1922 'De Stijl': Creative demands

De Stijl made its voice heard all over Europe. Month by month the periodical spread the principles of elemental creativity. Theo van Doesburg travelled from city to city delivering lectures. 'The progressive architects of Holland have adopted an international standpoint.' Which 'has grown up out of practice'. The field of practice had itself expanded. In 1920 *De Stijl* formulated its literature manifesto and in 1921 the manifesto *Vers une nouvelle formation du monde*. At the International Artists Congress in Düsseldorf in May 1922 van Doesburg announced: 'We are preparing the way for the use of an objective universal means of creation.'

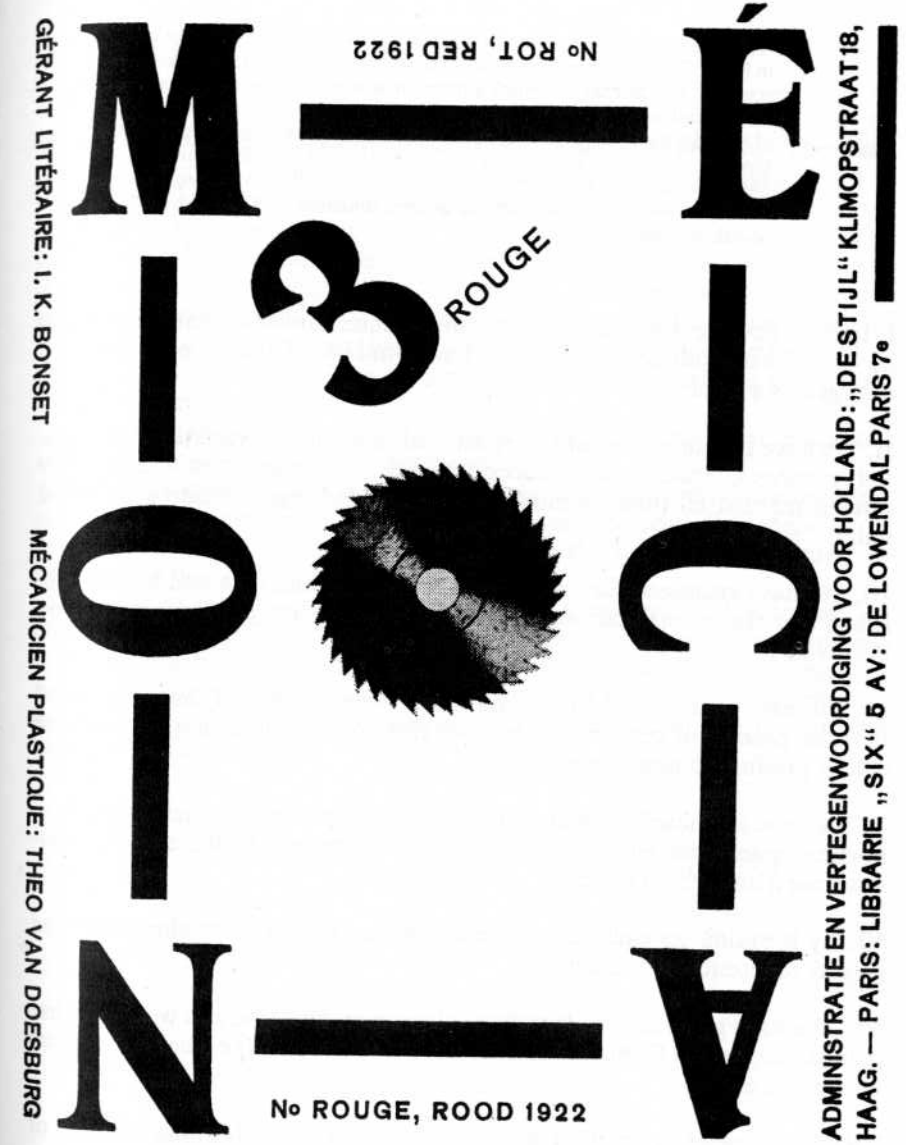
1. The end of exhibitions. Instead: demonstration rooms for total works.

