

stände“ stringent, oder, wie es Goethe gelang, als Komposition zu erreichen, erklären die Vorreden zu „Ansichten der Natur“. So begegnet man immer neuen Versuchen, das ästhetische Äquivalent seiner Forschungen zu definieren: in bewegten Schichten latent ästhetischer und szientifischer Begriffe sich dem „Naturgemälde“ hier qua Natur, dort qua Gemälde zu nähern und teils wieder zu entfernen. Zwischen experimentellen Naturstudien und der Sympathie für romantische Geisteswissenschaft bedrängte einerseits der Anspruch, wissenschaftliche Ethik nur in der empirisch-induktiven Methode zu vertreten, andererseits das Ungenügen vor dem Rang der Naturphilosophie, höchstens Daten für deren tiefere Einsicht zu liefern. So gesteht die Vorrede zur „Geographie der Pflanzen“ von 1807, er hoffe, einst werde möglich, die streitenden Pole der Empiriker und Naturphilosophen in einem System höherer Kräfte zu versöhnen, möglich, „ein Naturgemälde ganz anderer und gleichsam höherer Art naturphilosophisch darzustellen“, wie es der kühne Entwurf des tiefsinnigen Schelling just begründe (im Frühjahr 1805 hatte der Philosoph zu Gesprächen geladen).

Nachzutragen sind kurz genannte kleinere Funde der Greifswalder Tagung, work in progress über den Richterschüler Ludwig Friedrich Nitzschke (1822–50) und Carl Christian Vogel von Vogelstein.

REINER ZEEB  
Augsburg

**Maiken Umbach: German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism 1890–1924;** 253 pp, 55 black and white illustrations; Oxford University Press 2009; ISBN 978-0-19-955739-4

Maiken Umbach's book *German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism 1890–1924* focuses on bourgeois architecture and urban design, yet it is not an architectural or urban design history in any narrower meaning of either academic field. Instead, Umbach calls her study a cultural history (p. 12) that aims to put forward an analysis of bourgeois modernism by looking primarily at the architectural practices with which members of the bourgeoisie shaped their urban environment. Even though Germany did not experience a successful bourgeois revolution during the nineteenth century, Umbach does not subscribe to the *Sonderweg* thesis which claims that this lacuna allowed more traditional elites to take a path that eventually lead to the III. Reich. Accepting instead the hypothesis by the historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley about 'a silent bourgeois revolution' that modernized Germany, Umbach circumvents any dialectic between modernist and conservative ideas in favour of arguing that German bourgeois modernism was successful not so much 'in the realm of ideas, but in [...] the infrastructure of German social life. [...] it became a dominant social, administrative and political *praxis*.' (p. 1) Thus, the emphasis on works of architecture and urban designs in German cities like, for example, Hamburg, Munich, Berlin, Hagen, and a few others which, Umbach argues, give histori-

ans analytical access to bourgeois modernism in ways that traditional textual and archival sources cannot.

