Building beyond the European
Utopian Architectural Projects as Sites of Social Identities

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Declaration

I, Viviane Louisa Otto, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Building beyond the European: Utopian Architectural Projects as Sites of Social Identities”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, textes, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

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Introduction

Building to transform society; this was the central demand the German architectural critic Adolf Behne advanced in his programmatic work *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, published in 1919. Behne’s statement reflected the dramatic tone of the avant-garde. In the context of World War I, the intellectual elite formulated the utopia of a solidary world community, living harmoniously in a beautifully designed glass world of infinite dimensions. In 1914, German expressionist writer Paul called for building glass architecture in order to pave the way for a new culture and alter mankind (Scheerbart, “Glasarchitektur” 453). His text laid the foundation for the subsequent development of expressionist architectural utopianism. In the same year, Taut displayed his *Glashaus*, a rotund and prismatic dome of glass, at the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne (Whyte, *Bruno Taut* 35).¹ In his fantastic literary texts *Alpine Architektur* and *Die Stadtkrone*, both published in 1919, Taut developed his ideal glass architecture further. Architectural research has extensively discussed the German expressionist architectural program established by, among others, Scheerbart, Taut and Behne, in order to transform European society and construct a ‘new man’ (e.g. Poppelreuter; Schirren, “Weltbild”; Neumeyer; Bletter; Pehnt, “‘New Man’”). In this context, I would like to draw particular attention to Rosemarie Bletter’s essay “The Interpretation of the Glass Dream-Expressionist Architecture and the History of the Crystal Metaphor”, published in 1981. Bletter saw “the glass-crystal symbolism” central to the expressionist architectural utopianism “as a metaphor of transformation to signify a changed society” (20). At first, it seems like this position does not differ significantly from later characterizations of the utopian program as a social dream, but Bletter claimed a singular position when she defined the “architectonic format in the works of Scheerbar, Taut, and a large number of Expressionists […] [as] a search for social identity” (42-43). The author developed this argument based on the iconographic tradition of the crystal-glass-metaphor as a symbol of search for identity, but did not offer a detailed

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¹ Founded in 1907 through the initiative of Hermann Muthesius, the Werkbund was intended to form a union of art, craft and industry (Pehnt, *Deutsche Architektur* 84). However, the Werkbund exhibition at Cologne resulted in a heated debate between the associates. Taut, Henry van de Velde and Gropius accused Muthesius of advancing economic interests (Pehnt, *Deutsche Architektur* 86).
discussion of the primary sources. Architectural research has neglected Bletter’s interpretation of the utopian program as a “search for social identity” (43). Matthias Schirren casually interpreted the utopian expressionist architectures as a “Spiel […] mit Identität und Differenz [emphasis in original]” (“Weltbild” 91). He referred to Novalis’ concept of identity and stressed the popularity of Romantic motives and concepts among the utopian expressionists (100). Herewith, Schirren’s interest in the category of identity remained restricted to prove once more the revival of early Romanticist ideals in German expressionist architectural utopianism.

I believe that it is worthwhile to recall Bletter’s and Schirren’s studies and explore the role of social identities in the German expressionist architectural utopian program. Using the adjective ‘architectural’ to describe the expressionist dreams of building in glass, I do not refer to actual buildings but spaces narrated or drawings sketched.² Noting that architectural research has dealt with the architectural utopias of the avant-garde as dreams of social community (e.g. Pehnt “Expressionistische Architektur”; Whyte, “Expressionist Utopias”), and that the utopian architects did not use the term identity themselves, it is fair to ask what I hope to gain from focusing explicitly on the role of social identity. First, my research aim is to offer a new theoretical perspective. To date, research on expressionist architectural utopianism has almost exclusively been a métier of architectural and art history scholars, such as Bletter, Whyte, Winfried Nerdinger, Schirren, Manfred Speidel, Wolfgang Pehnt and Magdalena Bushart. Their positions on expressionist architectural utopianism primarily stem from their disciplinary viewpoint of the architectural historian. An exception is the study “Social Theory, the Metropolis and Expressionism” by the British sociologist Frisby, who approached the expressionist architectural utopias against the background of the social critiques developed by Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel. Drawing equally on architectural historical research and Frisby’s sociological study, I explore the expressionist utopian architectural project from a cultural studies perspective, arguing that the focus on the construction of identity places added emphasis on key motifs of the architectural utopianism such as the construction of space (e.g. margins, borders and memorial places), collective memories and body politics. Of course, research on avant-gardist architectural utopianism has addressed these categories before, mostly as a side issue however. Formulating my second research goal, I believe, that if discussed in

² An exception remains Taut’s Glashaus exhibited at the Werkbundausstellung in Cologne in 1914.
detail as strategies of identification, these concepts shed light on the world view which the utopian architectural project envisioned. My research shall not present a clear-cut definition of the ideal which the architectural utopian dreams projected. Instead, I follow the work of Michael Stark, who stressed that the notion of a single concept of the ‘new man’ has merely been produced by researchers who desired a more homogeneous picture of the architectural avant-garde (132). Consequently, my research aim is not to present a catalogue listing as many characteristics of the ‘new man’ as possible, but rather to guide thinking about the world view which avant-gardist architectural utopianism framed. Regarding these interests, I am aware that it is vital to explore the role of identity without employing constructivist measures myself. I am conscious of the temptation of using fashionable concepts like identity, therefore being careful not to impose the term on the subject of analysis. While the first two research aims follow a cultural historical interest, this thesis is also motivated by a surprise about a current architectural utopian project: In 2010, the Belgian artist-architect Filip Berte has launched a long-term visual project of ‘building’ the House of Eutopia. Given their different historical contexts and, as a result, concrete forms, motives and aims, I do not assume a mutual correspondence between the utopian architectural project of the expressionist avant-garde and the architect-artist Berte. Nevertheless, it seems like Berte’s conception repeatedly engages with themes and ideas vital to expressionist architectural utopians. Hence, I continue to explore the role of identity in Berte’s artwork, equally challenging European society. Against this background, I hope that this cultural historic glance into the past may - to some degree, provide new insights into the contemporary fascination for utopian architecture.

Scheerbart’s and Taut’s literary texts, the correspondence of the Gläserne Kette, as well as Behne’s cultural critiques built the avant-gardist utopian architectural project. However, in approaching the previously stated research aims, this thesis primarily focuses on an exemplary close reading of Behne’s programmatic work Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, which the introductory quotation has already offered a glimpse

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3 This is a strategy exhibited by Tanja Poppelreuter, who described the ‘new man’ as “gradlinig, offen, ehrlich, praktische, einfach [und] rational” (219).

4 The Gläserne Kette was an intellectual circle which Taut initiated in 1919. A group comprised of architects and painters, among them Hermann Finsterlin, Wenzel Hablik and Wassili Luckhardt, followed Taut’s call to become imaginary architects (Bletter 38-39). The group engaged in an exchange of architectural utopian ideas. Many of them were published in Taut’s magazine Frühlicht which appeared from 1920 through 1922.
of. Behne’s programmatic work *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* was published in 1918. His text criticized modern bourgeois society and presented the utopian architectural visions developed by Scheerbart and Taut as a means to overcome this state. By building with glass, Behne conveyed, war-torn European society could be turned into a harmonious community. While *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* has been evaluated as a “conglomerate of different, partly also contradictory, thoughts” (Bushart, “Adolf Behne” 31), I argue that the text also exemplary reflects the expressionist utopian discourse. Behne’s euphoric celebration of glass architecture in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* was reprinted in the *Frühlicht* edition of 1920, because it tied the various meanings the utopian avant-gardists attached to the glass architecture into one programmatic vision of human community. Hence, architectural research has repeatedly referred to Behne’s praise of glass architecture in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* as a key text in the formation of the utopian architectural project (e.g. Bletter 34; Hartmann 59; Lutz). Despite this, in 1998 Walter Fähnders pointed out that detailed discussions of the programmatic prose of the avant-garde were underrepresented in research (178). This has only slightly changed since. Secondary literature has merely hinted upon Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* for a long time. In the year 2000, Magdalena Bushart presented a more lengthy discussion of Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, contextualizing his work and offering a helpful point of reference for this thesis (“Adolf Behne” 30-34). Besides its non-literary and programmatic character, another reason to bypass Behne’s work might have been its remarkable similarities to Taut’s texts. By implication, the literature seems to have granted the originality to Taut, even though Bushart stressed that the question of who is the giver and who is the taker, cannot be resolved without ambiguities (“Adolf Behne” 23). Reading Behne’s texts as an exemplary reflection of expressionist utopianism, I see no need to engage in speculations about authorship. In his role as critic, Behne subsequently commented on the development of a new form of architecture and picked up the tone of the avant-garde. In the journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, he published several cultural critiques discussing themes addressed in *Die

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5 Fähnders referred to the edition *Die ganze Welt ist eine Manifestation*, published by Wolfgang Asholt and himself in 1997, as a pioneering work in this context (178). In the foreword, Asholt and Fähnders stressed the variety of forms and expressions which the avant-garde coined. The contributions included in the publication live up to this aspiration, offering a comparative account of the various realizations of the avant-gardist manifest across Europe.
The close reading refers to these documents to contextualize the utopian architectural project developed in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*. Clearly, I do not claim a universal validity of the research results for the utopian architectural project. Given the exemplary qualities of Behne’s texts, I assume that the findings may be applicable to other documents of the architectural avant-garde, but leave this issue open to further research in order to deal with it properly.

In the previous paragraphs I used the concepts of modernity, avant-garde and expressionism to briefly contextualize the research interest. Every one of these terms contains a variety of meanings assigned to them by different strands of research. To recall these would go beyond the scope of this thesis. However, considering that my argument continuously draws upon these key terms, I briefly introduce Fähnder’s definitions of the respective concepts to position my research. To begin with, it is important to emphasize the differentiation between a socio-political and an aesthetic modernity (c.f. Fähnders 2; Anz 1). Along with Fähnders, I understand the first to be a process of social modernization manifesting itself in increasing rationalization, industrialization, urbanization and differentiation, and the latter as a creative and critical response encapsulating a variety of forms in the arts (2). Furthermore, I assess Behne’s architectural utopianism as a characteristic expression of the historical avant-garde, whose establishment Fähnders dated back to the very beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century (123). Starting in 1910, separate groups were increasingly gesturing towards social change and revolution (Fähnders 123). Fähnders applied Jürgen Habermas’ assessment of modernity as an “unvollendetes Projekt” to his concept of the historical avant-garde (206). Hereby he stressed its fragmentary character and orientation towards the future, which is essential to remember in the course of the argument. Finally, regarding expressionism as part of the avant-gardist project, there were no signs of homogenous movement either, and it has been used both to refer to an artistic style and a historical period. Whereas Fähnders tried to frame the various forms of expressionism with the broad definition of a typically rebellious mind-set of bourgeois intellectuals, he was more precise in recalling the common time period of expressionism, with its early phase spanning from 1910 to the beginning of World War

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6 The journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte* was a political forum of the left. Between 1895 and 1933 the journal was released monthly, with the exception of the period between 1918 and 1923, when it was published every fortnight (Woltering 1). According to Hubert Woltering, Joseph Bloch was the editor of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* from its inception to its end (2). Nevertheless, the position of the journal within the SPD remained controversial throughout its existence (Woltering 4).
I, a second phase from 1914 to the November revolution in 1918, and a late phase whose end date remained, as usual, subject to discussion (135). Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* may be classified among this late branch of expressionism, putting forth a social utopianism which comes to fruition through a future-oriented humanitarian pathos. Even though the close reading focuses on an example of German architectural expressionism, I approach the avant-gardist architectural utopianism as a European project (Bru et al.). I regard Behne’s text not only as a characteristic expression of utopianism in a German context, but am also aware that similar themes and motives circulated across the works of the intellectual European avant-garde, for example, in the garden city movement, which spread from Britain to Germany and the Netherlands in the beginning of the 20th century, or in the Netherlands where the architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage, had already emphasized similar ideals of social community at the turn of the century.

Taking into consideration that the concepts of utopia and identity do not inherently fit together, I place the architectural fantasies within the tradition of the utopian genre and the historical discourse on utopianism at the beginning of the twentieth century which they may both feed upon and reflect. Subsequently, but without suggesting a correlation to the category of utopianism, I introduce Peter Burke and Jan Stets’ definition of social identity as a point of reference for the analysis. Against this background, the second chapter enters into the close reading of Behne’s essays published in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* and *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, mainly following the chronology of publication, but deviating where considered necessary. The process of building an alternative community serves as the primary orientation throughout the study. Starting by exploring Behne’s characterization of his contemporary society, I discuss how the author described the point of departure for social change. In the third chapter, the study moves on to explore how the means to bring upon change were called upon and celebrated. What were the attributes of the architecture perceived as capable of introducing this transformation of society? How do the results of the analysis relate the understanding of Behne’s world view? Or, referring back to the initial quote from Behne’s text: Which perspective should the European adopt as he would be altered to a ‘new man’? In an enormous leap to contemporary Brussels, the fourth chapter finally asks how Berte’s *House of Eutopia* project translates the modern utopian architectural dream. Admittedly, this brief outline moves quite
boldly across time and disciplines. It starts out with a social science interest in the construction of identities and utopias, then engaging in a close reading which one may associate with literary studies (if we acknowledge that the massive glass utopias were constructed in written texts and were far from physically being built) and drawing on art and architectural historical research in order to contextualize the findings. Finally, it even goes as far as paying a short visit to Berte’s contemporary vision of a House of Eutopia for Brussels. Thus, I have to acknowledge that even if I am not able to fulfill the disciplinary standards of the respective fields, I will at least pursue the aim of offering a cultural perspective of architectural utopianism, in line with the aims of the interdisciplinary Master of Arts program Euroculture, in whose framework this research has been drafted. I hope that the substantial use of German, owing to the provenance of the primary and a wide range of secondary sources, does not obstruct the view of the European perspective which this research explores focusing on expressions of architectural utopianism as critiques on European society and its identification politics.