2. An international exchange of ideas concerning creative problems.

3. The development of a universal means of creation for all arts.

4. An end to the division between art and life. (Art becomes life.)

5. An end to the division between artist and man.



Theo van Doesburg, 1922

1923 'De Stijl': Manifesto V: $- \square + = R_4$

'Towards Collective Building' is the heading over *De Stijl Manifesto V*, written in Paris. Collective building means: constructive collaboration of architect, sculptor, and painter in a work existing in space and time. All work to be carried out according to the elemental laws of the specific material. The result of this work will be a flawless unity of the arts, from which all individual emotions have been banished. In *De Stijl VI* Theo van Doesburg and Cor van Eesteren comment on the Paris manifesto: art and life can no longer be separated. Hence the term art has become unusable. We are seeking an objective system.

I. In close co-operation we have examined architecture as a plastic unit made up of industry and technology and have established that a new style has emerged as a result.

II. We have examined the laws of space and their endless variations (i.e. spatial contrasts, spatial dissonances, spatial supplementations) and have established that all these variations can be welded together into a balanced unity.

III. We have examined the laws of colour in space and time and have established that the mutual harmonization of these elements produces a new and positive unity.

IV. We have examined the relationships between space and time and found that the process of rendering these two elements visible through the use of colour produces a new dimension.

V. We have examined the mutual interrelationships between dimension, proportion, space, time and material and have discovered a final method of constructing a unity from them.

VI. By breaking up enclosing elements (walls, etc.) we have eliminated the duality of interior and exterior.

VII. We have given colour its rightful place in architecture and we assert that painting separated from the architectonic construction (i.e. the picture) has no right to exist.

VIII. The time of destruction is at an end. A new age is dawning: the age of construction.

van Eesteren / Theo van Doesburg / G. Rietveld

Van Doesburg and van Eesteren: Towards collective building

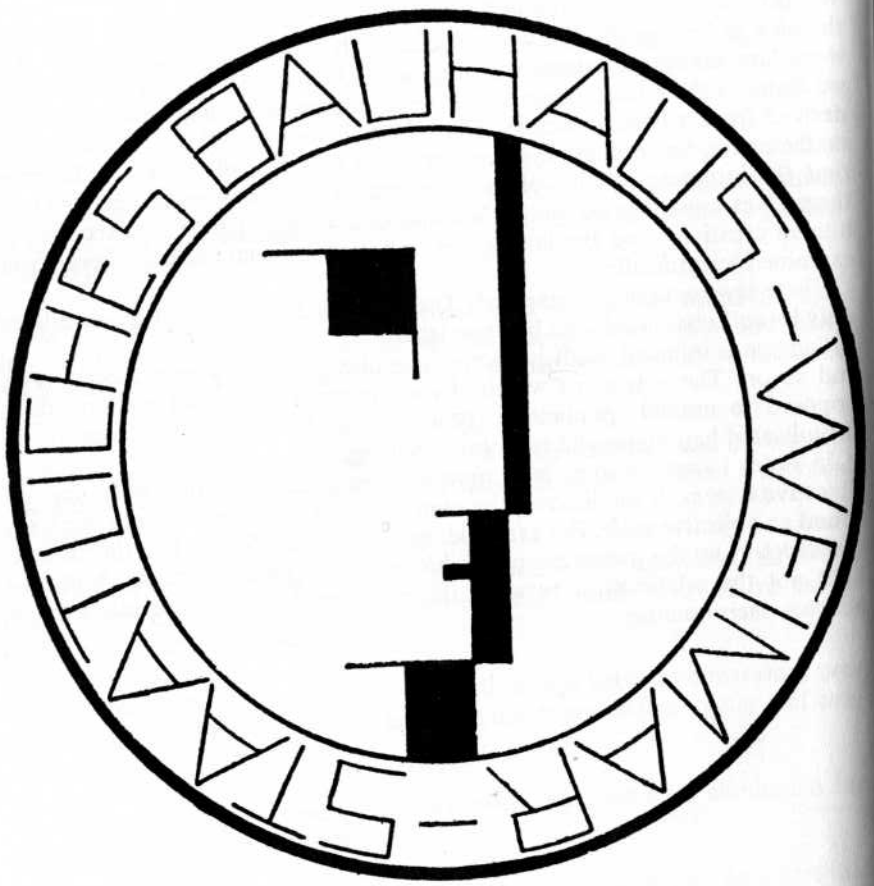
Commentary on Manifesto V

We have to realize that art and life are no longer separate domains. Therefore the idea of 'art' as illusion unconnected with real life has to disappear. The word 'art' no longer means anything to us. Leaving this concept behind us, we demand the construction of our environment according to creative laws derived from a fixed principle. These laws, linked with those of economics, mathematics, technology, hygiene, etc., lead to a new plastic unity. In order that the interrelationships of these reciprocal laws may be defined, the laws themselves must first be established and understood. Up to now the field of human creativity and the laws governing its constructions have never been examined scientifically.