The book is organized into five chapters framed by introduction and conclusion. Each chapter is dedicated to a particular aspect that shaped the modern bourgeois built environment. Thus chapter 2, 'The Sense of Time', looks at the ways a Bergsonian understanding of memory and more traditional concepts of history have both shaped the built environment of cities. Chapter 3, 'The Sense of Place', compares architectural expressions of the local or regional versus the national and international. This chapter is particularly strong when Umbach summarises her already earlier published thoughts about the status of secondary cities, Hamburg for example, in the pecking order of urban Germany. Chapter 4, 'Nature and Culture', revisits contemporary arguments about agrarianism and anti-agrarianism as they influenced, for example, ideas about the modern city in Munich. After a brief interlude in Hellerau, Germany's first garden city, the largest part of the chapter is given over to a detailed analysis of Fritz Schumacher's planning of parks and green spaces in Hamburg. This chapter contains a discussion of the contemporary debate in Hamburg about Germany's political and cultural colonialism. This digression tries to link aspects of Schumacher's work with the colonial discourse of the time by comparing the ubiquitous use of animal sculptures in the architect's designs for public parks, which Umbach understands to symbolise a close communion with nature, to an attempted similar communion with nature and noble savages that Umbach identifies in the colonial debate of the period. Even though she states that Schumacher did not draw on colonial imagery (p. 137), guilt by association is nevertheless almost suggested by this out of context discussion. Chapter 5 analyzes designed objects and commodities as the subject matter of commercial culture and globalized markets; an interesting chapter that revisits the famous Werkbund debate from 1914 for which Umbach proposes a new reading focusing on the arguments between Muthesius and Osthaus over commercialisation rather than the one over 'types' between the former and van de Velde. The new reading of the Werkbund debate is, however, marred by the fact that *Jugendstil* had by 1914 long passed its shelf life (pp. 155–6). Chapter 6 turns to 'Liberal Governmentality and the Spatial Politics of "Bürgerlichkeit"'. Umbach's discussion of Muthesius's bourgeois houses in Berlin is fascinating, especially the analysis of the music salon as a bourgeois domestic space. If this room, however, replaced the large hall of Arts and Crafts houses in Britain (p. 177) is arguable as there the main space for social gatherings before and after the dinner was the library even if it did not always accommodate books.

The focus on architecture and urban design is not only explained by the subject matter of bourgeois modernism but also by the author's wish to position her book as part of the 'pictorial turn' (p. 12) that has occupied art historians now for quite some time. This approach takes Umbach, a historian, into the adjacent field of architectural history, and that step generates interesting methodological questions. Umbach rightly suggests that architectural designs and buildings can generate insights that it would be difficult to extract solely or primarily from written sources.

The author extends this line of argument into a discussion about the pros and cons of the earlier linguistic turn versus the pictorial one, and also how much trust a historian can or should place on written and pictorial sources. This chapter positions the book theoretically; a must in studies that draw upon critical theory. Luckily, Umbach is too good a writer to burden her readers with too much of jargon, even though her argument still goes at times through the motions, for example, when Bruno Latour, Marshall Berman, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, etc. receive at least a passing mentioning, even if only in the footnotes. Other theoretical issues, highly relevant to Umbach's larger argument are noticeably absent. For example, Umbach never reflects on the fact that modern architecture was foremost conceived as a spatial practice and not a pictorial one. Of course, for its production modern architecture relies on two-dimensional visualizations, for example, drawings of plans and elevations. Are these images or texts? Umbach never approaches this question. Instead, her book reduces modern architecture exclusively to either facades or architectural detail, in both cases looked at through the lens of the author's own camera. This means, unfortunately, that most buildings are illustrated with rather hapless images of little depth and without much awareness that buildings have a third dimension.

Some of the author's main arguments rely on just the analysis of a single building or even a single detail. One wonders whether the tender thistle carved on the rusticated stone work of a 1904 house by Lundt and Kallmorgen in Hamburg can actually withstand the interpretative weight the author pins on its thorns. (pp. 43–4) Occasionally, the interdisciplinary weaving in and out of the histories of architecture and landscape architecture results in rather arguable generalizing observations. For example, by the time Muthesius introduced the English house to the German bourgeoisie; English gardens were no longer mere impressions of untamed nature (p. 54). Already by the turn of the century, Gertrude Jekyll had begun to design rather formal, though lushly planted gardens, for example, the Deanery Garden (1899–1901) at Sonning in Berkshire.

Finally, regardless of any criticism of the written word, the text would have benefitted from a little more traditional copy editing. Riemerschmid never was the director of the Bauhaus nor did Mies van der Rohe become the school's director in 1927 (p. 199). In that year, Mies van der Rohe became vice-president of the Deutsche Werkbund in 1927, and not president as stated on p. 117, after Riemerschmid had stepped down from the latter position in 1926. ([www.deutscher-werkbund.de/30.html](http://www.deutscher-werkbund.de/30.html), accessed November 14, 2010) Baillie Scott's first name is miss-spelled as Bailly (p. 54), while that of van de Velde is variously spelt Henri and Henry.