1 Linking Utopias and Identities?

This chapter starts out with a question mark surrounding it. I am skeptical towards linking the architectural utopian program of the avant-garde with identity. After all, at no point did the utopists Scheerbart, Taut and, as a euphoric critic also Behne explicitly describe their utopian project as one of searching for, or playing with identity. Instead, Behne referred to the program as a pioneering new “Weltanschauung” (Wiederkehr 25), and a “Geistesrevolution” (Wiederkehr 66). Unfortunately, Bletter did not explain why she introduced this term to contest Behne’s “Weltanschauung” (Wiederkehr 25). This tells me to be cautious in imposing the category of identity on expressionist architectural utopianism. I am curious to explore whether, and how the category of identity may contribute to an understanding of the architectural program of the avant-garde. Hence, I approach the discussion regarding the relationship between architectural utopianism and social identity gradually. Given the brief overview of the research interest in the introduction, I owe the reader a more detailed characterization of the architectural critic Behne and his works. This chapter first positions Behne’s works in the context of the architectural utopian program, as well as utopian discourse. Secondly, it provides a definition of social identity which Bletter regarded unnecessary. Both aspects establish the background for the close reading.
1.1 Exemplary Positions

In 1998, Cornelia Briel published a reprint of Behne’s writing on art, including his work “Die Wiederkehr der Kunst”. In her afterword, Briel characterized Behne as an exceptional figure of the avant-garde which research has unjustly neglected. More specifically, she described him as a critic and art historian guided by objective and academic expertise (266). According to Briel, Behne’s intention was exclusively the promotion of art, which excluded sympathizing with and popularizing certain artistic circles (265). This argumentation indicates that Briel established this case to emphasize the importance of her ‘rediscovery’ of Behne’s works. My research aim is not to argue in favor of Briel’s interpretation, which grants a unique role to Behne in the context of the artistic avant-garde, instead, I believe that Behne’s works continuously recounted fashionable discursive themes of the time. Briel’s claim that Behne played the role of a distanced critic is untenable, especially with reference to the utopian architectures of glass which this research explores. Behne was fascinated by Taut’s and Scheerbart’s utopian architectural dreams. In *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, Behne advocated their visions and presented a programmatic outline of humanitarian expressionist architecture. As such, I argue that the text lends itself to this study focusing on the role of social identity in the architectural utopian program. Highlighting the exemplary stance of Behne’s work, I distance my argumentation from Briel’s interpretation and move in the direction of Bushart’s evaluation of Behne’s achievements. In the colloquium on Behne’s role as an architectural critic held at the Technical University Berlin in 1995, Bushart characterized Behne as a “Wegbereiter” and a “Wegbegleiter der Moderne” (“Adolf Behne” 8). This evaluation corresponds with this research which, on the one hand, spots common themes in Behne’s writings and on the other hand, discusses *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* as a foundational program of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst and its utopian dreams of glass architecture.

Even though I do not grant Behne the outstanding role Briel intended him for, it is necessary to briefly outline the development of his career, the position of his writings and his personal ties to the artistic avant-garde. Behne was born in Magdeburg in 1885, but raised in Berlin where his family moved a year later (Bushart, “Adolf Behne” 13). His father was an architect and initially, it seemed as if Behne would follow in his footsteps when he commenced his studies of architecture at the Technical University in Berlin (Bushart 13). However, in 1907, after two years of studying, he quit architecture
to study art history with Heinrich Wölfflin and Karl Frey (Bushart 13). Behne completed his academic career with the dissertation *Der Inkrustationsstil in der Toscania* (Bushart 13). After finishing his studies, he became a professional art critic, being published mainly in journals of socialist alignment, such as the *Arbeiterjugend*, *Die neue Zeit* and the *Sozialistischen Monatshefte*. The publications document Behne’s ideological association with the SPD, which however, did not result in political membership (Bushart 14). Next to Behne’s socialist stance, his involvement with the Sturm is central to contextualizing this research. In 1912, he published a review on the “V. Ausstellung der Neuen Sezession” in *Die Hilfe* (Bushart 17). Part of the same article was a reference to Walden’s opening of the Sturm gallery (Bushart 17). The fact that Walden reprinted the essay in *Der Sturm* secured its author a place among the international avant-garde (Bushart 18). Here, Behne encountered Scheerbart’s utopian fantasies of glass and entered into an intensive exchange of ideas with Taut who developed Scheerbart’s fantasies further with the erection of his *Glashaus* at the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914, subsequently focusing on this in his literary texts *Alpine Architektur* and *Die Stadtkrone* published in 1919. Despite the fact that Behne did not join the intellectual circle of the Gläserne Kette, initiated by Taut to advance architectural utopianism, thanks to close contact with Taut he was, well informed about the shape which the utopian dreams of glass took. During his years with the Sturm, Behne wrote regularly for the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. His essays discussed art as a means to initiate and frame social change. According to Bushart, the social impact which Behne attributed to, and expected of art resulted in a turn away from Walden’s Sturm and its elitist aestheticism (30). The break with Walden manifested itself in Behne’s biting criticism of Walden’s *Expressionismus: Die Kunstwende* delivered in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* in 1918 (Bushart 30). The notion of the social obligation and influence of the artist built the backbone of Behne’s programmatic work *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* written in the same year. *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* called for the artist, more explicitly the architect, to initiate the process of social transformation towards the ideal state of a social human community. With this utopian vision of an alternative form of human coexistence, Behne criticized modern industrialized bourgeois society, its belief in scientific rationalities and technologies, as well as its conservative obedience to classical aesthetic and educational ideals. *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* did not merely appoint the leading role towards social change to the architect. Behne also identified more specific means, which the architects should
employ in order to transform society. Along with Scheerbart’s and Taut’s utopian architectural glass dreams, Behne argued that only glass architectures were capable of turning the greedy bourgeois society into a harmonious community. While Taut’s literary texts and sketches, developed in the Gläserne Kette correspondence, gave his utopian architecture a constructivist design of dynamic and out-reaching, as well as angular and sharp with white-yellowish colored forms, Behne did not explicitly discuss the design of the glass architecture his text called for. His ambition was restricted to promote glass as material which would ultimately construct a ‘new’ human community. Consequently, Behne’s call for glass architectures did not focus on specific forms and designs, but rather on the symbolic qualities of glass and its effects on society. The attributes which Behne assigned to glass went hand in hand with his messianic vision of the transgression of contemporary society for the sake of the ‘new’ man. The social utopianism of a ‘new’ human community, which Behne linked to the dream of glass architecture, was a fashionable discursive theme. With Nietzschean pathos, the expressionist architectural program aimed at the inversion of bourgeois values and the transgression of society. This emphatic celebration of an alternative community did not result from Behne’s originality as an author, nor was it restricted to German architectural expressionism. Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst pulled the various strands of the utopian architectural project together to form his communal ideal. Hereby, Behne anticipated the program of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, founded in 1918 in the context of the November revolution. The Arbeitsrat für Kunst was initiated with the hope of influencing the decision-making process of the counsels, its key request being to acknowledge the leading role of architecture in the reconstruction of an alternative society (Whyte, Bruno Taut 98). Against the background of this socialist agenda, as well as Behne’s programmatic architectural program laid out in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Briel called the Arbeitsrat für Kunst an “Institution für Utopien” (271). Behne used his double function as manager of the council and art critic to proliferate the revolutionary ideals of architectural utopianism in a series of essays published in the Sozialistischen Monatshefte (Bushart, “Adolf Behne” 35). The socialist journal were an outlet for his early cultural critiques, as well as for his call for a “brüderliche[…] Zusammenkunft der Künstler aller Länder”, which he developed in the framework of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst. Ironically, it was actually an international artistic meeting which grounded Behne’s architectural utopianism. On a journey to the Netherlands, Behne became acquainted with the Stijl movement. He established personal contacts
with J.J.P. Oud and Theo van Doesburg, which would greatly influence his position towards industrialized modernity. As a result of the intellectual exchange, Behne qualified his early fierce criticism of technology. Following this change in perspective, the 1920s became Behne’s most productive years. He published his main works *Von Kunst zur Gestaltung* (1925), *Der moderne Zweckbau* (1926) and *Neues Wohnen - Neues Bauen* (1927), which research has mainly focused on, but lie beyond the scope of this thesis. Consequently, the close reading follows not only Fähnders periodization motivated by historical events, but also the creative phases of expressionist architectural utopianism, with its corpus including Behne’s critique of Taut’s glasshouse in 1914, ending with his paradigmatic turn away from the utopian social dream in 1920 (Gruhn-Zimmermann 118).

1.2 ‘Other’ Places

The contextualization placed Behne’s works amidst fashionable discursive themes of the time. The revolutionary position of the architectural utopianism Behne claimed reflects the programmatic tone of the artistic avant-garde. Does the revolutionary gesture of Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* justify including the text in the genre of the avant-gardist manifest? A broad definition would certainly allow for this, highlighting its public address, content and tone urging for collective rebellion and action (Asholt and Fähnders 29-30). Yet, Hubert van Berg warned of subordinating the variety of programmatic texts under the category of the manifest (58). He claimed that this practice would diffuse the specific role the manifest assumed in the historical avant-garde, because it was then for the first time, that manifests were published in quick succession and entitled as such (58). Consequently, Van Berg suggested differentiating between a broad definition of the manifests as a genre and a close definition as a type of text (59). I follow this proposal and categorize Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* in the genre of the manifest. After all, Walter Fähnders and Wolfgang Asholt established the connection between Behne’s architectural program and the genre of the manifest in *Die ganze Welt ist eine Manifestation*, pointing out that manifests were, in the true sense of the word, “utopic” projects (10).

Ever since Thomas More coined the term utopia in 1516, the imaginary vision of an alternative way of living has ultimately become linked to the notion of spatiality. More derived the term utopia from joining the Greek ‘u’, or ‘ou’, and ‘topos’, the
former meaning ‘no’ or ‘not’, and the latter ‘place’.

With the prefix ‘eu’, More added one more pun and defined the ‘eu’-topia as a ‘good place’ (Sargent 5). By naming his work *Utopia*, More not only defined the ideal human community of the far-away island represented in his book, but introduced a generic term under which subsequent research has categorized his text as an early example (Gnüg and Hinck 9). The double function of More’s *Utopia* recalls the need to differentiate between concrete utopian forms and theoretical discourse on utopianism. Gregory Claeys and Lyman Sargent considered the Greek myths of a golden age, as developed by Hesiod in *Works and Days*, to be the earliest forms of utopianism (7). Other historical accounts of the utopian form granted the foundational role to Plato’s *Politeia* (Gnüg and Hinck 20; Quarta and Metcalf 176). With reference to the research interest in avant-gardist architectural utopianism, it is interesting to note through Nerdinger, that Plato had already worked with architectural design to represent his ideal Republic (269). Exploring several historical liaisons of architecture and utopia, Gerd de Bruyn conceptualized utopian dreaming as a founding moment of city planning. Nevertheless, theoretical discourse on utopianism has not yet come to terms with the relation between utopia and spatiality introduced by More’s neologism. Commonly, research has suggested that ‘ou’ or ‘u’ pointed towards the fact, that the (e)utopia, which was projected, did exist as a plan, but not yet in reality (Claeys and Sargent 1; Quarta and Metcalf 176). Claeys and Sargent wrote: “[T]he primary characteristic of the utopia is its nonexistence combined with a *topos* - a location in space and time - to give verisimilitude (1).” In contrast, Louis Marin argued that More’s negation did not refer to nonexistence, but to the place as “the ‘other’ of any place” (411). Accordingly, Marin stated: “When More said ‘Utopia’, this name performatively created [...] ‘otherness’ (411).” I believe that these two positions are not mutually exclusive, but ambiguously allude to More’s ‘u’ or ‘ou’ and ought to be equally kept in mind when exploring the utopian architectures.

1.3 Social Dreams

The utopian program established by the architectural avant-garde resembled a dream to bring upon social transformation. According to Hiltrud Gnüg and Walter Hinck, its premises were, first, a perception of the human as *homo faber*, able to ‘make’ progress, and second, a historical reality experienced as deficient (9). With Claeys and Sargent, I classify Behne’s architectural utopia as a “utopia of human contrivance”, such as Plato’s
Republic, equally based on the belief that humans are in control of social change (2). In accordance with this categorization, Bletter described the expressionist utopian architectural project as an expression of a “utopian socialism” (36). Rightly, Pehnt and Gerda Breuer qualified this position by instead speaking of an “apolitical socialism” (Pehnt, Architektur des Expressionismus 20; Breuer 160). They defend this position despite the association of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, key body in the development of the architectural program, with the USPD (Whyte, Bruno Taut 100). Breuer evaluated the socialist statements of the members, like Taut and Behne, as “Lippenbekenntnisse […] einer kollektiven Bewegung” (160). Overall, research has been concerned with contesting linear narrations of history which introduced the utopian dream of a ‘new’ community and a ‘new man’ as the point of origin leading to Nazism and Communism. Nevertheless, contemporary research on utopianism has stressed, like Lucy Sargisson for example, that utopianism is a crucial element of most ideologies (42). From this relation arose the strand of utopia-criticism which directed the reader to totalitarian monstrosities and warned of the idealism underlying much of utopian thinking. After all, research has commonly regarded perfectionism as an inherent quality of any utopia. Only in the last few decades has research begun to qualify this perception and argue that “[p]erfection is the exception to the norm” (Sargent 9), and that utopias were often “marked by incompleteness” (Sargisson 31). However, neither Sargent nor Sargisson denied the dangerous potential of utopianism once the social dream is mistaken as the only possible way towards perfection. The controversy surrounding the relation between idealism and utopianism guides this approach, which perceives Behne’s expressionist architectural utopia as a site of cultural criticism and creativity, but takes careful note where it displays a will for perfection. Recently, Jörn Rüsen addressed this janus-faces character of utopianism with the notion of the “Unruhe der Kultur”, which may be disturbing and irritating as well as inspiring since it frees creative potential (37).