These laws cannot be imagined. They exist as facts and can be elucidated only by collective work and by experience.

Our era is inimical to all subjective speculation in art, science, technology, and so on. The new spirit which already governs almost all modern life is opposed to animal spontaneity (lyricism), to the dominion of nature, to complicated hair-styles and elaborate cooking.

In order to create something new we need a method, that is to say, an objective system. If we discover the same qualities in different things, we have found an objective scale. For example, one of the basic laws is that the modern constructor, by the means proper to his particular field of activity, brings to light not the relationship between things themselves, but the relationship between their qualities.



Oskar Schlemmer, 1922

1923 Oskar Schlemmer: Manifesto for the first Bauhaus exhibition

Although this manifesto in the publicity leaflet for the first Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar (July to September 1923) was written with the approval in principle of Oskar Schlemmer's board of governors, it went to press before the board had been able to look at the text. Because of the statement that the Bauhaus was a gathering point for those who wished to build the 'cathedral of Socialism' the manifesto section of the leaflet was pulped. The precaution was in vain. Several complete copies reached the public and brought the Bauhaus under suspicion of being an institution that dabbled in politics.

The Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar is the first and so far the only government school in the Reich – if not in the world – which calls upon the creative forces of the fine arts to become influential while they are vital. At the same time it endeavours, through the establishment of workshops founded upon the crafts, to unite and productively stimulate the arts with the aim of combining them in architecture. The concept of building will restore the unity that perished in debased academicism and in finicky handicraft. It must reinstate the broad relationship with the 'whole' and, in the deepest sense, make possible the total work of art. The ideal is old, but its rendering always new: the fulfilment is the style, and never was the 'will-to-style' more powerful than today. But confusion about concepts and attitudes caused the conflict and dispute over the nature of this style which will emerge as the 'new beauty' from the clash of ideas. Such a school, animating and inwardly animated, unintentionally becomes the gauge for the convulsions of the political and intellectual life of the time, and the history of the Bauhaus becomes the history of contemporary art.

The Staatliches Bauhaus, founded after the catastrophe of the war in the chaos of the revolution and in the era of the flowering of an emotion-laden, explosive art, becomes the rallying-point of all those who, with belief in the future and with sky-storming enthusiasm, wish to build the 'cathedral of Socialism'. The triumphs of industry and technology before the war and the orgies in the name of destruction during it called to life that impassioned romanticism which was a flaming protest against materialism and the mechanization of art and life. The misery of the time was also a spiritual anguish. A cult of the unconscious and of the unexplainable, a propensity for mysticism and sectarianism, originated in the quest for those highest things which are in danger of being deprived of their meaning in a world full of doubt and disruption. Breaking the limitations of classical aesthetics reinforced boundlessness of feeling, which found nourishment and verification in the discovery of the East and the art of the Negro, peasants, children, and the insane. The origin of artistic creation was as much sought after as its limits were courageously extended. Passionate use of the means of expression developed in altar paintings. But it is in pictures, and always in pictures, where the decisive values take

History of 1900-1920 ↑

refuge. As the highest achievement of individual exaggeration, free from bonds and unredeemed, they must all, apart from the unity of the picture itself, remain in debt to the proclaimed synthesis. The honest crafts wallowed in the exotic joy of materials, and architecture piled Utopian schemes on paper.

