

HENRY-RUSSELL HITCHCOCK AND PHILIP JOHNSON, *THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE: ARCHITECTURE SINCE 1922*  
(NEW YORK: 1932)

NOTE: ORIGINAL SPELLING AND CHARACTER USAGE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED

## PREFACE

Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Johnson have studied contemporary architecture with something of the scholarly care and critical exactness customarily expended upon Classical or Medieval periods. This book presents their conclusions, which seem to me of extraordinary, perhaps of epoch-making, importance. For they have proven beyond any reasonable doubt, I believe, that there exists today a modern style as original, as consistent, as logical, and as widely distributed as any in the past. The authors have called it the International Style.

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It should be made clear that the æsthetic qualities of the Style are the principal concern of the authors of this book. R. Hitchcock as written elsewhere on its history and has published studies of several leading modern architects.\* He and Mr. Johnson have also made little attempt to present here the technical or sociological aspects of the style except in so far as they are related to problems of design. They admit, of course, the extreme importance of these factors, which are often stressed in the criticism of modern architecture to the practical exclusion of problems of design.

The distinguishing æsthetic principles of the International Style as laid down by the authors are three: emphasis upon volume – space enclosed by thin planes or surfaces as opposed to the suggestion of mass and solidity; regularity as opposed to symmetry or other kinds of obvious balance; and, lastly, dependence upon the intrinsic elegance of materials, technical perfection, and fine proportions, as opposed to applied ornament.

The section on functionalism should be, I feel, of especial interest to American architects and critics. Functionalism as a dominant principle reached its high water mark among the important modern European architects several years ago. As was to be expected, several American architects have only recently begun to take up the utility-and-nothing-more theory of design with ascetic zeal. They fail to realize that in spite of his slogan, the house as a *machine à habiter*, Le Corbusier is even more concerned with style than with convenient planning . . . and that the most luxurious of modern German architects, Miës van der Rohe, has for over a year been the head of the Bauhaus school, having supplanted Hannes Meyer, a fanatical functionalist. "Post-Functionalism" has even been suggested as a name of the new Style, at once more precise and genetically descriptive than "International."

American skyscraper architects with cynical good humor have been willing to label their capricious façade ornament "functional" – "one function of the building is to please the client." We are asked to take seriously the architectural taste of real estate speculators, renting agents, and mortgage brokers! ...

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The authors have spent nearly two years in assembling the photographs and documentary material from which the illustrations were chosen. They form a carefully selected anthology of the Style as it has developed in Germany, Holland and France, and spread throughout the world, extending from Finland to Italy, from England to Russia, and beyond to Japan and the United States.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

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\* "Frank Lloyd Wright, Paris, 1928; *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration*, New York, 1929; J.J.P. Oud, Paris, 1931. Mr. Johnson has in preparation a monograph on Miës van der Rohe."

## I. INTRODUCTION: THE IDEA OF STYLE

*THE LIGHT and airy systems of construction of the Gothic cathedrals, the freedom and slenderness of their supporting skeleton, afford, as it were, a presage of a style that began to develop in the nineteenth century, that of metallic architecture. With the use of metal, and of concrete reinforced by metal bars, modern buildings could equal the most daring feats of Gothic architects without endangering the solidity of the structure. In the conflict that obtains between the two elements of construction, solidity and open space, everything seems to show that the principle of free spaces will prevail, that the palaces and houses of the future will be flooded with air and light. Thus the formula popularized by Gothic architecture has a great future before it. Following on the revival of Græco-Roman architecture which prevailed from the sixteenth century to our own day, we shall see, with the full application of different materials, a yet more enduring rebirth of the Gothic style.*

Salomon Reinach, *Apollo*, 1904

SINCE the middle of the eighteenth century there have been recurrent attempts to achieve and to impose a controlling style in architecture such as existed in the early epochs of the past. The two chief of these attempts were the Classical Revival and the Medieval Revival. Out of the compromises between these two opposing schools and the difficulties of reconciling either sort of revivalism with the new needs and the new methods of construction of the day grew the stylistic confusion of the last hundred years.