As much architectural historic research has agreed that the expressionist architectural program may not be assigned to party politics, it has been good practice in
secondary literature to state that expressionist architectural utopianism envisioned the ideal of a “new society” (e.g. Bletter 20; Gutschow, Culture of Criticism 52). Bletter and Gutschow for example, applied a broad definition of utopianism, such as that provided by Sargent, who argued that utopias “usually envision a radically different society” to the architectural utopias (3), without questioning the suitability of the concept of “society”. In contrast, David Frisby recalled Tönnies’ Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, first published in 1887, to claim that the expressionist utopian program should not be assessed as the dream of a “new society”, but as one of a “new community” (93). Tönnies defined community as a collective whose members are “in organischer Weise verbunden” and act in mutual affirmation (14). He instead characterized society as a form of human coexistence in which individual persons live side-by-side, yet isolated from each other (40). In line with the discourse of the intellectual avant-garde, Tönnies criticized bourgeois forms of living and reinforced the dualism of techné and physis, culture and nature towards which Western thinking is so prone to. A closer look at Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst proves Frisby’s criticism of using the category of “society” in relation to the utopian social dream to be right. Behne highlighted the moral decay of the bourgeoisie, which he cynically called the “bessere Gesellschaft” (Wiederkehr 86), and celebrated those artists who engaged with the mass in a “Vermeidung der Gesellschaft” (Wiederkehr 87). As a result, Behne’s utopian architectural program constructed an ‘other’ place to supersede the metropolis as the locus of the decadent bourgeois society. Next to Tönnies’ ideal of community, the legacy of the garden city movement, which spread from Britain to Germany and the Netherlands in the beginning of the century, became manifest here. Following the ideals of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities of Tommorow, “gated communities” were built on the outskirts of German and Dutch cities which were supposed to offer ‘idyllic’ homesteads and the opportunity to escape from the tenant houses of the metropolis to the working class (Pehnt, Deutsche Architektur 51). The garden city movement fed into the various strands of the reform movement, proliferating since the end of the 19th century in Germany. In the context of the reform movement, there developed utopian architectural projects, which envisioned sacral buildings as means to construct an

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10 In her study of the utopian dream to build a ‘new man’, Poppelreuter rightly directed the reader to Helmuth Plessner’s cultural critique Grenzen der Gemeinschaft, published in 1924 (193). Plessner identified the concept of “Gemeinschaft” as the “Idol dieses Zeitalters” and warned that the transgression of boundaries towards a homogeneous social unity, and the celebration of practices of depersonalization, would result in a threat to individuality (26). For the controversial debate surrounding Plessner’s work and its relation to Tönnie’s sociology see Wolfgang EBbach, et al..
alternative, harmonious community and as a prelude to the plans Scheerbart and Taut developed.\footnote{The chapter \textit{The Experience of Expressionist Glass} mentions the architectural fantasies developed in the framework of the reform movement. However, for a more detailed discussion of the architectural utopias of the reform movement refer to Hofer’s study “Orte der Glückseligkeit.”}

Using the example of Tönnies, the garden city movement and the architectural utopianism of the reform movement, when considering the impact of fashionable discursive themes on the expressionist architectural program, it is time to move on from contemporary interpretations of the expressionist utopia, to the utopian discourse of the early 20th century. Behne’s utopianism reflected the positive connotation of utopianism in modern discourse and the paradigmatic turn towards highlighting the mental dimension of utopianism, which Rüdiger Graf identified (148). According to Graf, the lecture series “Die sozialen Utopien”, given by the mathematician and economist Andreas Voigt at the University of Leipzig in 1906, and Gustav Landauer’s book \textit{Die Revolution} published in the following year (151, 153), both had a pioneering role in establishing the socio-psychological approach in utopian thought. These works reassessed utopianism as an expression of a state of mind and, according to Graf, sparked a widespread interest among contemporary periodicals (152). What was not mentioned by Graf, but is telling in relation to the paradigmatic reevaluation of utopianism, is the essay “Utopische Ideen im modernen Sozialismus” published by a committed supporter of the SPD, Franz Laufkötter, in the \textit{Sozialistische Monatshefte} in 1908. Laufkötter set out to describe utopianism as “Wiege des Sozialismus”, but moved on to argue that utopianism needed to be overcome for the sake of practical socialism (1341). Loudly rejecting utopianism, Laufkötter took a fashionable Marxist stance. In the endeavor to underline the clout of his ideology, Marx had criticized early socialist and anarchist expressions as ‘utopist’. Accordingly, Sarginson has rightly observed that “politics often rejects utopianism and yet politics are built on utopias (25).” In his influential work \textit{Der Geist der Utopie}, published in 1918, Ernst Bloch rejected the distinction between Marxist ideology and utopianism, positively reevaluating the utopian dimension of Marxism. Graf acknowledged Bloch’s decisive contribution to the popularization of the socio-psychological approach to utopianism (158). Bloch appraised utopianism as an anthropological constant driving the human towards collective and revolutionary actions, subsequently bringing upon historical
transformation processes. He viewed utopianism as a hopeful orientation towards a world yet to be achieved (362). Accordingly, Bloch wrote in *Geist der Utopie*:

\[G\]ehen wir, hauen wir die metaphysisch konstitutiven Wege, rufen was nicht ist, bauen ins Blaue hinein, bauen uns ins Blaue hinein und suchen dort das Wahre, Wirkliche, wo das bloß Tatsächliche verschwindet - incipit vita nova. (365).

Bloch envisioned the beginning of a new life in the tone of early Romantic utopianism, which was characterized by a longing for the golden age. He used the metaphor of ‘building’ to stress his ideal of the *homo faber* and to spatially locate utopia in an ‘other’ place. The concrete utopian forms which the expressionist avant-garde sketched and narrated mirrored the weighty meaning Bloch placed on the practice of ‘building’.

### 1.4 Community and Identity

In line with Frisby, I defined the utopian architectural project of the expressionist avant-garde as project which aimed to construct an alternative community. Against this background, Bletter, who assumed that the architectural program is to be interpreted as a search for identity, consequently qualified the identity in focus as social identity (43). Tönnies described mutual affirmation and the feeling of belonging as premises for an intact community (14), to be found amongst families, neighbors and friends (15). In regards to the latter relation, Tönnies detached community from a physically shared location. Recently, this detachment of communal identification from shared spatial experience has been popularized in Benedict Anderson’s concept of the nation as an “imagined community” (6). Anderson translated this idea of friendship as a premise for community building into “comradeship” (7), and stressed that national communities are no longer built on personal relationships, but established in a process of collective identification “in the minds” (6). Before I explore whether this link between community and identity may be a starting point to discuss the category of identity in relation to expressionist architectural utopianism, I shall introduce Burke and Stets’ social identity theory as a theoretical framework and definition of social identity that Bletter denied. In their studies, the sociologists Burke and Stets focused on the dynamics of intergroup relations (226). Burke and Stets stated that identity construction was based on the reflexivity of the individual, whose comparative look at existing social categories and classifications, resulted in a categorization of the self (224). Role, person and group merely constituted different bases for a successful identity construction. They might
exist simultaneously and be activated according to the respective circumstances (229). Consequently, Burke and Stets explained that a social identity was activated once an individual identified with a specific group (118). The authors elaborated further that this identification occurred when a person compared the self with members of a group and, given that a set of similarities were identified, categorized the self among them (118). Hereby, the individual joined the “ingroup” in opposition to an “outgroup”, constituted by individuals perceived as different (118). The concept of a “group prototype” served as comparison, whose characteristic qualities either went along or contradicted the self-image of the individual (118). Burke and Stets pointed out that in the moment the individual became a characteristic member of the group, it consented to temporarily let go of the wish to emphasize its unique and distinctive personal identity (124). Burke and Stets called this shift from the ‘me’ to the ‘we’ as the basis of identification, the process of “depersonalization” (124). The authors clarified that the process of “depersonalization” did not suggest that the personal identity was lost. Instead, the notion of “depersonalization” merely highlighted the individual capacity to choose among a range of identifications (124). Despite their sociological focus on intergroup relations, Burke and Stets discussed the concept of roles as a basis of identification (224). While stressing the difficulties in empirically differentiating role and social identity, they suggested paying attention to the motivation of the individual (122). To exemplarily explain this position, which this research will return to in the course of the textual analysis, the authors introduced the exclamation “‘mothers of the world, unite!’” (122). Burke and Stets pointed out that whereas mother in the context of the family was a role identity, mother in the sense of the call to unite represented a social identity (122). Burke and Stets’ evidence suggests remembering categorization as a key process in identity formation, while moving on to explore areas where Bletter’s characterization of the architectural program as a “search for social identity” may be justified (43). Furthermore, it needs to be kept in mind throughout the close reading that role and social identities may overlap, whereas Burke and Stets perceived social and personal identities as exclusive concepts along the notion of “depersonalization” (124).

2 Taking Inventory

“Utopias stem from the discontent with the present, and they tell us what is wrong with the now. They are imbedded in what they criticize,” argued Sargisson (36).
position entails a risk of overestimating the correlation of historical events and intellectual discourse, as well as artistic expressions. Pehnt for example, assessed the utopian projects of the post-war period as a result of stifled creativity in a time which money for building projects was scarce (22). Hereby, Pehnt failed to highlight that Scheerbart had already experimented with utopian architectural forms in his novels *Münchhausen und Clarissa* (1906) and *Das graue Tuch und zehn Prozent Weiß* (1914). Indeed, Breuer demonstrated that architectural research at times overestimated the influence of political events and social conditions (156). Nevertheless, it is certainly vital to consider key historical events and developments as points of reference: In 1914, a strongly-armed Europe entered into World War I, characterized by its unprecedented technological nature, its material battles and consequently, the enormous number of war victims until the German defeat and the 1918 armistice. The November Revolution, which took place in Germany in the final phase of the war, lead to the proclamation of the Republic. In 1919, the Paris Peace Conference adopted Woodrow Wilson’s idea of a League of Nations. In the same year, the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles laid to the foundation for the League of Nations (without the membership of the USA and the defeated powers) and recognized Germany’s sole responsibility for the war, resulting in the surrender of territory and high reparation payments.

Having stressed that links between historical events and utopian dreaming need to be reflected upon critically, the thesis has to equally differentiate between historical crises and crisis discourse. In 1914, the majority of the intellectual elite welcomed the outbreak of World War I (Breuer 157). Breuer noted that expressionist discourse and art was frequently characterized by ambiguity. On the one hand, World War I was dramatically turned into a purifying force from Wilhelminian traditions and bourgeois materialism, and on the other hand, it was represented as human tragedy and terrifying apocalypse (Breuer 157). Hereby, the intellectual avant-garde commonly drew on Friedrich Nietzsche’s influential work, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, which had introduced death as a prerequisite of progression towards the idealized vision of the “Übermensch”: “Ich liebe Die, welche nicht erst hinter den Sternen einen Grund suchen, unterzugehen und Opfer zu sein: sondern die sich der Erde opfern, dass die Erde einst der Übermenschen werde (11).” The perception of a crisis of civilization did not merely evolve from the outbreak of World War I, but had already been discursively shaped around 1900 and continued to prevail in the post-war years (Schreiber 26). In his
sociological account of the idea of Europe, Gerard Delanty defined the crisis discourse as “European pessimism” (Inventing Europe 109). With reference to Nietzsche’s critique of civilization, Delanty wrote:

The idea of Europe came increasingly to be equated with the cultural and intellectual apparatus of the bourgeoisie who found refuge in the comfort of high culture. Thus we find a return to a supposedly authentic European culture as a substitute for the intellectual void of modernity and technological civilization. (110)

As has been observed with reference to Tönnies’ *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, the binary opposition of *techne* and *physis* and the decay of European culture were popular themes in avant-gardist discourse. In 1918, Oswald Sprengler revisited them in his book, *The Decline of the West*, and attracted considerable attention among his contemporaries. Delanty introduced his work as “one of the most widely read books of the Weimarer Republic” (109-110), and John Maciuika highlighted that Sprengler’s study had had great influence on the intellectual avant-garde, specifically noting Taut and Gropius (290). Thomas Mann wrote the canonical novel *Der Zauberberg*, another well-known testimonial of the apocalyptical mood of the avant-garde representing the preoccupation of the bourgeoisie with its own ending. The motif of death was omnipresent. The body became an exhibition site for civilizational decay. In *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, Behne constructed the utopian architectural vision with a similar use of the motif of the body as signifying device. He heralded that the architects were going to perform “ein immer noch schwaches, aber doch ehrliches Symbol unserer Liebe zum Ganzen […], blitzend groß und neu, ein glanzvoller Sonnendiamant über Europas zerfleischtem Leib (Wiederkehr 58).” Hereby, Behne personified the geographical entity of Europe with the image of the war-torn body and heavily alluded to a phoenix figure with his vision of the “Sonnendiamant”. Similarly, Nietzsche wrote in *Also sprach Zarathustra*: “Verbrennen musst du dich wollen in deiner eignen Flamme: wie wolltest du neu werden, wenn du nicht erst Asche geworden bist (78)!?” In these instances, architectural utopianism painted a counter-image of society which equally evolved from a feeling of a civilizational crisis and, in Behne’s case, the experience of World War I.

Against this background, I claim that it is necessary to revisit Sargisson’s assessment of utopianism and to single out two different dimensions of his argument. I pointed out that it may at times be misleading to assume a direct correlation between historical
reality and utopian counter-image, as suggested by Sargisson with the statement “utopias [...] tell us what is wrong with the now” (120). Indeed, Behne’s quotation on war-torn Europe directed my attention to the correlation of the architectural utopian program with historical crisis and modern crisis discourse. Therefore, I emphasize the second part of Sargisson’s statement, namely that utopias document a “discontent with the present”, which resembles a perception and not necessarily a reality (Sargisson 120). Given that modern crisis discourse set the backdrop for much of architectural utopianism, the close reading explores how Behne picked up and shaped crisis discourse in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst and in his essays published in Sozialistische Monatshefte.