Regardless, this is an interesting book. In particular the larger argument that German modern architectural history was characterized by continuity and evolutionary developments rather than revolutions and ruptures constitutes a valuable insight. The foundation for this argument could have been much stronger if the thesis would have been tested against a wider spectrum of building types, more works including those of lesser known architects, over a longer period of time, and against the thoughts

of more contemporary writers who have argued over bourgeois Germany even if they have remained ever since outside the canon of those authors conventionally grouped under the heading of 'critical theory'.

VOLKER M. WELTER

*University of California Santa Barbara*

**Lynette Roth: köln progressiv 1920–33;** 160 S., zahlr. Abb.; Köln: Seiwert, Hoerle, Arntz, Museum Ludwig und Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König 2008; ISBN 978-3-86560-383-8; € 34,00.

Köln. Progressiv??! Das muß ein wenig länger her zu sein. Die Domstadt, die im neuen Jahrtausend eher mit Regression denn Fortschritt von sich reden macht, vermochte in vergangener Zeit durchaus wegweisende künstlerische Impulse auszusenden. Etwa in den 1960er mit Namen wie Beuys und Vostell als auch in den 1920er Jahren, als sich eine Handvoll politisch wie künstlerisch Gleichgesinnter in Köln zusammen findet. Zunächst nur lose verbunden, nennt man sich bald „Gruppe progressiver Künstler“, eben jene, die später als „Kölner Progressive“ in die Kunstgeschichte Einzug halten sollen. Die Mitstreiter – geprägt von den Schrecken des Ersten Weltkrieges, bewegt von den revolutionären Bewegungen in Russland, berührt vom sozialen Elend in den Jahren der Weimarer Republik – versuchen mit ihren Mitteln und Möglichkeiten, die Kunst in den Dienst der gesellschaftlichen Sache und politischen Agitation zu stellen. Nicht nur in ihren politischen Überzeugungen im Sinne einer humanen Gesellschaft radikal – auch in ihrer sachlichen und grafisch reduzierten Formensprache, die bis in unsere Tage wirkt.

Den prägenden Köpfen jener avantgardistischen Bewegung, den Malern Wilhelm Seiwert und Heinrich Hoerle sowie dem Holzschnitzer und Grafiker Gerd Arntz, widmete das Kölner Museum Ludwig im Sommer 2008 eine sehenswerte Ausstellung. Was bleibt: Ein ebenso beachtlicher Katalog, für den redaktionell die amerikanische Kunsthistorikerin Lynette Roth, zugleich Gastkuratorin der gezeigten Präsentation, verantwortlich zeichnet. Und mit diesem Beitrag nicht nur dem Werk der drei führenden Protagonisten die nötige Aufmerksamkeit zollt, sondern einer weitgehend unbekannteren Facette der Kunst der Weimarer Republik Kontur gibt: „Malerei als ‚Waffe‘“ (S. 15) überschreibt Roth ihren zentralen Aufsatz. Und weiß selbst: Das ist nur die halbe Wahrheit. Denn, so anarchisch die Ideen, Utopien und Methoden der Kölner Progressiven auch scheinen mögen – ihre Waffen wollen nicht töten, sie sind Aufruf zur Aktion – gleich der zum Klassenkampf geballten und gereckten Faust. Untermauert von Ideen und einem so noch nicht gesehenen gestalterischen Konzept, das nicht blinden Aufruhr predigt, sondern formal durchdacht, mit strenger Gesetzmäßigkeit in hitzigen Diskussionen und auf den Barrikaden einen kühlen Kopf behält. Klarheit in bewegten Zeiten, der Zeit zwischen den Weltkriegen, in der Kritiker und Künstler nach brauchbaren neuen Ausdrucksformen rufen, die der angestrebten klassenlosen Gesellschaft angemessen erscheinen. Die alten Meister sind es für den