The nineteenth century failed to create a style of architecture because it was unable to achieve a general discipline of structure and of design in the terms of the day. The revived "styles" were but a decorative garment to architecture, not the interior principles according to which it lived and grew. On the whole the development of engineering in building went on regardless of the Classical or Mediæval architectural forms which were borrowed from the past. Thus the chaos of eclecticism served to give the very idea of style a bad name in the estimation of the first modern architects of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the nineteenth century there was always not one style, but "styles," and the idea of "styles" implied a choice. The individualistic revolt of the first modern architects destroyed the prestige of the "styles," but it did not remove the implication that there was a possibility of choice between one æsthetic conception and another. In their reaction against revivalism these men sought rather to explore a great variety of free possibilities. The result, on the whole, added to the confusion of continuing eclecticism, although the new work possessed a general vitality which the later revivalists had quite lost. The revolt from stylistic discipline to extreme individualism at the beginning of the twentieth century was justified as the surest issue from an impasse of imitation and sterility. The individualists . . . [held] up the failure of the revivals as a proof that the very idea of style was an unhealthy delusion.

Today the strict issue of reviving the styles of the distant past is no longer one of serious consequence. But the peculiar traditions of imitation and modification of the styles of the past, which eclecticism inherited from the earlier Classical and Mediæval Revivals, have not been easily forgotten. The influence of the past still most to be feared is that of the nineteenth century with its cheapening of the very idea of style. Modern architecture has nothing but the healthiest lessons to learn from the art of the further past, if that art be studied scientifically and not in a spirit of imitation. Now that it is possible to emulate the great styles of the past in their essence without imitating their surface, the problem of establishing on dominant style, which the nineteenth century set itself in terms of alternative revivals, is coming to a solution.

The idea of style . . . has become real and fertile again. Today a single new style has come into existence. The æsthetic conceptions on which its disciplines are based derive from the experimentation of the individualists. They and not the revivalists were the immediate masters of those who have created the new style. This contemporary style, which exists throughout the world, is unified and inclusive, not fragmentary and contradictory like so much of the profusion of the first generation of modern architects.

In the last decade it has produced sufficient monuments of distinction to display its validity and its vitality. It may fairly be compared in significance with the styles of the past. In the handling of the problems of structure it is related to the Gothic, in the handling of the problems of design it is more akin to the Classical. In the preeminence given to the handling of function it is distinguished from both.

The unconscious and halting architectural developments of the nineteenth century, the confused and contradictory experimentation of the beginning of the twentieth, have been succeeded by a directed evolution. There is now a single body of discipline, fixed enough to integrate contemporary style as a reality and yet elastic enough to permit individual interpretation and to encourage general growth.

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The idea of style as the frame of potential growth, rather than as a fixed and crushing mould, has developed with the recognition of underlying principles such as archæologists discern in the great styles of the past. The principles are few and broad. They are not mere formulas of proportion such as distinguish the Doric from the Ionic order; they are fundamental, like the organic verticality of the Gothic or the rhythmical symmetry of the Baroque. There is, first, a new conception of architecture as the volume rather than as mass. Secondly, regularity rather than axial symmetry serves as the chief means of ordering design. These two principles, with a third proscribing arbitrary applied decoration, mark the productions of the international style. This new style is not international in the sense that the production of one country is just like that of another. Nor is it so rigid that the work of various leaders is not clearly distinguishable. The international style has become evident and definable only gradually as different innovators throughout the world have successfully carried out parallel experiments.

In stating the general principles of the contemporary style, in analyzing their derivation from structure and their modification by function, the appearance of a certain dogmatism can hardly be avoided. In opposition to those who claim that a new style of architecture is impossible or undesirable, it is necessary to stress the coherence of the results obtained within the range of possibilities thus far explored. For the international style already exists in the present; it is not merely something the future may hold in store. Architecture is always a set of actual monuments, not a vague corpus of theory.

## II. HISTORY

THE STYLE of the twelfth and thirteenth century was the last before our own day to be created on the basis of a new type of construction. The break away from the High Gothic in the later Middle Ages was an æsthetic break without significant structural development. The Renaissance was a surface change of style generally coupled with actual regression in terms of structure. The Baroque and *a fortiori* \* the Romantic Age concerned themselves all but exclusively with problems of design. When a century ago new structural developments in the use of metal made their appearance they remained outside the art of architecture. The Crystal Palace at the London Exposition of 1851, Paxton's magnificent iron and glass construction, has far more in common with the architecture of our day than with that of its own. Ferroconcrete, to which the contemporary style owes so much, was invented in 1849. Yet it was at least fifty years before it first began to play a considerable part in architectural construction.