2.1 The European Bourgeois and the Rebel


In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne dramatically diagnosed a disintegration of contemporary society. He observed the domination of a bourgeois sense of order and cold ego-centrism, which fed into his fierce criticism of modernity. In line with the intellectual avant-garde, Behne claimed that social collapse and moral decay were mirrored by the organization of the modern metropolis. Following Tönnies, who had argued that the modern metropolis caused alienation and separation of society (40), he criticized society based on the claim that its members existed “abgegrenzt” from one another (Wiederkehr 85).12 En passant, Behne included a critique of mechanization and contemporary building styles, reading buildings as representations of a specific state of living and mind. Behne had already elaborated upon this argumentation in his essay “Einleitung zu einer Betrachtung des Morgenlandes”, published in Sozialistische Monatshefte in 1917. Here, spatial separation equally served as a signifier for the greedy and isolated stance of the bourgeoisie: “Der Bürger teilt die Erscheinungen der Erde ein. Nach gewissen äußeren, sicheren, unverkennbaren Merkmalen schafft er Grenzen, die

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12 The metropolis was at once a site of decadent civilization and a leitmotif of the expressionist avant-garde. In 1920 Taut narrated the utopian dream of the Auflösung der Städte. On the ambiguous perception of the metropolis in modernity see for example Frisby “Social Theory, the Metropolis and Expressionism”.

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er dann ernsthafter nimmt als die Dinge selbst”, generalized Behne (589). Hereby, he attacked the bourgeoisie and its exclusive identity politics:

Der Bürger also unterscheidet auf diesem Planeten 5 Erdteile, unterscheidet verschiedene Rassen, Stämme, verschiedene wesentliche Kulturen, mit so und so vielen Stufen, und erwartet nun von jedem Erdbewohner, daß er an dem Platz, bestimmt nach Generation, Rasse und Kulturstufe, für den auf normalen Weg ein entsprechendes Elternpaar ihn zeugte, gesund und frisch sein Amt ausfülle. (588)

Despite his critique of imperialist, racist and capitalist strategies of categorization, which he defined as a characteristic technique of the bourgeoisie, Behne in turn constructed the binary opposition of bourgeois and rebel: “Überall auf der Erde gibt es [...] zwei Typen von Menschen [...] Bürger und Rebellen (588).” Indeed, the author specified further that the ‘European’ was congruent with the bourgeois and the rebel resembled an exception from this rule (589). Behne wrote with deadpan humour: “Tatsächlich hat Europa im Verlauf seiner Entwicklung nur wenige Rebellen anzuzeigen und umzubringen gehabt (589).” At the same time, the author only vaguely characterized the rebel as a pioneer towards an alternative social community: “Der Rebell sprengt harmlos diese Grenzen, weil er [...] sich jene Wenigen zu Freunden machen will, die durch alle Welt eines Sinnes sind (589).” In his article “Unsere moralische Krisis”, Behne described transgression as a characteristic habitus of the proletarian (38). Whether or not one may equate Behne’s rebel with the proletarian, when speaking in terms of Burke and Stets’ social identity theory, Behne introduced the rebel as well as the bourgeois as a “group prototype” (118). As such, the stereotypical characterization should serve as a positive or negative point of comparison for the addressee. Behne staged the rebel as the desirable, yet almost unattainable human ideal, while placing him, as the ‘other’ of the bourgeoisie, at the margins of European society. He introduced the category of ‘class’ as a stable point of reference for social identification and stressed that bourgeois society placed the rebel in a position of marginality. At the same time he emphasized that it would not be possible to prevent the rebel from challenging this order (“Morgenland” 589). Herewith, Behne redefined the social margin to the center of the utopian dream and gave the rebel an initiating role in the revolutionary social transformation process.

Upon closer inspection, the binary opposition of the bourgeois and the rebel which Behne established supports Thomas Nipperdey’s observation of the ambiguous
relationship of the bourgeoisie and the artistic avant-garde. Nipperdey brilliantly detected that the formation of the artistic avant-garde, despite its performance of autonomy and revolutionary habitus, needs to be assessed to a considerable extent as a legacy of the bourgeoisie (8). He highlighted that the latter in various instances significantly supported anti-bourgeois art, explaining this with the new reflexivity which bourgeoisie assumed, consequently irritating its cultural self-confidence (70). Nipperdey argued that the reflexive bourgeoisie increasingly shared the sense of a civilizational crisis. The notion of challenging its own role identity became feasible (71). The expressions of avant-gardist art fed on this perception of insecurity. It served, as Nipperdey showed, as a counter-image which offered the bourgeoisie the opportunity to reposition the self. The “Grenzerfahrung” and the encounter with “des ‘Anderen’ an sich” built constitutive elements of the process of identification, initiated by the clash of bourgeois and avant-gardist world views (Nipperdey 65). Nipperdey summarized: “Das Andere der rebellischen modernen Kunst, das Grenzüberschreitende, Fremde – exzentrisch, dekadent, esoterisch –, das Antibürgerliche war in der problematischen Normalität und Durchschnittlichkeit eine neu legitimierte Gegenwelt (73).” For Nipperdey, the rebel was the artist performing his anti-bourgeois stance (73). Behne did not explicitly establish this parallel in “Einleitung zu einer Betrachtung des Morgenlandes”. Behne’s reference to Scheerbart as rebellious pioneer merely suggested that the rebel for Behne, if at all existent in Europe, was to be found among the expressionist utopian artists (Behne, “Morgenland” 590). Like Nipperdey, Behne stressed the entanglement of the bourgeoisie and large parts of the modern art scene. In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne expressed his low opinion of the secessionist school, criticizing its formation as an exclusive and elitist artistic group, as well as its ties to the bourgeoisie resulting in economic dependence and institutional anchoring (Behne, Wiederkehr 14-15). At the same time, Behne claimed in a somewhat ambiguous manner that the avant-garde held an isolated position which needed to be overcome (Behne, Wiederkehr 15). As a result, he selected the “Architektoniker” to initiate social change and transgression (Behne, Wiederkehr 19). According to Behne, these included inter alia the cubists, to whom he considered, among others, Robert Delaunay, Marc Chagall, Franc Marc, Paul Klee, but above all Lyonel Feininger (Wiederkehr 24), Taut (Wiederkehr 39), Gropius (Wiederkehr 54) and Scheerbart (Wiederkehr 58).13 Hence,  

13 Chapter 3.1 discusses Behne’s broad definition of the “Architektoniker”, which equally included “Künstler, Maler, Dichter, [und] Bildner”, in more detail (Wiederkehr 19).
Behne replaced the old ‘new’ secessionists, once established in opposition to the bourgeoisie, with the new ‘new’ utopian “Architektoniker” (Wiederkehr 19). Nipperdey’s observation applied, that the association of the bourgeoisie with art, which had initially been created in anti-bourgeois attire, was followed by the construction of a new binary (61). As manager of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst and author of its architectural program, Behne signalized his own ties to the architects whom he acknowledged as playing the role of the revolutionary. As Bushart pointed out, Behne did not restrict his role to the critic, but also performed as an active member of the avant-garde (“Einleitung” 8). After all, he managed the Arbeitsrat für Kunst initiated as a revolutionary institution which demanded the construction of an alternative social community. However, despite this socialist attire, the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, and the associated artists, belonged to the intellectual elite. Justly, Bushart highlighted that the architectural avant-garde propagated art as a means to unite society and at the same time celebrated itself in the privacy of secret societies such as the Gläserne Kette (“Adolf Behne” 38). Bushart stated that, even though Behne rejected Taut’s invitation to join the Gläserne Kette, his case made no exception (38). Even more telling with regard to the entanglement of architectural avant-garde and bourgeoisie, was Taut’s publication Alpine Architektur published in 1919. Rainer Stamm observed that regardless of the social dream which Taut developed in his work, the text was printed as a luxurious edition with golden and silver colored special pigments and a book cover adorned with an embossment in aluminium-silver (19). The avant-gardist artist, too, were prone to bourgeois delights (Nipperdey 75).

2.2 The Orient as Multistable Figure

Behne drew parallels between the opposition of European bourgeois and rebel with the antagonism of Europe and the Orient. He defined the Orient as a counter-image, the ‘Other’, of European society representing an ideal of social coherence: “Im Orient finden wir eine ursprüngliche, fest in Empfindung und Tat verfaserte Einheit aller menschlichen Kräfte, über alle relative und oft nur scheinbare Trennung hinweg (Behne, Wiederkehr 15).” Behne constructed an image of organical unity, which dramatically contrasted with his own perception of an increasing differentiation of society and the isolated position of the architect (Behne, Wiederkehr 14-15). Behne’s representation of the Orient drew upon a popular theme of the avant-garde and reflected modern political-intellectual culture. Behne himself signalized the fashionability of the
Oriental, where he celebrated the euphoric reevaluation of the primitive by Western artists, such as Picasso, who introduced the Orient as an innocent ideal in opposition to industrialized society:

[G]leich wie sich die gebildete, klassische reiche Kunst des Bürgers verträgt mit entsetzlicher Kahlheit und Nüchternheit, so verträgt sich unsere Primitivität aufs beste mit ursprünglicher Farbigkeit, Ausdrucksstärke und Schönheit, den herrlichen Eigenschaften jeder wahren Volkskunst, die ja unser nächstes Ziel ist und bleibt. (Behne, Wiederkehr 104)

Edward Said stressed the key role of the Orient in the formation of European identity: “[T]he Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience (1).” In the cases Said addressed, the binary opposition resulted in the empowerment of the West at the expense of the East. Like primitivism at the turn of the century prominently did, Behne’s architectural program pretended to reverse this relation. His representation of the Orient put decadent bourgeois society on display as a state of grave misconduct which needed to be overcome. By declaring that the Orient had qualities which Europe should strive for, Behne moved the Orient, just like the rebel, from the margin to the center of his social dream, and placed it at the core of his architectural program. He urged the Europeans to arrive at an alternative identification by sighting the Oriental ‘Other’. Here, I intentionally use the capital ‘O’ following postcolonial theory, which borrows on Jacques Lacan’s distinction between the grand and petit autre, coined in Autres écrits to emphasize the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 155). In postcolonial theory, the capital ‘O’ usually represents the imperial center, whereas the small ‘o’ is reserved to refer to the marginalized colonized (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 155). By installing the Orient as a model for and grand autre of Europe, Behne claimed to reverse this logic. Reevaluating the values attributed to Europe and the Orient, Behne argued for counteraction of the prevailing Eurocentric imperialism, which he characterized as a bourgeois deed (“Morgenland” 590):

Sollte es in der Tat so weit kommen, daß […] Europa seine Kultur der ganzen Welt aufstempelt, dann wäre dieses Unheil unvergleichlich. Denn daß der Europäer die unheimliche Gabe hat nicht nur im Krieg, sondern selbst im tiefsten Frieden Kultur reinlich aufzulösen und zu vernichten, das hat er in allen 5 Erdteilen einwandfrei nachgewiesen. (“Morgenland” 589)
Manfred Speidel maintained that the fascination with the Orient served as source for a new world view (7). I find that Speidel is too easily convinced by the utopist and their rejection of Eurocentrism. Despite his worldly claims, Behne’s strategies of ‘othering’ reinforced the categorizations to which he objected. Constructing the representation of the Orient and attributing a certain value, he nevertheless performed “authority” (Said 3). Hereby, the location and features of the Orient did not matter to him, as long as it clearly resembled an ‘other’ place in comparison to Europe. With Said, I consider Behne’s categorization as an instance of “Orientalism”. Drawing on Michel Foucault, Said defined “Orientalism” as a discourse and consequently as “a system of knowledge about the Orient” (3, 6). As a result, Said argued, that the geography of the Orient within the discourse of Orientalism was “arbitrary” (54). On the development of this “imaginative geography”, Said wrote: “It is enough for ‘us’ to set up these boundaries in our minds; ‘they’ become ‘they accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from ours (54).” Behne moved on to introduce the Orient not only as the ‘other’ place, but also as the ‘home’ of European civilization. He posed the question: “Haben wir in aller unserer europäischen Herrlichkeit nicht seelisch furchtbar verloren, seitdem wir aus dem Osten fortgezogen sind (Behne, “Morgenland” 589)?” With this in mind, Behne continued to reverse strategies of capitalist, bourgeois colonial discourse. Counteracting expressions like ‘mother England’, he referred to the Orient as ‘home’. At the same time, this wording advanced a linear perception of human history, according to which the Orient represented the early stage of human development. While Behne perceived Europe’s modern civilization as a site of moral decay and decadence, he envisioned the Orient in its preserved primitive state. Citing Michael Pickering, I identify this strategy of stereotyping the pure, Oriental ‘Other’, which Behne employed, as a “denial of history […] and transformation” (48). Assuming this interpretative predominance, Behne excluded the Orient from progress and human equality. He coined the primitive ideal and suggested that the notion of the homo faber lost its validity and relevance, when speaking about the Oriental. Behne’s position resembled what Timothy Benson described as “[t]he early Expressionists’ quest for a utopian future [which] began in a nostalgic return to the past as much an attempt to find a lost paradise as to build a new world (15).” In the course of the text, Behne reasoned more explicitly that

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14 Speidel argued this with reference to Taut’s concept of the Orient. He noted that Taut’s Orient was something rather unspecific, including Turkey, Lithuania, India as well as Indochina and spoke of Taut’s “persönlichen” Orient” (7-8).
not decent, but a desirable attitude motivated his definition of the Orient as ‘true home’: “[W]ir gehorchen nicht dem Lineal sondern dem Gewissen. […] Und darum seien wir geboren und angemeldet wo immer, soll das Morgenland unsere Heimat sein (‘Morgenland’ 590).” Introducing his statement with the inclusive personal pronoun “we”, Behne rhetorically marked his identification with an “imagined community” of readers and rebels challenging the social order (Anderson 6).