Reversal of values, changes in point of view, name and concept, result in the other view, the next faith. Dada, court jester in this kingdom, plays ball with paradoxes and makes the atmosphere free and easy. Americanisms transferred to Europe, the new wedged into the old world, death to the past, to moonlight, and to the soul, thus the present time strides along with the gestures of a conqueror. Reason and science, 'man's greatest powers', are the regents, and the engineer is the sedate executor of unlimited possibilities. Mathematics, structure, and mechanization are the elements, and power and money are the dictators of these modern phenomena of steel, concrete, glass, and electricity. Velocity of rigid matter, dematerialization of matter, organization of inorganic matter, all these produce the miracle of abstraction. Based on the laws of nature, these are the achievements of mind in the conquest of nature, based on the power of capital, the work of man against man. The speed and supertension of commercialism make expediency and utility the measure of all effectiveness, and calculation seizes the transcendent world: art becomes a logarithm. Art, long bereft of its name, lives a life after death, in the monument of the cube and in the coloured square. Religion is the precise process of thinking, and God is dead. Man, self-conscious and perfect being, surpassed in accuracy by every puppet, awaits results from the chemist's retort until the formula for 'spirit' is found as well . . .

Goethe: 'If the hopes materialize that men, with all their strength, with heart and mind, with understanding and love, will join together and become conscious of each other, then what no man can yet imagine will occur – Allah will no longer need to create, we will create his world.' This is the synthesis, the concentration, intensification, and compression of all that is positive to form the powerful mean. The idea of the mean, far from mediocrity and weakness, taken as scale and balance, becomes the idea of German art.

Germany, country of the middle, and Weimar, the heart of it, is not for the first time the adopted place of intellectual decision. What matters is the recognition of what is pertinent to us, so that we will not aimlessly wander astray. In balancing the polar contrasts – loving the remotest past as well as the remotest future; averting reaction as much as anarchism; advancing from the end-in-itself and from self-directedness to the typical, from the problematical to the valid and secure – we become the bearers of responsibility and the conscience of the world. An idealism of activity that embraces, penetrates, and unites art, science, and technology and that influences research, study, and work will construct the 'art-edifice' of Man, which is but an allegory of the cosmic system. Today we can do no more than ponder the total plan, lay the foundations, and prepare the building stones.

But

We exist! We have the will! We are producing!

1923 Werner Graeff: The new engineer is coming

The first number of the periodical *G – Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* (material for elemental creativity) – appeared in July 1923 in Berlin. The publisher was the film pioneer Hans Richter; his fellow editors were Werner Graeff (b. 1901 in Wuppertal, lives in Essen) and El Lissitzky (b. 1890 in Smolensk, d. 1941 in Moscow). The editorial programme followed in its essential points the principles of the Stijl group. A new concept was introduced: 'The basic requirement for the creation of elemental form is *economy*. A pure relationship between force and material. This calls for elemental means, complete mastery of the means. Elemental order, adherence to laws.' Werner Graeff's contribution is dated December 1922. Alongside it stand theses from the *Realist Manifesto*, Moscow 1920.

Essential criterion for modern, creative people:

The capacity to think and fashion elementally.

The school for the new creation of form is: to elucidate the elements of every creative domain radically and unimpeachably. And: to live the modern world-view in its most extreme implications.

Now the new generation of engineers is growing up!

This means: first the perfection – then the end of mechanistic technology. The last mighty soaring of mechanistic technology, because the requisite laws are a component of the modern world-view that has been *mastered* and the means for the creation of elemental form are *perfectly clear* to the new engineer.

Necessary consequences of this clarity and mastery are: simplicity, balance, naturalness, the shrewdest economy.

The new engineer does not modify, he creates afresh; that is to say, he does not improve, but provides an *absolutely elemental* fulfilment of every demand.

In a few years, the new elementally trained generation of engineers will easily fulfil every demand that can rationally be made upon mechanistic technology.

BUT THIS IS NOT THE END:

Above and beyond this, an immense, far more magnificent field, whose first outlines are already emerging in science and art, will open up to the leaders among the new creators. In a decade hypotheses will develop into theories – and finally into mastered *laws*. Then the capacity to treat every fresh demand in an absolutely elemental manner will lead forward only when it has become part of man's flesh and blood.

The new, more splendid technology of tensions, of invisible movements, of remote control and speeds such as cannot even be imagined in 1922 will come into being, uninfluenced by the methods of mechanistic technology.