Metal had begun to be used incidentally in architecture before the end of the eighteenth century. Thenceforth it achieved a place of increasing importance, even in buildings of traditional design. . . .

[Another history of the nineteenth century] deals with the development of the art of architectural design regardless of specific imitations. Design was freed here and there from the control of the past. . . . Soane

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\* with greater or even stronger reason

in England, Schinkel and his followers in Germany, and Labrouste in France, were among these early precursors of modern architecture.

Within the Classical Revival there developed a new sense of design, purer and more rational than that of the Renaissance or the Baroque, yet not restricted merely to the purity and rationalism of the Greeks. Within the Mediæval Revival there grew up a body of doctrine, based on the practice of the builders of the Middle Ages, which foreshadowed the theories of our own day. . . . Yet it should be stressed that the relation of the modern style to the Gothic is ideological rather than visual, a matter of principle rather than a matter of practice. In design, indeed, the leading modern architects aim at Greek serenity rather than Gothic aspiration.

. . . Some few years ago it was possible to accept that the individualists of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth . . . established tentatively a *New Tradition*. . . . Today it seems more accurate to describe the work of the older generation of architects as half-modern. Each architect\* broke in his own way with the immediate past, each sought . . . his own direction. . . . But there was no real stylistic integration until after the War.

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There is, however, a definite breach between Wright and the younger architects who created the contemporary style after the War. Ever since the days when he was Sullivan's disciple, Wright has remained an individualist. A rebel by temperament, he has refused even the disciplines of his own theories. . . . In his refusal of the shackles of a fixed style he has crated the illusion of infinite possible styles. . . . His eternally young spirit rebels against the new style as vigorously as he rebelled against the "styles" of the nineteenth century.

Wright belongs to the international style no more than Behrens or Perret or Van de Velde. . . . Their work is still marked by traces of the individualistic manners. . . . Their individualism and their relation to the past, for all its tenuousness, makes them not so much the creators of a new style as the last representatives of Romanticism. They are more akin to the men of a hundred years ago than to the generation which has come to the fore since the War.

The continued existence of Romantic individualism is not a question of architecture alone. There is a dichotomy of the spirit more profound than any mere style can ever resolve. . . .

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There are certain times when a new period truly begins despite all the preparation that may be traced behind the event. Such a time came immediately after the War, when the international style came into being in France, in Holland, and in Germany. Indeed, if we follow the projects of the War years made by the Austrian Loos and the Italian Sant'Elia, it may appear that the new style was preparing on an even broader front. While the innovations of the half-moderns were individual and independent to the point of divergence, the innovations of their juniors were parallel and complementary, already informed by the coherent spirit of a style in the making.

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\* Hitchcock comments positively on the work of an international collection of "half-modern" architects: German Peter Behrens, Austrian Otto Wagner, Belgian Van de Velde, Dutch Berlage, French Perret and Americans H. H. Richardson (who "often went as far as did the next generation on the Continent in simplification of design and in direct expression of structure"), Root and Sullivan (noted for their contribution to the design of steel-frame skyscrapers) and Wright (lauded for "open planning [that] broke the mould of the traditional house," the conception of architectural design in terms of planes, and "novel ornament").

It is particular in the early work of three men, Walter Gropius in Germany, Oud in Holland, and Le Corbusier in France, that the various steps in the inception of the new style must be sought. These three with Miës van der Rohe in Germany remain the great leaders of modern architecture.\*

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... The principles of the style that appeared already plainly by 1922 in the projects and the executed buildings of the leaders, still control today an ever increasing group of architects throughout the world.

### III. FUNCTIONALISM

IN PART the principles of the international style were from the first voiced in the manifestoes which were the order of the day. . . . Some modern critics and groups of architects both in Europe and in America deny that the æsthetic element in architecture is important, or even that it exists. All æsthetic principles of style are to them meaningless and unreal. This new conception, that building is science and not art, developed as an exaggeration of the idea of functionalism.

In its most generally accepted form the idea of functionalism is sufficiently elastic. It derives its sanctions from both Greek and Gothic architecture, for in the temple as well as in the cathedral the æsthetic expression is based on structure and function. In all the original styles of the past the æsthetic is related to, even dependent on, the technical.