Nevertheless, Behne made clear that this ‘home-coming’ demanded specific actions: “Wollen wir Menschen in schöpferischem Sinne sein, so müssen wir den Europäer ausziehen. Das Ideal ist natürlich (Behne, “Morgenland” 590).” This dramatic statement reflects another discursive commonplace of the artistic avant-garde: the nude. Taut, for example, made very similar claims: “Indien! Europäer! werft die schmutzigen Lumpen der Bildung von euch, die klebrigen stinkenden Hüllen über eurem Menschen, seid nackt und kniet in Demut vor der strahlenden Sonne der Kunst (15)” His call reads like an *ecphrasis* of Fidus’ *Lichtgemälde*, figure head of the *fin de siècle* reform movement, which stylized the nude in a Nietzschean gesture to symbolize breaking free from the constraints of the fashioned, industrial European civilization (Neumeyer 19).

Sigrid Hofer’s intuition, that the expressionist architectural projects should be revisited not only as continuation of Scheerbart’s literary fantasies, but equally as a program with roots in the reform movement, proves right (83). The symbolic meaning of the nude which the reform movement celebrated was accompanied by pseudo-religious views, as the title *Lichtgebet* suggests. Accordingly, Fritz Neumeyer stated: “Der vom Korsett der Zivilisation befreite Körper wurde zum Botschafter eines neuen Menschengeschlechts, das sich im Kult des gesunden und schönen Leibes eine neue Religion schuf (20).” Undressing the body therefore symbolized an act of transgression. This made the concept particularly interesting for the utopian projects. Hence, it is no surprise to find a similar passage in Bloch’s *Geist der Utopie*: “Wir gehen zwar nackt und frierend, aber nicht hoffnungslos hinüber (344).”

However, the idea of the nude as symbol of transgression was not the only inspiration for the architectural utopist. The celebration of the nude body was intimately related to the formation of social identity. At times, research suggested a linear

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15 Published in *Die Lebensreform*, Hofer’s article “Orte der Glückseligkeit. Architekturphantasien und utopische Projekte aus dem Kreis der Lebensreform” has unfortunately been surpassed by research on architectural history. So far, Scheerbart and Nietzsche have frequently remained the only points of reference in works on the legacies of the expressionist architectural program.
development from nudism to Nazism. Chad Ross wrote for example: “In nudism, the declining German nation could only be repaired by first building better Germans, and Germans could only be regenerated by transforming their bodies.”\textsuperscript{16} In contrast, John Williams accurately stressed the weaknesses of the “‘naturism to Nazism’ argument” and challenged its validity (5). He emphasized, that the working class, in the framework of the reform movement, at times heavily promoted nudism as symbol of revolt against industrial capitalism and bourgeoisie (1).\textsuperscript{17} Whereas Ross placed emphasis on the nude in the context of constructing a German national and racial identity, Williams highlighted the naked body as instrument of class formation (Ross 3; Williams 15). While the working class urged undressing the body and freeing it from oppression, capitalism and industrial work, the bourgeoisie thought, according to Williams, of strengthening the body “in order to maintain their respectability and status as cultural leaders” (Williams 15). According to Foucault, the body served as a surface onto which different regimes of power and knowledge inscribed their meanings. In this sense, the body becomes a ‘capacity’ to signify on the one hand, and a subject to the strategies of signification on the other. Simmèl’s philosophy of fashion, published in 1905, described fashion as an ambiguous mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, as well as a product and instrument of social classes. The appeal to get undressed hence not only attacked the prudery of the bourgeoisie, but also criticized its use of fashion to build an exclusive society. The utopian architectural program of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst staged the nude body as an attack of bourgeois morals and values. In \textit{Die Wiederkehr der Kunst}, Behne explained: “Wenn man wissen will, wie der Europäer zu den letzten Dingen steht, so braucht man nur seine weißlackierten Stehkragenbauten in den Tropen mit den herrlichen Häusern der Eingeborenen zu vergleichen (102).” From a contemporary perspective, this metaphorical entanglement of architecture and fashion may seem puzzling, but Behne’s parallelization of buildings and bodies followed Adolf Loos’ influential cultural critiques which saw architecture and fashion as signifiers of a state of mind and morals.\textsuperscript{18} Loos formulated this relationship most prominently in his programmatic essay “Ornament und Verbrechen”, published in 1908, where he urged

\textsuperscript{16} Ross discussed the German \textit{Freikörperkultur} from 1918 onwards, and defined the years 1919-1933 as “popular phase” focusing almost entirely on nudism as a political instrument of the Nazi regime.

\textsuperscript{17} For a more lengthy discussion of the working class and the reform movement, see Spitzer’s article “Sozialistische Lebensreform und Sport am Beispiel der proletarischen Freikörperkulturbewegung”.

\textsuperscript{18} Behne’s strategy to construct representations of the body to signify socio-political realities has already been discussed with reference to the “zerrissene[n] Körper Europas”, hinting at the alienation of European society post World War I society on page 17.
neglecting ornamental decorations and build ‘naked’ Baukörper.\textsuperscript{19} The comparison of architecture and fashion and their impact on society, which the previous quotation put forth, was already recognized by Loos in “Das Prinzip der Bekleidung” in 1898.\textsuperscript{20} The reform movement elaborated on Loos’ equation of fashion and morality with a medical perspective on fashion, which problematized the “gesundheitsschädlichen steifen Kragen […] der Männer” and the “Vergewaltigung des weiblichen Körpers’ durch das Korsett” (Welsch 427). Like the utopian architectural project committed to the idea to transform society, the reform movement advanced the notion that a harmony of body, spirit and soul resembled a first step on the way towards building a harmonious human community (Peckmann 153). Hereby, it followed the fashionable assessment of the body as an exhibition site of moral conditions. Obviously, Behne’s quotations included this pathological dimension to give his criticism of the harmful “Stehkragenbauten” even more impetus (Wiederkehr 102).

2.3 The German and the European

Recalling Behne’s binary constructions of European bourgeois and rebel, Europe and the Orient, civilized and primitive, society and community, fashion and nudity, bourgeoisie and working class, which all oppose two contrarily structured social identities and build the backbone of his architectural utopian program, as well as defining features of expressionism (Fähnders 154), one aspect of Behne’s terminological inventory remains to be explored: The architectural utopias seemed to take the existence of a shared European identity for granted. Of course, it is important to note that texts, subject to discussion, were published in the context of warring nation states in Europe; the initial excitement about the outbreak of World War I and its purifying effect had also passed by this time. Hence, in his socio-historical account of the idea of Europe, Delanty argued that in the first half of the twentieth century, a sense of European identity only existed as a “personal identity of intellectuals” (Inventing Europe 111). In retrospect this statement may certainly be justified, given the international ties and travels of the intellectual avant-garde. Sasche Bru et al. illustrated

\textsuperscript{19} Modern discourse constructed the notion of the ‘nude’ ambiguously. McLeod, for example, focused on the adaptation of Loos’ works by Le Corbusier in the early 1920’s and assessed his notion of purism as an expression sympathizing with “order” and “rationality” (317).

\textsuperscript{20} Fashion was not merely a popular metaphor in modern writing on architecture. The architects Peter Behrens, Henry van de Velde and Frank Lloyd Wright engaged in women’s clothes design (McLeod 312). Regarding Van de Velde’s fashion design in the context of the reform movement see Sabine Welsch’s study “Reformkleidung um 1900. Ein Ausstieg aus dem Korsett?”.
how the historical avant-garde formed an “alternative European community” (8). Behne’s own involvement with Walden’s Sturm, and his commitment to transnational artistic exchange as manager of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, supported this case. However, Behne’s architectural utopian program rejected ‘Europeanness’ as a point of identification. As the discussion of Behne’s concept of the European bourgeois indicated, Behne followed the avant-gardist tone of “European pessimism” (Delanty, Inventing Europe 109), and constructed the prototypical European as an example of modern moral decline. In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne described in more detail what he considered to be the shared heritage and, therefore, constitutive component of European identity. “Der Europäer! – Woher stammt er?,” Behne asked, presenting ancient Greece as a predecessor of the decadence and aestheticism, which he maintained to be the characteristics of European society (Wiederkehr 61-62). As great moments of ‘Europeanness’, Behne merely evaluated Christianity and the Gothic era which, according to the author, represented times of harmony and unity, whereas humanism and enlightenment caused the final decay and fragmentation of European society: “Der Europäer blickt stets geradeaus oder zu Boden,” noted Behne (Wiederkehr 61-62). Developing his argument, Behne suggested that the way society approached and constructed space signified its Eurocentric narrow-mindedness. Consequently, he identified the sentence “Der Mensch ist das Maß aller Dinge” as the maxim of the European bourgeoisie, and mocked (Wiederkehr 63):


In the essay “Die Pflicht zur Wahrhaftigkeit”, published as a response to the Treaty of Versailles in the Sozialistische Monatshefte in 1919, Behne deliberated over the position of German society and German national identity: “Was ist deutsch? 1914, als das Volk aufstand, war deutsch identisch mit Heldentum, und der deutsche Held eine Mischung

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21 The contributions to the publication show that the international positioning of the avant-garde did not ultimately exclude nationalist expressions. Indeed, Bushart pointed out that Behne’s texts published during the first year of the war exhibited a German nationalistic tone (“Adolf Behne” 28).

22 In 1919, Behne published the “Vorschlag einer brüderlichen Zusammenkunft der Künstler aller Länder” in the Sozialistische Monatshefte. Chapter 3.4 discusses the transnational perspective this text called for in more detail.
von Brutalität und Heiligenschein. [...] Und was ist jetzt deutsch (721)?"23 Behne left the attributes of ‘the German’ open to question. He warned instead of attempts among nationalists to construct a new German national identity to overcome the German loss of face (Behne, “Wahrhaftigkeit” 721).24 In “Unsere moralische Krisis”, published in the same year, Behne compared German society to those of its neighboring states: “Ich glaube nicht, daß das deutsche Volk schlechter ist als irgendein anderes. Aber es scheint fast so, als ob in keinem anderen Volk die Quellen der Ursprünglichkeit so tief begraben sind. Der Deutsche getraute sich schließlich nicht mehr ein natürlicher Mensch zu sein; er war stets und immer offiziell (Behne, “Moralische Krisis” 35).” Behne employed the same argumentative strategy when constructing the opposition of European bourgeois and primitive. He represented German society as the outmost example of civilizational aberration, again pointing to architecture as an illustration of this: “Bis 1870 habt ihr zwar auch im Kasernenstil, aber doch ohne Prätention gebaut; seit 1871 baut ihr herrschaftlich. Und heute gibt es kein Kaufhaus, das sich nicht offizieller hinstelle als früher die meisten Ministerien (Behne, Wiederkehr 36).” While these quotations established a singular German case, Behne had already taken leave from this notion when he urged to stop blending moral claims with “nationalen Fragen” in the essay “Pflicht zur Wahrhaftigkeit” (722). Behne emphasized, that the aim should not be a reintegration of the German society, but, as his programmatic texts discussed extensively, should lie beyond this in a humanitarian perspective:

Die anderen sind, wie wir, Menschen. Sprechen wir nicht immer als Deutsche zu ihnen, so werden sie uns auch nicht als Franzosen usw. antworten. Und selbst wenn sie es täten, es liegt an uns die Welt neu zu gestalten, nicht deutsch, sondern menschlich. (Behne, “Wahrhaftigkeit” 724)

3 Refashioning Europe

Behne developed the architectural program by reinforcing a set of binary oppositions drawing on contemporary discursive motives and themes. He installed the prototype of the European bourgeois as a negative point of comparison and identification. Behne suggested that a dramatic rejection of the “herrschenden Typs Mensch” built the prerequisite for overcoming contemporary social circumstances (Wiederkehr 67).

23 Here, Behne borrowed a passage from Nietzsche’s Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, which is introduced with the words: “Zum alten Probleme: ‘was ist deutsch?’ (279).”