The new engineer is ready and waiting. *Long live elemental creativity!*

1928 Hannes Meyer: Building

In 1928 Hannes Meyer (b. 1889 in Basle, d. 1954 in Crocifisso di Savosa, Switzerland) was appointed head of the Bauhaus in Dessau. Walter Gropius retired at the beginning of February 1928 and recommended him as his successor. The same month Meyer outlined before representatives of the students his programme, which was aimed essentially at a closer combination of teaching and work in the Bauhaus with life. 'Do we wish to take our direction from the needs of the outer world . . . or do we want to be an island which admittedly leads to a broadening of the personality, but whose positive productivity is questionable?' His thesis 'building' was published in *bauhaus* Year 2, No.4.

building
all things in this world are a product of the formula: (function times economy).

all these things are, therefore, not works of art:
all art is composition and, hence, is unsuited to achieve goals.
all life is function and is therefore unartistic.
the idea of the 'composition of a harbour' is hilarious!
but how is a town plan designed? or a plan of a dwelling? composition or function? art or life?????
building is a biological process. building is not an aesthetic process.
in its design the new dwelling becomes not only a 'machine for living', but also a biological apparatus serving the needs of body and mind.
the new age provides new building materials for the new way of building houses:

reinforced concrete	aluminium	ripolin
synthetic rubber	euböolith	viscose
synthetic leather	plywood	asbestos concrete
porous concrete	hard rubber	bitumen
woodmetal	torfoleum	canvas
wire-mesh glass	silicon steel	asbestos
pressed cork	cold glue	acetone
synthetic resin	cellular concrete	casein
synthetic horn	rolled glass	trolite
synthetic wood	xelotect	tombac

we organize these building materials into a constructive whole based on economic principles. thus the individual shape, the body of the structure, the colour of the material and the surface texture evolve by themselves and are determined by life. (snugness and prestige are not leitmotifs for dwelling construction.) (the first depends on the human heart and not on the walls of a room . . .) (the second manifests itself in the manner of the host and not by his persian carpet!)

bauen

alle dinge dieser welt sind ein produkt der formel: (funktion mal ökonomie)

alle diese dinge sind daher keine kunstwerke:
alle kunst ist komposition und mithin zweckwidrig.
alles leben ist funktion und daher unkünstlerisch.
die idee der „komposition eines seehafens" scheint zwerchfellerschütternd!
jedoch wie ersteht der entwurf eines stadtplanes? oder eines wohnplanes? komposition oder funktion? kunst oder leben? ? ? ? ?

bauen ist ein biologischer vorgang. bauen ist kein aesthetischer prozeß. elementar gestaltet wird das neue wohnhaus nicht nur eine wohnmaschinerie, sondern ein biologischer apparat für seelische und körperliche bedürfnisse. — die neue zeit stellt dem neuen hausbau ihre neuen baustoffe zur verfügung:

stahlbeton	drahtglas	aluminium	si-stahl	ripolin	asbest
kunstgummi	preßkork	euböolith	kaltleim	viscose	azeton
kunstleder	kunstharz	sperrholz	gasbeton	eternit	casein
zell-beton	kunsthorn	kautschuk	roliglas	goudron	trolit
woodmetall	kunstholz	torfoleum	xelotekt	kanevas	tombak

diese bauelemente organisieren wir nach ökonomischen grundsätzen zu einer konstruktiven einheit. so erstehen selbsttätig und vom leben bedingt die einzelform, der gebäudekörper, die materialfarbe und die oberflächenstruktur. (gemütlichkeit und repräsentation sind keine leitmotive des wohnungsbaues.)
(die erste hängt am menschenherzen und nicht an der zimmerwand. . . .)
(die zweite prägt die haltung des gastgebers und nicht sein perserteppich!)

architektur als „affektleistung des künstlers" ist ohne daseinsberechtigung.
architektur als „fortführung der bautradition" ist baugeschichtlich treiben.

diese funktionell-biologische auffassung des bauens als einer gestaltung des lebensprozesses führt mit folgerichtigkeit zur reinen konstruktion: diese konstruktive formenwelt kennt kein vaterland. sie ist der ausdruck internationaler baugesinnung. internationalität ist ein vorzug der epoche. die reine konstruktion ist grundlage und kennzeichen der neuen formenwelt.