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In America also there are both architects and critics who consider architecture not an art, as it has been in the past, but merely a subordinate technic of industrial civilization. Æsthetic criticism of building appears to them nearly as meaningless as æsthetic criticism of road building. . . . Most European critics feel rightly that American engineers have always been far more successful with their technics than American architects with their æsthetics.

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The American functionalists claim to be builders first. They are surely seldom architects in the fullest sense of the word. They are ready, as the European functionalists are not, to deface their building with bad architectural design if the client demands it. Nor can they claim for their skyscrapers and apartment houses the broad sociological justification that exists for the workers' housing, the schools and hospitals of Europe. On the whole, American factories, where the client expects no money to be spent on design, are better buildings. . . . Technical developments, moreover, are rapidly forcing almost all commercial and industrial building into the mould of the international style.

It is not necessary to accept the contentions of the functionalists that there is no new style or even to consider their own work still another kind of architecture. While the older generation has continued faithful to individualism, a set of general æsthetic principles has come into use. While the functionalists continue to deny the æsthetic element in architecture . . . more and more buildings are produced in which these principles are wisely and effectively followed without sacrifice of function. . . .

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\* Hitchcock discusses the Fagus Factory by Gropius (Alfeld), housing projects by Oud (in Rotterdam and elsewhere, 1921-22), the Citrohan house (1921) and the house for Ozenfant by Le Corbusier, and Mies' glass skyscraper and brick villa projects. Others who receive mention are Rietveld, Lurçat and Mendelsohn.

#### IV. A FIRST PRINCIPLE: ARCHITECTURE AS VOLUME

CONTEMPORARY methods of construction provide a cage of skeleton of supports. . . . In traditional masonry construction the walls were themselves the supports. Now the walls are merely subordinate elements fitted like screens between the supports or carried like a shell outside of them. . . .

Plans may be worked out with far greater freedom than in the past. . . .

The effect of mass, of static solidity, hitherto the prime quality of architecture, has all but disappeared; in its place there is an effect of volume, or more accurately, of plane surfaces bounding a volume. The prime architectural symbol is no longer the dense brick but the open box. . . .

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In the past the great styles became something more than a certain sort of construction, or a certain repertory of ornament. Post and lintel construction was used in Egyptian architecture as well as Greek. Romanesque churches achieved nearly as great a science and elaboration of vaulting as did the later ones of the Gothic age. The Gothic architects emphasized the impression of height and of orderly multiplicity of organically related parts; the Greek architects so adjusted their design as to give their buildings the plastic somatic character of their sculpture. Style is character, style is expression; but even character must be displayed and expression may be conscious and clear, or muddled and deceptive. The architect who builds in the international style seeks to display the true character of his construction and to express clearly his provision for function. He prefers such an organization of his general composition, such a use of available surface materials, and such a handling of detail as will increase rather than contradict the prime effect of surface of volume.

In giving this effect the flat roofs normal with modern methods of construction have an essential æsthetic significance. . . .

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The principle of surface of volume intelligently understood will always lead to special applications where the construction is not the typical cage or skeleton of supports surrounded by a protecting screen. . . . Rigid rules of design are easily broken once and for all; elastic principles of architecture grow and flourish. Forgetting neither the origins in a certain type of construction nor the possibilities which lie always ahead, architects should find in such principles as that of surface of volume a sure and continuing guidance as the international style develops.

#### V. SURFACING MATERIAL

THE CHARACTER of surface of volume is not expressed merely by the general design of a modern building; the actual materials of the surface itself are of the utmost importance. The ubiquitous stucco, which still serves as the hall-mark of the contemporary style, has the æsthetic advantage of forming a continuous even covering. But if the stucco is rough, the sharpness of the design, which facilitates apprehension of the building's volume, is blunted. . . .

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As in the architecture of the past, the finest materials for wall surfacing are stones, granites and marbles. Unless they are large in area, however, the separate units are likely to appear like the faces of blocks of masonry, suggesting weight and mass. As in Byzantine architecture it is possible to use plates so that their true character as sheathing is evident. . . . Graining . . . should be so disposed as to emphasize the

continuity of the whole wall and not, as in the past, to produce symmetrical patterns. It is also important that the surface remain a plane without convexities and concavities. Otherwise the effect becomes picturesque and the sense of equal tension in all directions is destroyed.

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Brick, when laid conventionally, suggests a solid supporting wall even where that does not exist. Even a screen wall of brick appears to retain something of the mass and the dead weight of the architecture of the past. The use of brick tends to give a picturesqueness which is at variance with the fundamental character of the modern style. . . .