24 Considering Bushart’s observation that Behne fancied a nationalist tone during the first year of World War I, this quotation may be read as an expression of self-criticism (“Adolf Behne” 37).
Indeed, he explicitly justified this technique of stereotyping in a quotation which reads like a poetological statement: “Ließe man wenigstens diese Fehler sich […] auswachsen, bis sie recht sichtbar und greifbar geworden wären, könnte eher auf einen menschlichen Umschwung gehofft werden (Behne, Wiederkehr 67).” The rejection of the existing social order went hand in hand with the idea that the architectural utopian program spotted the ideal ‘Other’ at the margins of European society and repositioned it as the ‘root’ of the social utopia. However, it is important to note that Behne neither introduced the rebel, nor the ‘Other’, as ultimate aim of the utopian architectural project. The fantasies of the architectural avant-garde went beyond this, its ultimate goal being to bury the ‘old’ and to construct the ‘new’ Europe (Bru et al. 6). Behne’s plea to undress the body and the buildings of the European was therefore accompanied by plans to find alternative designs which would shape an alternative community. In the spirit of Loos’ “Prinzip der Bekleidung”, according to which architectural material and form defined the effects of buildings on society (140), Behne called for glass architecture to refashion Europe and to initiate the transgression of society:


3.1 The Leadership of Architecture

The ambiguity of establishing binaries and exclusive social identities, while at the same time calling for a transformative process towards an integrative, egalitarian society, is enduring through Behne’s outline of the role of architecture. He demanded: “Die Führung muß an die Architektoniker übergehen, und die Lyriker, die wir nicht missen wollen, müssen mitgerissen werden (Behne, Wiederkehr 20).” With this statement, Behne highlighted the leading role of architecture as initiating force of social change on the one hand, and stressed his communal vision of a union of the arts on the other. Behne’s argumentation owed heavily to William Morris who had elaborated the vision of a harmonious union of the arts under the supremacy of architecture in the framework of the British Arts and Crafts Movement at the turn of the century. Morris criticized industrial production as a system of capitalist exploitation and promoted a harmonious collaboration of the arts and crafts (56). At the same time, he secured the special status of architecture claiming that it encompassed the whole environment and therefore
reflected, as well as influenced, the social construction of society (56). Behne did not arrive at this all-encompassing definition of architecture at once. Comparable to his discussion of the rebel and the Orient, Behne preceded the transgression of differences between the arts with an emphasis on the singularity of architecture. Accordingly, he contrasted the prototypical architect and lyric in a binary relationship: “Sie [die Lyriker] holen sich aus der Welt, […] was sie anregt, und für ein kühnes […] Neuaufbauen fehlen ihnen die Organe. Dazu bedarf es ihres künstlerischen Gegentyps: des Architektonikers (Behne, Wiederkehr 21).” Pitting the lyricist and the architect against each other, Behne alluded to a paragon of the arts. While Leonardo da Vinci distinguished between the specific qualities of the arts in relation to their contribution to scientific knowledge, Behne assigned meaning to architecture based on a metaphorical dramatization of building activity (Schirren, “Weltbild” 100). Despite its associative gesture, Behne’s argumentation nevertheless exhibits similarities with Leonardo’s paragon of arts. Like Leonardo, Behne celebrated architecture based on the motive of the eye. Leonardo praised the eye as the noblest of all senses, as it mediates between object and the perception of the artist (22). The architectural utopian program exceeded this mimetic aspiration. In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne introduced a synthesis of eye and cosmos and argued that architecture should no longer be satisfied with constructing grounded and singular items, but should strive to build cosmic, all-encompassing spaces integrating everything separate and singular:

Nicht die Netzhaut unseres leiblichen Auges ist die Folie unserer optischen Empfindungen, sondern wirklich das gewaltige Himmelsgewölbe. Wir sind unendlich viel inniger und kühner mit dem Kosmischen verbunden, als wir glauben wollen, und es sollte uns auch der Architekt keine Netzhaut-Architektur mehr bieten, sondern kosmische Architektur. (57)

Behne’s metaphorical speech paralleled Taut’s illustration subtitled “Die Kugeln! Die Kreise! Die Räder!”, published in Alpine Architektur. Taut drew a planetary system which simultaneously resembled an eye, whose distinct parts, like the eyeball, retina and the pupil, merged (Schirren, “Weltbild” 97-98). The cosmos was a recurring motive in German expressionism, drawing heavily on Alexander von Humboldt’s Kosmos: Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung, which emphasized the relationship of the individual to the entire cosmic order (Schirren, “Weltbild” 102). This motif can be traced back as far as 1914, where Scheerbart’s engraving in Taut’s Glass House read: “Light seeks to penetrate the whole cosmos” (Bletter 21). The utopian architectural
project employed the motif of the eye with the double purpose of legitimizing the leadership of the architect and initiating the transgression towards a union of the arts (Schirren, “Weltbild” 100). The motif of the eye alluded to the architect who overcame the limited human perspective. It granted him an elevated position, which was constructed similarly to Nietzsche’s notion of the sublime artistic outlook: “Wir Künstler! […] Wir todenstilten unermüdlichen Wanderer, auf Höhen, die wir nicht als Höhen sehen, sondern als unserer Ebenen, als unsere Sicherheiten (Fröhliche Wissenschaft 99-100)”

The amalgamation of architecture, the cosmos and the eye represents a union of the arts, and deconstructed the binary opposition of architect and lyricist, which Behne had previously coined (Behne, Wiederkehr 16-17). This integrative notion of art corresponded with the fashionable avant-gardist ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk and indicated once more Morris’ considerable influence on the European avant-garde. In agreement with Morris, Behne saw the utopian architectural Gesamtkunstwerk as an all-encompassing entity and environment (Morris 56). Despite this correlation, Behne only named Richard Wagner’s concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk as predecessor. He signalized neo-romantic borrowings, nevertheless emphasizing that his expressionist architectural approach to the Gesamtkunstwerk was ‘new’. He claimed that Wagner meant to achieve the Gesamtkunstwerk “von außen”, while the expressionist utopian architectural project triggered a union of the arts “von innen heraus” (Behne, Wiederkehr 39-40). Behne reduced the respective multidimensional concepts to contrasting catchphrases in order to underline the revolutionary character of the visions which the Arbeitsrat für Kunst put forth.

In addition to the two major propelling forces of the Gesamtkunstwerk, namely the ideal union of the arts, and the synesthetic perception, which Pehnt appointed to the expressionist ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk (Architektur des Expressionismus 10), it is important to emphasize its social ambitions. Even though, the architectural utopian program underlined the leading role of architects, Behne envisioned the Gesamtkunstwerk as a necessary step in the project to build an alternative social community. This aspect resulted in the ambiguous introduction of the architect in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst. On the one hand, Behne stressed the supremacy of the

25 This aggrandizement of the artist based on a transgressive vision, was also a key concept in Taut’s essay “Der Sozialismus des Künstlers”. Taut likewise represented the artist as isolated, yet inspired being: “[W]ie ein großes Auge, nur Auge, nichts als Auge schaut er [der Künstler und zugleich Mittelstern] in die Welt (“Sozialismus des Künstlers” 260).” For a detailed study on the motif of the sublime in expressionist utopian architecture see Whyte’s “The Expressionist Sublime”.

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architectural individual, on the other hand however, he expected architects to acknowledge that they were merely the initiators of social change. Like the rebel and the Oriental, the architect was not introduced as the ultimate goal of the utopian dream, instead, drawing heavily on Nietzsche’s ideal of the “Übermensch”, being conceptualized as initiator of the social transformative process along the way towards a new society: “[D]as Letzte, das Höchste der Architektur heute schon zu verwirklichen, ist nicht in die Hand der heutigen Architekten gegeben (Behne, Wiederkehr 56).” Behne argued, that the architects knew, how to transgress “den in sich rotierenden Kreisring des erregten Ich” (Wiederkehr 19). Behne’s celebration of the transgression of the ‘circled’ individual once more resembled the utopian dream of an alternative community. Taking the work of Burke and Stets, I refer to this notion of the circled individual merging with the cosmos, as an incident of “depersonalization” during which the basis of identification is transferred from the ‘me’ to the ‘we’ (124). With Bushart I stress, that through the ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk, Behne aimed not only at the creation, but also at the visibility of social community (“Adolf Behne” 38). The architect should practice anonymous authorship:

Das Werk soll allein für sich sprechen. Die Persönlichkeit soll sich ohne Signierung manifestieren. Im Unterordnen des Individuums unter die Forderung der Aufgabe, unter das für die Zukunft zu Erhorchende, liegt die Stärke der Architekten-Persönlichkeit. So wird er Gestalter der Solidarität. Es ist wunderbar und ein Zeichen höchster Kultur, daß die großen alten Bauwerke namenlos dastehen. (79)

It seems like Behne tried to live up to this ideal in his performance as author. His argumentation neglected the first personal pronoun and programmatically constructed a ‘we’ of author, artists, rebels, proletarians and respective readers. The excessive and unmarked borrowings of popular discursive motives from various sources, amounted to the “depersonalization” of the author Behne on the one hand, and undermined his performance in this role on the other. After all, Behne’s language and tone signalized his belonging to the exclusive community of the European intellectual avant-garde.26 Behne ended Die Wiederkehr der Kunst with the programmatic statement: “Wir aber sind Dividualisten, wir waren schon, wir werden sein, und wir teilen uns leicht (114).”27

26 A similar argumentation is exhibited, for example, in Berlage’s speech “Gedanken über Stil in der Baukunst” delivered in German at the Museumsverein Krefeld already in 1904 (52). Berlage equally rejected the individualized capitalist society and pleaded for a unifying “Gemeinschaftskunst” (75).
27 This characterization reinforced the dualism between the artist and the European bourgeois. According to Behne, the latter perceived himself as “Einheit, die sich nach vorn und nach hinten gegen zwei markierende Striche zu bewahren hat (Wiederkehr 114)”.

34
This quotation may be deciphered as a poetological side-note by the author, proving his compliance with the principle of artistic ‘sharing’. After all, it was Nietzsche who coined the term of the “dividuum” as a premise of morality in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* I (74).

### 3.2 ‘New’ Traditions and Collective Memory

Behne’s quotation on the “Dividualisten” raises an issue which deserves further attention (*Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* 114), namely how the utopian architectural project employed concepts of future and past. In his study on utopianism, Sargisson argued that utopias “create a new space for the exploration of alternatives” while “deconstruct[ing] […] old categories and certainties” (38). Indeed, the close reading showed that the architectural avant-garde claimed to overthrow modern bourgeois values for the sake of a new social community. In *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*, Behne constantly emphasized the radical changes which the utopian architectures of glass would bring, such as the “neue Kultur” (65), something “[w]ertvolles Neues” (66), and finally a “neue[n] Europäer” (69) in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*. However, Pehnt and Poppelreuter pointed to the popularity of the adjective ‘new’ in the first decades of the twentieth century, used to dramatize the ‘revolutionary’ character of the various intellectual groupings, visions and manifests (Poppelreuter 12; Pehnt, “‘New Man’” 14). Accordingly, research has overtly questioned the avant-garde’s claim of radical change and reevaluated it as a dramatic performance. In 1981, Bletter argued that “ancient images lurk beneath the surface impression of totally revolutionary forms” (20). In 2001, when Nerdinger, Kristiana Hartmann, Schirren and Speidel edited their work on Taut, this observation was common sense as documented by the subtitle: “Architekt zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde” (Whyte, “Visionär” 71; Benson 47). As a result, research on expressionist architectural utopianism has been preoccupied with tracing the various traditions which the intellectual avant-garde drew upon and adopted. Approaching Behne’s texts not as a proof of originality, but as an exemplary reflection of the expressionist architectural utopianism, this study has already touched upon some of the respective sources, such as Bloch, Tönnies, Simmel, Morris and, of course, Nietzsche. Furthermore, the close reading encountered representations of the Orient as ‘primitive’ state during which humans lived jointly in harmonious community.
While architectural research has carefully explored numerous references of the utopian architectural project to the past, I believe that a discussion of their motivation from a cultural studies perspective, focusing on categories of memory and identity, has yet to be carried out. In fact, Behne himself provided the explanation for the repeated recourse to the past. He defined the creation of an “einheitlich empfindenden Volkes” as the key concern of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, pointing out that this could be achieved when society recalled its “Erinnerung an die ursprüngliche Einheit” (Behne 99, 40). Hereby, Behne once more followed Tönnies, who stated that a sense of community was primarily created based on shared memories (15), which the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs later conceptualized as “mémoire collective”. Against the background of Halbwachs’ notion of the “mémoire collective” as a fundamental principle of social cohesion, Aleida Assmann developed her phenomenological account of the collective cultural memory (131 ff.). Her work shall briefly be introduced as it offers an interesting perspective on the role of social identities in the architectural program of the avant-garde. Assmann distinguished between “Speicher-“ and “Funktionsgedächtnis” (133). With the first term, she referred to an all-encompassing and unbiased collection of memories, functioning like an archive (134). In contrast, Assmann described the “Funktionsgedächtnis” as a memory which actively constructed itself, continuously making choices regarding what part of history to integrate and, consequently, which story to narrate (137). Against the background of this constructivist view, Assmann appointed three different functions to the “Funktionsgedächtnis”. First, Assmann explained, that the “Funktionsgedächtnis” may serve as an instrument to “legitimate” power (138). Exemplarily, she highlighted the role memory politics play in nation-building processes (137). Of course, this strategy is not restricted in use. Therefore, Assmann also maintained that the oppressed may equally construct a collective memory to “delegitimize” those in power and to challenge the social order (139). I argue that Assmann’s memory theory can be read as a comment on Behne’s utopian architectural program which, with a revolutionary gesture, exhibited the construction of an alternative collective memory. Hereby, I reject the conclusion which Birgit Wagner drew of her application of Assmann’s memory theory to the practice of the avant-gardist manifest. Wagner claimed that the avant-gardist manifest sought to delete and reinvent

28 Assmann clarified that personal contacts between members of the group or nation are not needed to construct and share a collective memory as a premise for collective identifications. This statement supports Anderson’s concept of the nation as an “imagined community” (6).
the archival memory of modern society (51-52). Her position bore significant shortcomings, as it misused Assmann’s concept of the “Speicher-” and “Funktionsgedächtnis”. Wagner’s assumption was that the memory of modern society which the avant-gardist manifest attacked was “wertneutral [und] archivarisch”; this is untenable when looking at Assmann’s point of view (53). I suggest that Behne’s memory politics did not engage with the “Speicher-” but the “Funktionsgedächtnis”. Behne introduced the ‘primitive’ as a historical period characterized by the existence of a human community. This technique did not only deny progress to the Oriental (Pickering 48), as has already been mentioned, but also constructed memories of human community and harmony in opposition to the values advocated by the capitalist bourgeoisie, which it aimed to “delegitimise” (Assmann 138). Moreover, Assmann established a link between the construction of collective memory and collective identity, where she introduced “Distinktion” as another aim which memory politics might pursue. She defined symbolical expressions which served the performance of a collective identity as actions of “Distinktion” (139). Assmann differentiated between the religious and the secular as spheres in which the construction of a collective identity are motivated differently (139).