1. geschlechtsleben	4. gartenkultur	7. wohnhygiene	10. erwärmung
2. schlafgewohnheit	5. körperpflege	8. autowartung	11. besonnung
3. kleintierhaltung	6. wetterschutz	9. kochbetrieb	12. bedienung

solche forderungen sind die ausschließlichen motive des wohnungsbaues. wir untersuchen den ablauf des tageslebens jedes hausbewohners, und dieses ergibt das funktionsdiagramm für vater, mutter, kind, kleinkind und mitmenschen. wir erforschen die beziehungen des hauses und seiner insassen zum fremden: postbote, passant, besucher, nachbar, einbrecher, kaminfeger, wäscherin, polizist, arzt, aufwartefrau, spielkamerad, gaseinzüger, handwerker, krankenpfleger, bote. wir erforschen die menschlichen und die tierischen beziehungen zum garten, und die wechselwirkungen zwischen menschen, haustieren und hausinsekten. wir ermitteln die jahresschwankungen der bodentemperatur, und wir berechnen danach den wärmeverlust der fußböden und die tiefe der fundamentsohlen. — der geologische befund des haus-

architecture as 'an emotional act of the artist' has no justification.
architecture as 'a continuation of the traditions of building' means being carried along by the history of architecture.
this functional, biological interpretation of architecture as giving shape to the functions of life, logically leads to pure construction: this world of constructive forms knows no native country. it is the expression of an international attitude in architecture. internationality is a privilege of the period. **pure construction is the basis and the characteristic of the new world of forms.**

1. sex life	5. personal hygiene	9. cooking
2. sleeping habits	6. weather protection	10. heating
3. pets	7. hygiene in the home	11. exposure to the sun
4. gardening	8. car maintenance	12. service

these are the only motives when building a house. we examine the daily routine of everyone who lives in the house and this gives us the function-diagram for the father, the mother, the child, the baby and the other occupants. we explore the relationships of the house and its occupants to the world outside: postman, passer-by, visitor, neighbour, burglar, chimney-sweep, washerwoman, policeman, doctor, charwoman, playmate, gas inspector, tradesman, nurse, and messenger boy, we explore the relationships of human beings and animals to the garden, and the interrelationships between human beings, pets, and domestic insects. we determine the annual fluctuations in the temperature of the ground and from that calculate the heat loss of the floor and the resulting depth required for the foundation blocks. the geological nature of the soil informs us about its capillary capability and determines whether water will naturally drain away or whether drains are required. we calculate the angle of the sun's incidence during the course of the year according to the latitude of the site. with that information we determine the size of the shadow cast by the house on the garden and the amount of sun admitted by the window into the bedroom. we estimate the amount of daylight available for interior working areas. we compare the heat conductivity of the outside walls with the humidity of the air outside the house. we already know about the circulation of air in a heated room. the visual and acoustical relationships to neighbouring dwellings are most carefully considered. knowing the atavistic inclinations of the future inhabitants with respect to the kind of wood finish we can offer, we select the interior finish for the standardized, prefabricated dwelling accordingly: marble-grained pine, austere poplar, exotic okumé or silky maple. colour to us is merely a means for intentional psychological influence or a means of orientation. colour is never a false copy of various kinds of material. we loathe variegated colour. we consider paint to be a protective coating. where we think colour to be psychically indispensable, we include in our calculation the amount of light reflection it offers. we avoid using a purely white finish on the house. we consider the body of the house to be an accumulator of the sun's warmth . . .

the new house is a prefabricated building for site assembly; as such it is an industrial product and the work of a variety of specialists: economists, statisticians, hygienists, climatologists, industrial engineers, standardization experts, heating engineers . . . and the architect? . . . he was an artist and now becomes a specialist in organization!

the new house is a social enterprise. it frees the building industry from partial seasonal unemployment and from the odium of unemployment relief work. by rationalized housekeeping methods it saves the housewife from household slavery, and by rationalized gardening methods it protects the householder from the dilettantism of the small gardener. it is primarily a social enterprise because it is – like every government standard – the standardized, industrial product of a nameless community of inventors.

the new housing project as a whole is to be the ultimate aim of public welfare and as such is an intentionally organized, public-spirited project in which collective and individual energies are merged in a public-spiritedness based on an integral, co-operative foundation. the modernness of such an estate does not consist of a flat roof and a horizontal-vertical arrangement of the façade, but rather of its direct relationship to human existence. in it we have given thoughtful consideration to the tensions of the individual, the sexes, the neighbourhood and the community, as well as to geophysical relationships.

building is the deliberate organization of the processes of life.
building as a technical process is therefore only one part of the whole process. the functional diagram and the economic programme are the determining principles of the building project.
building is no longer an individual task for the realization of architectural ambitions.
building is the communal effort of craftsmen and inventors. only he who, as a master in the working community of others, masters life itself . . . is a master builder.
building then grows from being an individual affair of individuals (promoted by unemployment and the housing shortage) into a collective affair of the whole nation.
building is nothing but organization:
social, technical, economic, psychological organization.