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Glass bricks and translucent glass plates are types of surfacing materials which may occasionally take the place of true windows. In certain buildings various panes of transparent, translucent and opaque glass have been combined together for entire walls. The effect is rich and harmonious but perhaps too fragile for permanent architecture. . . .

In the choice of surfacing materials the architect is far from free. Factories will hardly have marble sheathing; yet because they have very large wall areas, the surfacing material itself is less noticeable. Brick appears the best material for large and inexpensive construction, tile in the middle range and plate sheathing for exceptional buildings. In the last the architect has the opportunity to seek to the full the possibilities of richness and individual distinction which the contemporary style affords quite as much as the styles of the past.

## VI. A SECOND PRINCIPLE: CONCERNING REGULARITY

THE PATTERNS of Gothic fenestration were ordered according to definite conceptions of design derived from structure and leading more and more to arbitrary decoration. Today the patterns of windows, the composition of the parts of contemporary architecture, must also be ordered according to an æsthetic principle if a contemporary style exist. The functionalists claim that they order their designs according to practical considerations alone. Yet even they, because of the economic force of standardization, accept a discipline of design not dissimilar to that found in the work of contemporary architects who grant the importance of æsthetic considerations. Beside the principle of surface of volume already discussed there is a second controlling principle, evident in the productions of the international style including the work of the European functionalists.

This second principle of contrary style in architecture has to do with regularity. The supports in skeleton construction are normally and typically spaced at equal distances in order that strains may be equalized. Thus most buildings have an underlying regular rhythm which is clearly seen before the outside surfaces are applied. Moreover, economic consideration favors the use of standardized parts throughout. Good modern architecture expresses in its design this characteristic orderliness of structure and this similarity of parts by an æsthetic ordering which emphasizes the underlying regularity. Bad modern design contradicts this regularity. Regularity is, however, relative and not absolute in architecture.

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In the various styles of the past a principle of axial symmetry controlled design rather than a principle of regularity as that is understood here. The Greek meaning of symmetry, "a due proportion of the several parts," was nearly equivalent to this special meaning of regularity. But Greek symmetry was usually bilateral as well as regular. . . . Modern standardization gives automatically a high degree of consistency in the parts. Hence modern architects have no need of the discipline of bilateral or axial symmetry to

achieve æsthetic order. Asymmetrical schemes of design are actually preferable æsthetically as well as technically. For asymmetry certainly heightens the general interest of the composition. Function in most types of contemporary building is more directly expressed in asymmetrical form.

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The mark of the bad modern architect is the positive cultivation of asymmetry for decorative reasons. . . . The mark of the good modern architect, on the other hand, is that the regularity of his designs approaches bilateral symmetry. Occasionally, indeed, he even reaches it. . . .

. . . The international style does not attempt to force irregular functions into a symmetrical shell. It does aim to adjust rationally the provision for irregular functions to regular structure and to express this adjustment in a clear and consistent design.

Analogous to, but separate from, the hidden structural skeleton, a scheme of proportions integrates and informs a thoroughly designed modern building. A geometrical web of imaginary lines on plan and in elevation composes the diverse parts and harmonizes the various elements into a single whole. Proportions, which according to the theories of the extreme functionalists are but a relic of the nineteenth century, are still the æsthetic touchstone of the best modern design.

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. . . Such exceptions to general rectangularity [as the use of oblique and rounded forms in plan and elevation] are only occasionally demanded by function and they may introduce complications in the regular skeleton of the structure. . . . Yet sometimes as in stair wells and water-tanks, function is not best served by rectangular shapes. . . .

Non-rectangular shapes, particularly if they occur infrequently, introduce an æsthetic element of the highest positive interest. To them the architect of courage turns from time to time, realizing that he must employ them chiefly with the sanctions of genius and in definite opposition to the discipline of regularity. They need seldom occur in ordinary building, but in monuments. . . . They succeed, as they fail, on æsthetic grounds alone.

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Only great artists are capable of achieving brilliant effects with limited means. . . . But it is the privilege of great architects to interpret the æsthetic discipline of the style according to the spirit rather than the letter. Anyone who followed the rules, who accepts the implications of an architecture that is not mass but volume, and who conforms to the principle of regularity can produce buildings which are at least æsthetically sound. If these principles seem more negative than positive, it is because architecture has suffered chiefly in the last century and a half from the extension of the sanctions of genius to all who have called themselves architects.