According to Assmann, the goal of religious rites and festivals, which continuously renew the collective memory of the religious community, is to reinforce a sense of belongingness to, and identification with the community (139). Assmann contrasted this with the goal of the secular nationalist movements of the 19th century, which recalled or “invented” collective traditions seeking to create a collective identity among the ‘Volk’, in order to install it as a forceful “neue[s] politische[s] Handlungssubjekt” (139). Behne assumed a causal relationship between the religious and the secular sphere, which Assmann considered separately. In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne explained the disintegration of modern society: “Wir haben keine Volkseinheit, weil wir keinen Glauben haben (104).” This entanglement reflects the mystification of the concept of “Glaube” in the expressionist architectural program.29 Die Wiederkehr der Kunst represented the memory of a religious community with the motif of the Gothic cathedral. The author argued that as long as there was no sense of community in the modern society, the church held an exceptional value as “Trägerin

29 On the role of mysticism in the architectural utopias of the avant-garde see for example Schirren, “Weltbild”.
einer einheitlichen Empfindung” (Wiederkehr 105). The notion that places may serve as a basis for establishing a sense of community had already been expressed by Tönnies. He evaluated the “Erinnerung an Dinge der Umgebung” as a origin of community (Tönnies 9). In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne described how the encounter with the Gothic cathedral evoked memories and a sense of community:

Selbst in der italienischen Renaissance […] ist im Lande selbst der Geist der Nähe noch oft […] zu spüren, wenn in der schlichtesten dörflichen Umgebung ein festlicher Kirchenkörper mit Voluten, Säulen und Pilastern still und schweigsam aufgebläht steht (87).”

Again, Behne followed a common topos of the avant-garde here, creating the image of a remote and peaceful location, a spacious architecture and a deep silence in sharp contrast to the loud modern metropolis. He introduced the religious space as a place of contemplation and reflection. Once more elaborating on Halbwach’s insight on the impact of places on the formation of a collective memory, Assmann stressed that that the religious “Erinnerungsart” triggered memories of community as well as social identifications. Stressing the correlation of the construction of memory and identity, she highlighted that individuals as well as groups frequently based their identifications on constructed memories accessed or recalled in “Erinnerungsräumen”. As a result, Assmann did not consider memory and a vision of the future as antagonism, but highlighted that memories provided the background for future expectations (408). Herewith she offers one explanation why the architectural utopian program is often so entwined with the motif of the Gothic cathedral.

The fact that Assmann considered the vision of the Gothic cathedral as a point of departure for both individual and collective identification processes, shed light on the ambiguous function of the motif of the Gothic cathedral in the utopian architectural project. On the one hand, Behne envisioned the Gothic cathedral as a place of refuge for the individual from the crowded public spaces of the metropolis. Peter Gross, Hans Geiser and Timon Beyes identified the longing of the individual for private spaces and experiences as a characteristic consequence of modernity:

[D]er Mensch der Moderne [braucht] Orte der Stille und Zeiten der Selbstvergegenwärtigung […] auch wenn sich an die Stelle der Vergegenwärtigung Gottes die ‘neoreligiöse‘ Selbstopfлексив geschoben zuhaben

Simmel introduced the notion of an overload of stimuli as characteristic of the metropolis in Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben published already in 1903.
On the other hand, the exceptional skill of metaphysical and spiritual transcendence, which the utopian architectural project appointed to the architect, found breeding ground in the memory of spiritual community, represented by the Gothic cathedral. The avant-garde represented the Gothic cathedral as a memorial space which initiated the transgression of the self and offered a perspective which transcended the self, the nation and the world. Citing Behne, it represented the “Welt der Gebundenheit […] denn hier ist der Geist teilhabend am großen Ganzen, am Kosmos, der in ewiger Treue seine Kreise in Gottes absolute Einheit zurückkehren lässt (Wiederkehr 31).” Rightly, Schirren assessed this notion of transgressing differences between the self and the cosmos as “neuromantisches Identitätsdenken” (“Weltbild” 99). Clearly, the idea of an identification of the individual with the cosmos was highly compatible with the fashionable celebration of the community and processes of “depersonalization” in the discourse of the intellectual avant-garde. This observation corresponds with Gross’, Geiser’s and Beyes’ remark that the mystic escapism of the modern individual after all results in a “Suche nach […] gemeinsamer Gegenseitigkeit und Harmonie” (181).

The central role, which I have granted Behne’s representation of the Gothic cathedral in the framework of this chapter, may not be mistaken as an argument for his originality. As stated in my research interest and practiced in the previous stages of the argument, I consider Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst as an exemplary text of the expressionist architectural utopianism. Indeed, praises of the Gothic cathedral proliferated at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1914 Taut exhibited his Glashaus at the Werkbundausstellung in Cologne employing the symbolism of the Gothic cathedral. Throughout the correspondence of the Gläserne Kette, the Gothic cathedral was seen a leitmotif (Whyte and Schneider e.g. 26, 74, 77, 81, 89, 94); let alone its key position in Taut’s text Die Stadtkrone published in 1919. In the same year, Gropius’s first Bauhaus manifest included Feininger’s woodcut Kathedrale des Sozialismus. However, it is most important not to forget Wilhelm Worringer’s work

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31 Clearly, this quotation also hints at the ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk discussed in chapter 3.1.
32 As a result of the spatial turn in humanities, research has intensively engaged with Romantic concepts of space. See for example Pape, Lange and Rigby. Lange explicitly studied Romantic representations of space as sites of identity construction. In the context of the expressionist architectural program, his analysis of the motif of the cathedral in Novalis’ Heinrich von Ofterdingen offers an especially interesting point of reference.
“Formprobleme der Gotik”, which exercised a considerable influence on the architectural avant-garde. Published in 1912, Worringer’s text described the Gothic cathedral as a place triggering transcendental aspirations. Even earlier, namely in 1904, the Dutch architect Berlage narrated a walk through Bruges and nostalgically praised Gothic and Romanesque church buildings which he set off against the industrialized metropolis in his essay “Gedanken über Stil in der Baukunst” (52-53). The idyllic scenery of the cathedral, which Behne narrated in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* and which was quoted above, clearly showed parallels. Finally, the motif of the Gothic cathedral also had a place in Morris’ medieval aesthetic. Even though meanings appointed to the symbol of the cathedral were flexible, the image of the Gothic cathedral was usually accompanied by a melancholic turn to the past and a utopian vision for the future. As an “Erinnerungsort”, the Gothic cathedral became a fundamental part of the ‘other’ place, which the new architecture imagined building in order to transform society (Belting 260). Finally, I agree with Hans Belting, who interpreted the motif of the Gothic cathedral as a strategy of the intellectual avant-garde to signify belonging to the artistic elite, sharing specific themes and practicing similar memory politics. In *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* Behne loudly refused the objection that building the social utopia on the ideal of the Gothic cathedral resulted in architectural copies. Disregarding the various commonplaces which built the background of his utopian architectural program, he exclaimed dramatically: “Kunst ist immer neu! Auch diese Kunst wird völlig neu sein (Wiederkehr 108).”

### 3.3 The Experience of Expressionist Glass

Behne built his utopian architectural program on a representation of the Gothic cathedral as space of communal experience. This illustrates Behne’s narration of approaching the Gothic cathedral in the idyllic, rural landscape, which has already been introduced in the previous chapter. Behne used the verb “spüren” in order to stress that the encounter with the “Kirchenkörper” triggered a sensation of belonging (Wiederkehr 87). Focusing on the feeling, Behne described a physical experience, resulting in the emotional actualization of a memory of community. The key role which the spatial

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33 See Vaninskaya for Morris’ idea of community which built the backbone of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

34 See Belting for a concise overview of the changing meanings appointed to the Gothic cathedral from expressionism to Bauhaus.
experience assumes in Behne’s quotation correlates with the supremacy of the category of experience in expressionism. Worringer’s “Formprobleme der Gotik”, for example, had dramatically portrayed the spatial experience of the Gothic cathedral and most likely inspired Behne’s writing (71). However, Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst did not name Worringer’s, but Jakob von Uexküll’s works as reference for the construction of his utopian architectural program (57). Uexküll opposed the methods of the exact sciences, introducing a theoretical biology which assumed a constructivist position and an affiliation to social science in order to highlight ways in which the individual actively engages with the world (Gutschow, Culture of Criticism 179). In Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, Behne followed Uexküll’s distinction between a “Merk-” and a “Wirkungswelt” (109). Uexküll defined the “Merkwelt” as the part of the “Umwelt” which is constructed by the individual’s senses, and the “Wirkwelt” as part of the “Umwelt” which is created by the individual’s movement and actions (72). While Uexküll brought both concepts together as constitutive elements of the “Umwelt”, Behne translated this additive relation of the terms into mutual exclusiveness when he, without further explanations, defined the former as an “Erlebniswelt” and the latter as a “Wissenswelt” (Wiederkehr 109). Based on this binary opposition, Behne established the argument that the modern subject is alienated from the “Erlebniswelt”:


Interestingly, Behne’s example introduced knowledge and experience as two different bases for identification. He claimed that the European bourgeoisie identified itself as European because it knew about the existence of the European continent as documented in maps. In the tone of the intellectual avant-garde, Behne readily rejected knowledge and rationality as foundations of society and suggested experience as starting point for an alternative community. Taking Kevin Hetherington’s study on the role of experience in Romanticism into consideration, I assess Behne’s celebration of active participation as yet another neo-romantic twist. Hetherington argued: “The romantic structure of feeling […] is organized around ideas of experience, authenticity and identity that derive from the idea of participation in changing the self through engagement with others (78).”
As has already been discussed, the utopian architectural project referred to the Gothic era as a period, and the Gothic cathedral as a place, when and where a sense of community was actively experienced. *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* called for a ‘new’ architecture which ought to work with glass as a material which, as exemplified by the Gothic cathedral, had the inherent quality to trigger emphatic feelings of belonging. Despite his euphoric reception of the utopian architectural fantasies narrated and sketched by Scheerbart and Taut, Behne was well aware of his role as critic and manager of the Arbeitsrat der Kunst. He left the design of the glass architecture to the revolutionary ‘Architektoniker’, and, for his part, only picked up some features of the glass fantasies to explain their expected impact on society. Behne read Taut’s and Scheerbart’s glass architecture as a signifier for the state of the society and followed the argumentative structure he had established in relation to the ideal of the nude, the tropical hut or the bourgeois brick housings. His defense of glass architecture attracted the attention of his contemporaries as well as secondary literature. Considering that Behne’s programmatic work held only praise for Taut and his glass fantasies, it was no surprise that the same gladly included Behne’s Text in the Frühlicht edition of 1920 and granted the critic interpretative primacy on the utopian glass architecture. This has been acknowledged by architectural research which has seldom discussed the expressionist architectural glass utopias without referring to Behne’s praise of glass architecture in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* (e.g. Bletter 34; Hartmann 59; Lutz). Next to Taut, Behne only allowed Scheerbart the role as revolutionary glass architect and emphasized the influence of his pioneering work on Taut’s successive utopianism. The author staged Scheerbart’s and Taut’s architectural glass fantasies as cornerstone of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst and his ideal of transforming society. Deliberately, Behne did not refer to other architectural projects developed in Europe which equally exhibited fascinations for glass and utopian aspirations. He referred neither to Joseph Paxton’s *Crystal Palace* built for the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, nor to the futuristic architectural utopianism of Antonio Sant’Elia’s *Città nuova* drawings, some of which appeared in the first Futurist manifesto of architecture in 1914 (Kirk 53).35 Instead, starting point for Behne’s discussion of glass architecture was a reference to Scheerbart’s text *Die Glasarchitektur* (Wiederkehr 64), which explained the call for glass architecture with a

35 Sant’Elia’s excitement for modern technology, mirrored in his Città Nuova drawings and design sharply contrasted with Scheerbart’s and Taut’s visions of flexible and organic glass architectures. On Sant’Elia’s futurist utopianism see Kirk.
reference to the Gothic cathedral: “[Der] Einfluß [der Glasarchitektur] auf die menschliche Psyche kann […] nur ein guter sein, da er doch dem Eindruck, den gotische Domfenster und babylonische Glasampeln hervorbrachten, entsprechend ist (Scheerbart 532).” Furthermore, Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* praised the development of Taut’s utopian glass architecture from the early example of the Glashaus integrated in the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914 to his texts *Die Stadtkrone* and *Alpine Architektur* (59). In *Die Stadtkrone* Taut planned the construction of a crystal house with colored glass, which should be enthroned high above the city and, alluding to the communal space of Gothic cathedral, the Indian pagoda and the Assyrian temple, create a harmonious ‘new’ community. The utopian fantasies which Taut sketched and narrated in the *Alpine Architecture* progressed even further. He imagined a flexible, infinite glass construction built upon the Alps and merging with the cosmos. Not to threaten the pioneering role of Taut, Behne praised his original aesthetics and moral positions, and ignored that Taut’s *Stadtkrone* exhibited striking similarities with Fidus’ utopian architectural work *Tempel der Erde* and his *Alpine Architektur* reminded of Wenzel Hablik’s *Kristallbauten*, developed in the context of the reform movement (Hofe 81,83).  

Against the background of these utopian designs, Behne’s utopian architectural program outlined the way glass would transform society and shape a harmonious human community. The qualities and symbolic meanings which he attributed to glass were no original inventions (Whyte 164), but reflected a long history of the symbol of glass starting with the biblical episode of Salomon’s temple, as Bletter recalled. Drawing on these symbolic traditions, the expressionist utopian program creatively constructed multiple meanings of glass and, as Schirren correctly emphasized, at times, did not shy away from antagonisms (“Ironic und Bewegung” 91). Behne introduced the idea of glass as reinforcement of the position of the European bourgeois as a pilloried ‘other’, who is encompassed by the industrial brick of the metropolis. The building material signifies the differentiation between industrial society and envisioned community. As

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36 Even though, the utopian architectural project dramatized the historical, symbolical meaning of glass, research has also emphasized more pragmatic reasons for the expressionist fascination with the transparent material. Whyte stressed that while the utopian architectural project performs a critique of technologized modernity, it may equally be read as a promotion of glass as a new and flourishing technology (171). Indeed, the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* included several articles which discussed the development of the glass industry. See for example Emil Girbig “Die Flaschenmaschine in der Glasindustrie” and Paul Umbreit “Dringender Arbeitsschutz in der Glasindustrie”.  