Discuss El. use of dialectic in relation to H & P.

1929 El Lissitzky: Ideological superstructure

After long residence in Germany and Switzerland, El (Eleazar Markovich) Lissitzky (b. 1890 in the province of Smolensk, d. 1941 in Moscow) returned to Russia. He was almost certainly the first to make the Constructivist ideas of 1920 known in Germany. At the Düsseldorf Congress of Progressive Artists in 1922 he met artistic revolutionaries from all over Europe. He worked with Mies van der Rohe in Berlin and with van Doesburg in Paris and showed his 'Proun' exhibition in many places. Enriched by the sum total of all these encounters, Lissitzky returned in 1928 to Moscow, in order there to push through a 'reconstruction' in his sense against an already active opposition.

We shall present here a few sections of a life process which, having been first brought into existence by the Revolution, is a bare 5 years old. During this time the high demands made by the cultural revolution have taken root in the feelings and consciousness of our new generation of architects. It has become clear to our architect that through his work he is playing an active part in building the new world. To use an artist's work has no value *per se*, no purpose of its own, no beauty of its own; it receives all this solely from its relation to the community. In the creation of every great work the architect's part is visible and the community's part latent. The artist, the creator, invents nothing that falls into his lap from the sky. Therefore we understand by 'reconstruction' the overcoming of the unclear, the 'mysterious' and chaotic.

In our architecture, as in our whole life, we are striving to create a social order, that is to say, to raise the instinctual into consciousness.

The ideological superstructure protects and guarantees the work. As the substructure for the renewal that we must carry out in architecture, we named at the beginning the social economic reconstruction. It is the unequivocal starting point, but it would be a mistake to explain the interconnexions so simply. Life, organic growth, is a dialectical process that simultaneously asserts yes (plus) and no (minus). Everything that comes into being is a part of the process of social life, the result of particular facts, and itself exercises an influence on the aims that come into being in their turn. On the basis of what has come into being there is formed an ideology, a way of looking at things, there are formed interpretation and interrelationships, which exercise a further influence on what is coming into being. We may trace this dialectical process in the development of our architects.

1. Destruction of the traditional. Material production is paralysed throughout the country. The longing for a super-production. The first studio dreams. An ideology is formed containing two demands that are fundamental to further development: element and invention. A work that is to be in keeping with our age must contain within it an invention. Our age demands creations arising out of elemental forms (geometry). War has been declared on the aesthetic of

chaos. An order that has entered fully into consciousness is called for.

2. The start of rebuilding. First in industry and production. Concrete problems demand solution. But the new generation has grown up in a period without architecture, has inadequate practical experience, little authority, and has not yet become an academy. In the struggle for building contracts its ideology has turned to the primary utilitarian, the nakedly functional. The slogan is: 'Constructivism', 'Functionalism'. An equals sign has been placed between engineer and architect . . .

3. The first reconstruction period demands a concentration of forces from the sphere of the socio-economic revolution to bring about a deepening of the cultural revolution. In the total complex of a culture, physical, psychological and emotional factors are inseparable.

Art is acknowledged in its capacity to order, organize, and activate consciousness by charging it with emotional energy. Architecture is considered the leading art and the attention of the public is directed towards it. Architectural questions become mass questions. The studio dreams of the beginning lose their individual character and receive a solid social foundation. Once again the 'Utilitarians' are opposed by the 'Formalists'. The latter assert that architecture is not covered by the concept of 'engineering'. To solve the utilitarian task, to construct a volume that functions correctly for the purpose, is only one part of the problem. The second part is to organize the materials correctly, to solve the constructive problem. A work of architecture comes into being only when the whole thing springs to life as a spatial idea, as a form that exercises a definite effect on our psyche. To do this it is not enough to be a modern man; it is necessary for the architect to possess a complete mastery of the expressive means of architecture.

Thus we can summarize these three periods even more briefly:
(a) Denial of art as merely an emotional, individual affair carried on in romantic isolation.
(b) 'Objective' creation in the silent hope that the resulting product will eventually be looked upon as a work of art.
(c) Conscious and purposeful creation of an architecture that will exercise a closed artistic effect on an objective, scientific basis that has been worked out in advance.