It were better that the world build only according to the rigid anti-æsthetic theories of the extreme European functionalists than that nineteenth century debauchery of design should continue. The individualists of the early twentieth century reacted against that debauchery with its extravagance of applied ornament. But their reaction created no fixed standards. . . . The ornament of the half-moderns has failed to stand the test of time even as well as that of the more cultured revivalists. The continuance of this superficially novel decoration which the half-moderns originated most effectually distinguished than mass of American modern architecture from that of Europe.

## VII. A THIRD PRINCIPLE: THE AVOIDANCE OF APPLIED DECORATION



ABSENCE OF ornament serves as much as a regular horizontality to differentiate superficially the current style from the styles of the past and from the various manners of the last century and a half. . . . The failure of revivalism probably lay quite as much in the inability to recreate the conditions of craftsmanship which once made applied ornament aesthetically valid, as in the impossibility of adapting the spirit of old styles to new methods of construction.

. . . Conditions are today less propitious for the production of ornament than they were during the last century. . . . Even the renaissance of craftsmanship sponsored by the Mediævalists failed. . . .

Architecture, however has never been without other elements of decoration. For decoration may be considered to include not only applied ornament, but all the incidental features of design which give interest and variety to the whole. Architectural detail, which is required as much by modern structure as by the structure of the past, provides the decoration of contemporary architecture. Indeed, detail actually required by structure or symbolic of the underlying structure provided most of the decoration of the purer styles of the past.

The fact that there is so little detail today increases the decorative effect of what there is. . . .\*

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Besides architectural detail, related subordinate works of sculpture and painting have on occasion been successfully used to decorate contemporary buildings without degenerating into mere applied ornament.

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Sculpture also ought not to be combined or merged with architecture. It should retain its own character quite separate from that of its background. This was true of the best Greek sculpture and often of that of other periods. . . .

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Lettering is the nearest approach to arbitrary ornament used by the architects of the international style. It has, of course, a real functional purpose in advertising and in indicating the use of different parts of a large building. Clear unseriffed letter forms are most legible at a good scale and conform most harmoniously to the geometrical character of contemporary design. . . .

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Also in the use of color the general rule is restraint. In the earliest days of the contemporary style white stucco was ubiquitous. . . . Then followed a period when the use of color began to receive considerable attention. In Holland and Germany small areas of bright elementary colors were used [due to the influence of De Stijl]. . . .

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Trees and vines are a further decoration for modern architecture. Natural surroundings are at once a contrast and a background emphasizing the artificial values created by architects. . . . As far as possible the original beauties of the site should be preserved. Mere open spaces are not enough for repose; something of the ease and grace of untouched nature is needed as well. . . .

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\* Some of the "ornamental" possibilities include window details, the "capping of walls," "handling of isolated supports," parapets and railings.

## VIII. ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING

THUS FAR in this discussion architecture has been considered as inclusive of all forms of building. . . . there is a broad differentiation between *architecture* and *building*. There exists a range, or hierarchy, of æsthetic significance. The degree to which an edifice represents consciously or unconsciously the result of an æsthetic, as well as of a technical, effort of creation determines its place in the hierarchy. The wider the opportunity for the architect within the limitations of structure and function to make judgments determined by his taste and not merely by economics, the more fully architectural will be the resultant construction. . . . Buildings built at minimal cost with practical considerations dominant throughout may be held to be less fully architectural than those on which the architect has more freedom of choice in the use of materials and the distribution of the parts.

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. . . Architecture [defined as “edifices consciously raised above the level of mere building”] is seldom merely neutral æsthetically. It is good architecture or it is bad. When it is bad, the extreme contentions of the functionalists seem justified. But when it is good, such negative contentions appear an essential denial of the important spiritual function which all art serves. Good modern architecture may be as richly and coherently imbued with the style of our day as were the great edifices of the past with that of theirs.

The functionalists, approaching architecture from the materialistic point of view of sociology, go behind the problems that are offered to the architect and refuses their sanction to those which demand a fully architectural solution. In their estimation the modern world has neither the time nor the money required to raise building to the level of architecture. . . .

