his design work—the challenge of retaining human and spiritual values in the face of technological change.” As he warned in 1924: “We agree with the direction [Henry] Ford has taken, but we reject the plane on which he moves. Mechanization can never be the goal; it must remain the means. A means toward a spiritual purpose.” Quoted in Barry Bergdoll and Terence Riley, “Mies in Berlin,” *Guide for the Exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art*, June 21—September 11, 2001 (New York, 2001), 9. See also Werner Blaser, *Mies van der Rohe. Teaching and Principles* (New York, 1977); Ulfert Herlin et al., eds., *Neubausiedlungen der 20er und 60er Jahre* (Frankfurt, 1987); Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley, 2001).

²⁹ Peter Blake, *Marcel Breuer* (New York 1949); M. Nolan, *Visions of Modernity*, 109ff.; F. Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion*, 172ff.

³⁰ Margaret Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America. First Contacts, 1919–1936* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 37ff.

³¹ See Dietrich Neumann, ed., *Filmarchitektur. Von Metropolis bis Blade Runner* (Munich 1996).

³² See, for example, William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York, 1963); John K. Galbraith, *The Great Crash* (New York, 1954).

- ³³ M. Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America*, 228.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 204ff.
- ³⁵ See Jochen Thies, *Architekt der Weltherrschaft* (Düsseldorf, 1976); Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1979).
- ³⁶ See Philipp Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart, 1997).
- ³⁷ See the contribution by Alexander Sedlmaier in this volume.
- ³⁸ See Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Chicago, 1988). The more pessimistic view prevailed during the 1980s.
- ³⁹ See Günther Schulz et al., eds., *Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Arbeitsgebiete—Probleme—Perspektiven* (Stuttgart, 2004).
- ⁴⁰ Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution* (Frankfurt, 1979), 14.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 50ff. See also Kathryn Brush, "Marburg, Harvard and Purpose-Built Architecture for Art History, 1927," in Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Art History and Its Institutions* (London, 2002), 65–84; John Zukowsky, "Urbane Dreams and Urban Realities: Some Observations on Regionalism and Architecture in the Modern German City," in Françoise Forster-Hahn, ed., *Imagining Modern German Culture, 1889–1910* (Washington, 1996), 147–63.
- ⁴² Gwendolyn Wright, "History for Architects," in Wright and J. Parks, eds. *The History of History in American Schools of Architecture*, 23.
- ⁴³ See, for example, John L. Heilbron, *The Dilemmas of an Upright Man* (Berkeley, 1986).
- ⁴⁴ See Wright, "History for Architects," 40ff. See also Panayotis Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 5ff., and Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?* (Chicago, 1987).
- ⁴⁵ Thus Ernst Gombrich, as quoted in Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution*, 40.
- ⁴⁶ Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven, 1982), xxiv.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in Vernon H. Minor, *Art History's History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1994), 114. On Dilthey, see also Georg G. Iggers, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft* (Munich, 1971), 175ff.
- ⁴⁸ Edgar Wind, "Warburg's Concept of 'Kulturwissenschaft' and its Meaning for Aesthetics," in Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998), 207.
- ⁴⁹ Minor, *Art History's History*, 125.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 145. See also Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History* (New Haven, 1989), 160ff.
- ⁵² See notes 9 and 12 above. See also Katie Withersby-Lench's "Investigating the Bigger Picture: A Case Study of the Jacobean Great Barn at Vaynol Park," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, XIII (Cambridge, 2003), 281–91, which Clyde Binfield, the editor of the papers of a joint symposium of the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, held at Tapton Hall, University of Sheffield, on 5–7 April 2002, introduced with the words (194ff.): "Here too is an essay on how a building-centred study, deploying the interaction of architectural, economic, socio-cultural, and political history (with a strong woman yet again powerful in the not-so-distant background), can answer the historian's questions as no single type of history could."