This architecture will actively raise the general standard of living.

This is the dialectic of our development, which reaches affirmation through denial; it has melted down the old iron and annealed the new steel.

1930 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: The new era

In the closing words of his address at the congress of the Deutscher Werkbund in Vienna in 1930 Mies van der Rohe made himself the resolute spokesman for the 'spiritual in architecture'. He saw the path of industrialized building, for which he had appealed in 1924, blocked by misunderstanding. The appealer has become a warner. In prophetic anticipation he foresees that technical progress will bring with it a loss of the meaning of building. Mies van der Rohe speaks of the 'value-blind' progress of events, which will lead to the elimination of meaning and hence to a lack of standards and to chaos in the establishment of values.

The new era is a fact; it exists entirely independently of whether we say 'yes' or 'no' to it. But it is neither better nor worse than any other era. It is a pure datum and in itself neutral as to value. Therefore I shall not spend long trying to elucidate the new era, to demonstrate its links and lay bare its supporting structure.

Let us also not overestimate the question of mechanization, standardization and normalization.

And let us accept the changed economic and social conditions as fact.

All these things go their destined way, blind to values.

The decisive thing is which of these given facts we choose to emphasize. This is where spiritual problems begin.

What matters is not 'what' but only 'how'.

That we produce goods and by what means we manufacture them means nothing, spiritually speaking.

Whether we build high or low, with steel and glass, tells us nothing about the value of the building.

Whether in town planning we aim at centralization or decentralization is a practical question, not one of value.

But precisely the question of value is decisive.

We have to establish new values, to demonstrate ultimate aims, in order to acquire criteria.

For the meaning and right of every age, including our own, consists solely in providing the spirit with the necessary prerequisites for its existence.

1932 Hugo Häring: The house as an organic structure (excerpt)

In 1928, as representative of the Berlin architects' association Der Ring, whose secretary he was, Hugo Häring took part in the founding of CIAM at Château Sarraz. It there proved that the initiators of the congress, Le Corbusier and Siegfried Giedion, could not accept the concept of 'new building' presented by Häring. There is no French word exactly equivalent to 'building'. Yet for Häring architecture and building are fundamentally different. Building meant for him: to give physical shape to the substance of a task. Form is in this sense result, not starting point. The important thing is to see the house as an organ that first acquires its essential shape in the actual process of creation.

It still seems to many people inconceivable that a house too may be evolved entirely as an 'organic structure', that it may be 'bred' out of the 'form arising out of work performance', in other words that the house may be looked upon as 'man's second skin' and hence as a bodily organ. And yet this development seems inescapable. A new technology, working with light constructions, elastic and malleable building materials, will no longer demand a rectangular house, but permit or put into effect all shapes that make the house into a 'housing organ'. The gradual structural shift from the geometrical to the organic, which is taking place throughout our whole spiritual life and to some extent has already taken place, has made the form of work performance mobile as opposed to geometrical. The need to create form constantly leads the artist to experiment with styles, repeatedly leads him, in the interest of expression, to spread shapes over objects – whereas the form arising out of work performance leads to every object receiving and retaining its own essential shape. The artist stands in the most essential contradiction to the form of work performance so long as he refuses to give up his individuality; for in operating with the form arising out of work performance the artist is no longer concerned with the expression of his own individuality but with the expression of the essence of as perfect as possible a utilitarian object. All 'individuals' – and the stronger they are as personalities, and at times the louder they are, the more this applies – are an obstacle in the path of development, and in fact progress takes place in spite of them. But nor does progress take place without them, without individuals, artists and strong personalities. There remains an essential difference between the architect and the engineer. The work of the engineer has as its goal merely the performance of material work within the limits or in the domain of economic effects. That the result frequently contains other expressive values as well is a side-effect, a subsidiary phenomenon of his work. The architect, on the other hand, creates a *Gestalt*, a total form, a work of spiritual vitality and fulfilment, an object that belongs to and serves an idea, a higher culture.

This work begins where the engineer, the technologist, leaves off; it begins

when the work is given life. Life is not given to the work by fashioning the object, the building, according to a viewpoint alien to it, but by awakening, fostering, and cultivating the essential form enclosed within it.