## IX. PLANS

THUS FAR there has been only incidental mention of the plan in contemporary architecture. Modern methods of construction have freed planning from conforming to the rigid lines of masonry structure. Isolated supports interfere hardly at all with free space and circulation. Interior partitions, like exterior walls, are mere screens. Thus planning has become absolutely pliant to the needs of function. New study of function, moreover, has broken down most of the conventions of planning inherited from the past, quite as rapidly as structural advance has made radical changes in plan possible.

The functionalists make a particular fetish of planning. They sometimes claim that they have never studied or composed their exteriors, but have merely allowed them to grow as the unavoidable clothing of the plan. . . . [But] architects who aim at achieving the fullest architectural character in their buildings must still study elevations alone quite as much as plans and sections.

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The development of free planning, particularly with the use of curved and oblique screens, has been carried furthest in constructions of definitely architectural character. It gives to modern interiors a new kind of abstract space design unknown in the architecture of the past. But it is one of the elements of modern architecture which is easily abused, both practically and æsthetically.

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Something has been said of the use of color in interiors. . . . Screen walls should be, if possible, of natural materials in their own colors. . . . In small enclosed rooms more use of artificial color is justifiable to give interest and variety. . . . But growing plants and fine picture are the best means of giving life to interiors.

The absence of all other decoration gives them added emphasis and increases the importance of placing them properly in relation to the general design. The detail of interior treatment will undoubtedly vary with the years far more than the general principles of the style.

## X. THE *SIEDLUNG*\*

THE DEVELOPMENT of modern city planning has brought an increasing intervention of the political authorities in architecture. In some cases the æsthetic effect of this intervention has been for the good, substituting harmony for anarchical diversity, as in the buildings of Haussmann's day which line the Paris boulevards. In other cases it is unfortunately, as in the case of the New York zoning law requiring the setback treatment of tall buildings; or in the case of the *Baupolizei* (building-police) in German cities, who force later builders on a street to continue the steep roofs used on the first house.

But the state is more than a supervisor of architecture. It has itself become a patron of architecture in fields previously left to the individual. . . . All over Europe public and semi-public agencies are concerning themselves with inexpensive housing. In America the patronage of housing developments by the state or by philanthropists, who so often carry on activities which are left to the government abroad, is only beginning.

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. . . Our *Siedlungen* [in America] are sometimes excellent illustrations of sociological theory, but they are seldom examples of sound modern building and never works of architectural distinction.

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The modern *Siedlung* raises the question of what is meant by function in architecture more pertinently than does any other type of building. The general function is clear both in Europe and in America: to provide a large number of dwellings outside the city but still not too distant from the place of work of the inhabitants. . . .

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The architect has a right to distinguish functions which are major and general from those which are minor and local. In sociological building he ought certainly to stress the universal at the expense of the particular. He may even, for economic reasons and for the sake of general architectural style, disregard entirely the peculiarities of local tradition unless these are soundly based on local weather conditions. His aim is to approach an ideal standard. But houses should not be functionally so advanced that they are lived in under protest.

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Whether the architects' work be a single elaborate country house, a public edifice, or a residence colony of apartments or small dwellings, the application of æsthetic principles of order, the formal simplification of complexity, will raise a good work of building to a fine monument of architecture. . . .

Buildings will continue to be looked at as well as used. It is surely one function of architecture to provide for æsthetic appreciation. Fortunately the functionalists have not altogether failed to do so. Their achievements form an important part of the productions of the international style.

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\* "The German word, *Siedlung*, serves more conveniently and specifically to denominate modern community housing projects than 'garden suburb' or 'residence subdivision.' "

Within this style there are no subsidiary manners which are ecclesiastical or domestic or industrial. The symbolical expression of function by allusion to the past, which the half-modern architects at the beginning of the century developed, has ceased to be necessary. Where function is straightforwardly expressed, one type of building will not be confounded with another. Nor need that individuality break the premises of the style. The international style is broad and elastic enough for many varying talents and for many decades of development.

We have, as the Egyptians had or the Chinese, as the Greeks and our own ancestors in the Middle Ages before us, a style which orders the visible manifestation of a certain close relationship between structure and function. Regardless of specific types of structure or of function, the style has a definable æsthetic. That æsthetic, like modern technics, will develop and change; it will hardly cease to exist. It is found in the humblest buildings, as well as in monuments, fully architectural. Those who have buried architecture, whether from a thwarted desire to continue the past or from an over-anxiety to modify and hurry on the future, have been premature: we have an architecture still.