37 See Hofer for a more detailed discussion of Fidus’ and Hablik’s architectural utopianism.
has already been observed in reference to the image which Behne constructed of the Orient, the utopian architectural program frequently used references to building styles as representations of a specific state of mind and morals. Accordingly, Taut noted in *Die Auflösung der Städte*: “Steinhäuser machen Steinherzen. Lass sie zusammenfallen, die gebauten Gemeinheiten (7).” In contrast to this, glass was associated with ‘new’ values and a ‘new’ social community, as Whyte correctly explained (164). Moreover, Whyte inferred that because glass is created from the classical elements of fire and earth, it is best suited for the revolutionary gesture of the intellectual avant-garde which, as has already been discussed, envisioned the ‘practical’ state of human existence as an ideal of community and harmony (164). Indeed, Behne employed this argumentative strategy, when emphatically exclaiming in *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst*: “In einer fast rätselhaften Weise bleibt sie [die Glasarchitektur] immer primitiv (68)!” As in the previous discussion of the various dichotomies which Behne constructed in the course of his argument, the binary construction of stone and glass is only introduced in order to be transgressed. Like the rebel and the primitive, glass represented firstly a difference which helped to define a clear cut picture of modern society as the ‘other’, and secondly a starting point to transgress this binary in the construction of an alternative world. Behne argued that: “Kein Material überwindet so sehr die Materie wie das Glas. Das Glas ist ein völlig neues, rein Material, in welchem die Materie ein- und umschmolzen ist (Wiederkehr 67).” Once more, the specific material content of glass, which comes into being through a process of melting, suited nicely to support the symbolic meaning which was attributed to glass as material which should initiate the transgression of differences and bring upon the harmonious union of the individual and the world. Furthermore, the utopian architectural project dramatized the reflective and mirroring effects of glass in order to underline this dimension. Behne romanticized the effects of glass: “Es spiegelt den Himmel und die Sonne, es ist wie lichtes Wasser und es hat einen Reichtum der Möglichkeiten an Farbe, Form, Charakter, der wirklich nicht zu erschöpfen ist” (Wiederkehr 67). In his celebration of Taut’s *Glashaus*, published in the *Kunstgewerbeblatt* in 1914, Behne rejoiced similarly: “Glas […] [ist ein] Stoff, der wie kein anderer verschmilzt mit der Welt, […] unendlich reich an Beziehungen, das Oben im Unten, das Unten im Oben spiegelnd, beseelt, voller Geist und lebendig (1-4)!” Karin Hirdina made reference to this dramatization of glass reflections by the architectural utopian program as an aestheticization of bordering processes (25). I agree with her Hirdina, that the motif of light in the expressionist architectural utopias,
symbolized the transgression of boundaries, such as class or origin, towards a harmonious unity on the one hand, and that the natural light of the sun, reflected in the imagined glass architectures, created a contrast to the artificial and differentiated light sources of the metropolis on the other (24). Behne did not miss a single opportunity to emphasize the revolutionary stance of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst. Bletter stressed that motifs of glass and crystal have widely been introduced in order to allude to self-reflexivity and various processes of identification, ranging from its early appearances in the bible, its central role in Romantic metaphorical language, to its rediscovery by expressionism. Nevertheless, Bletter emphasized that in Romanticism the motifs of glass and crystal predominantly symbolized a “transformation of the self” (42) and an individual’s “quest for identity” (29), while the expressionist utopians, in their neo-romantic attire, shifted the focus from self-reflexivity to a process of “depersonalization” in the identification of the individual with an alternative community (42). The passages previously quoted from Die Wiederkehr der Kunst and “Gedanken an das Glashaus” explicitly referred to glass as a mirror, the classical metaphor of the identification process, and described an image of an all-encompassing, organic unity, therefore proving Bletter’s general assessment of the crystal glass motif in expressionism. Accordingly, the look in the mirror triggers, as Schirren has put it, an “Identifizierung […] mit dem sich selbst reflektierenden Weltganzen” (“Weltbild” 100).

So far, this research has discussed the motif of glass with respect to strategies of ‘othering’ as well as transgression. As promised, I have yet to shed light on the specific qualities which the utopian architectural project attributed to glass and, subsequently on the characteristics of the ‘new’ community envisioned. Schirren highlighted that the architectural utopian program imagined glass as a building material of various and partly even contradictory qualities (91). Indeed, the expressionists deliberately employed their freedom to coin representations of glass, which did not correspond with the actual forms and characteristics of glass. Whereas the utopian architectural project was, as has been shown, reluctant to use more specific descriptions of the utopian ideal, Behne coined the qualities of glass according to the ideal alternative community he had in mind. Behne described glass as a flexible and lively material undergoing frequent mutations. The mildness, softness and flexibility of glass should, according to Behne, break the “Starrheit und Härte des Europäers” and become the attributes of the “neue[n] Europäer” (Wiederkehr 69). At the same time, Behne stressed that this “softness” was
not comparable with the “Stumpfsinn, Gewohnheit und Gemütlichkeit” of the decadent bourgeoisie (68). Consequently, Behne offered a poetic description of the composition of glass: “Glas ist klar und kantig, aber in seinem versteckten Reichtum ist es milde und zart (68).” He redefined softness as a hidden quality of glass and emphasized that its rigidity and intransigence would stimulate activity, critical reflections and experiences. Given these qualities, Behne claimed that glass would bring upon a community, being part of which, people would share a “helles Bewußtsein” as well as “Verantwortung” (68). Finally, the utopian architectural project highlighted the transparency which is inherent in glass. While this quality is at least truly observable in most material forms of glass, Behne of course dramatized and aestheticized this dimension. The transparency of glass would result, according to Behne, not only in an unrestricted view (as through a window) but would create, following Behne, “Klarheit, Schönheit und Offenheit” (69). As has already been mentioned, research has frequently appraised utopianism as an idealistic and perfectionist construction plan which allows for no mistakes. At first glance, the community which Behne imagined along the lines of glass symbolism meets these expectations. Yet, looking more closely, Behne’s architectural program also acknowledged the human tendency towards imperfection and misconduct. However, glass also provided the solution to this. In the glass world, which Behne envisioned, there is no room for overindulging oneself, as everybody is constantly aware of the presence of the world community (68).

3.4 Envisioning Cosmopolitanism?

Die Welt des kosmopolitischen Blicks ist in gewisser Weise eine gläserne Welt. […]. Die Grenzen zum Anderen sind nicht länger durch ontologische Andersartigkeit blockiert, verdunkelt, sondern durchsichtig. (Beck 8)

The sociologist Ulrich Beck conceptualized the cosmopolitan outlook as a constitutive element of life in our contemporary second modernity (8), which is characterized by, what Manuel Castells called, the existence of the “global network society” (24). Interestingly, Beck introduced the metaphor of a worldwide architecture of glass in order to allude to the notion that lives are interrelated and people realize that they are a part of a global human community. Looking at Beck’s image of the contemporary cosmopolitan “glass world”, I wonder whether the ‘new’ form of human communal

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38 Neumeyer pointed towards the alarming dimension of this control mechanism and the expulsion of the individual and private experience, when he referred the reader from Taut’s, Scheerbart’s and Behne’s utopian glass architectures to Foucault’s panopticum (24).
existence which the utopian glass architectures of the expressionist avant-garde envisioned, equally bore characteristics of cosmopolitanism. At the root of the various manifestations and theoretical definitions cosmopolitanism may take is, following Delanty’s brief historical account of the cosmopolitan idea, “the Greek conception of human belonging referred to the world of the polis and the cosmic order of the Gods” (358-359). As has previously been discussed, Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* repeatedly defined a state of human existence which is characterized by a sense of belonging to, or identification with the world as the ultimate goal of the utopian architectural project, using manifold expressions to refer to the feeling of being an integral part of the world. The spectrum ranges from an “Empfindung der Weltenliebe” (Behne, *Wiederkehr* 24) over the “Einheit des Menschen mit der Welt” (29) and a “Gemeinsamkeitsempfinden” (40) to the experience of “Weltengeist” (31) and “Weltbewusstsein” (48) as a “Weltwesen” (43). Nevertheless, most evident seems the notion of belonging to the world in Behne’s dramatic declaration of the world as home, which reads: “Er [der sich seines Ursprungs im Gefühl bewußt geblieben ist] fühlt die Heimat, die Welt, in sich, zu ihr will er gelangen, und die Lebensäußerungen, die die kosmische Urkraft aus ihm tut, sind Bauten (43)” Here, Behne even introduced the term ‘cosmos’, as in the description of the glass architecture as “kosmische Architektur” (57), emphasizing the integral relation of the individual to the cosmic order (Schirren 103). However, even though there is a massive accumulation of the terms ‘world’ and ‘cosmos’, one waits in vain for Behne to explicitly indicate a cosmopolitan aspiration. Against this background, it seems plausible to explain the repeated use of the words ‘cosmos’ and ‘world’ with their fashionableness in expressionist discourse, as Schirren did (“Weltbild” 103), and further contextualize the utopian architectural project as a manifestation of socialist internationalism (Gutschow, “Object to Installation” 67-68). Gutschow wrote: “[The] utopian, visionary ‘glass architecture’ (Glasarchitektur) that was flexible and mobile, floating and towering, gleaming and transcendent, […] was allied with a modern political and social agenda calling for internationalism (67-68).” With this reference, Gutschow pointed to the international association of socialists parties. The foundation of the First International in 1864 was initiated by Marx, but only existed until 1870 (Zöpel 4). A Second International followed in 1889, yet it did not survive the outbreak of World War One (Zöpel 4). The October revolution of 1917 exacerbated the divide between democratic and totalitarian socialists (Zöpel 4). In 1919, Lenin founded the Third International, while the democratic alternative, the Socialist
Workers’ International, was established in 1923 and lasted until 1940 (Zöpel 4). Considering that the expressionist avant-garde explicitly railed against inventions of European history which referred to ancient Greece and the Enlightenment as high phases of European culture, it seems reasonable to suppose that it was not a cosmopolitan idea, usually thought of as a Greek invention and as a favorite project of Enlightenment, but the Socialist International movement which guided Behne’s formulation of the architectural utopian program. The theoretical discourse of the intellectual avant-garde surely suggested this interpretation. Tönnies’s work “Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft” may serve as a good example of this, which described, as has been mentioned earlier, the contemporary time as an age of society contrasting an age of community which has been surpassed and lost (251). As a characteristic feature of earlier times, Tönnies made reference to a “[k]osmopolitisches Leben” which he introduced as a mind-set of the “Gelehrten-Republik” (251). According to Tönnies, this way of life was dominated by an unwavering belief in science which consequently formed the public opinion (252). In contrast, Tönnies melancholically reflected upon ages of human community and religious harmony (251). Paul Kampffmeyer, member of the Friedrichshagener Kreis, advanced an almost identical point of view in his essay, “Die Weltbürgerliche und die Weltproletarische Idee” published in the Sozialistische Monatshefte in 1916. Like Tönnies, he rejected cosmopolitanism as a bourgeois and enlightened ideal (Kampffmeyer 26). Despite this, Kampffmeyer did not introduce the lost age of human community in opposition to the cosmopolitan world view. Instead, he referred to the Socialist International as a “weltproletarische Idee”, hereby defining the ideals of fraternity and solidarity to class. Interesting to keep in mind with respect to the architectural utopian program, is Kampffmeyer’s argument that the cosmopolitan idea of enlightenment, as well as the “weltproletarische Idee”, whose time he believed to have come with the Socialist International, regularly gained impetus through national class struggles (30, 33). Consequently, Kampffmeyer demanded: “Nicht außerhalb, als demonstrierende Masse, sondern innerhalb des nationalen Staates muß die Arbeiterchaft stehen, wenn sie den weltproletarischen Sozialismus […] zur Herrschaft bringen will (33).” Before this research relates Kampffmeyer’s position to Behne’s utopian architectural program, another paradox which accompanied the issue of

39 Initiated in the 1890s, the “Friedrichshagener Kreis” was a heterogeneous group of writers, artists and intellectuals including, among others, Scheerbart, Rudolf Steiner, Edvard Munch and August Strindberg who shared an anti-bourgeois and bohemian outlook situating themselves among the political spectrum of the left (Fähnders).
cosmopolitanism after World War I needs to be addressed. While it has been pointed out through Tönnie’s and Kampffmeyer’s texts that cosmopolitanism has widely been associated with the bourgeoisie, being rejected as a general characteristic of the industrial society, the term cosmopolitan was equally used across the classes as defamatory and racist, referring to the intellectual avant-garde, most prominently embodied by ‘the Jew’ (Delanty, “Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism” 362). Delanty explained that the intellectual avant-garde of “artists, political refugees and déclassé individuals of the various kinds” represented a cosmopolitanism which was feared because the respective ‘subjects’ were neither part of the bourgeoisie, nor of the working class (362). In the xenophobic and anti-Semitic climate of the 19th century, cosmopolitanism was, citing Delanty, ultimately linked to “rootlessness”, “otherness” and “a lack of loyalty to the nation” (362). Consequently, Delanty highlighted that “[t]he Jew was the cosmopolitan who as outsider embodied the vision of modernity as a relation of self and alterity (362).” Cosmopolitanism got frequently related with “migrants, outcasts and refuges”, as well as the European intellectual avant-garde, and was therefore more and more associated with a way of life that belonged to and was a product of the metropolis (362). Considering that the utopian architectural project claimed that the industrialized urban space of the early 20th century offered no room for a social community, instead shaping eccentric and self-centered individuals, it is unlikely that it would have chosen the concept of cosmopolitanism to frame its visions.  

Nevertheless, against the background of Kampffmeyer’s definition of the Socialist International as a “weltproletarische Idee”, and Gutschow’s conviction that the utopian architectural dream corresponded with the ideals of the same, one could consider assessing the utopian architectural project as a socialist cosmopolitanism. This would also concur with Delanty, who defined the Socialist International as a

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40 Both Nazis and Stalinists used the category ‘cosmopolitan’ synonymously with ‘Jew’ within their discriminatory, deathly discursive regime (Beck 3).

41 Esra Akcan argued that Bruno Taut was exiled in Japan and Turkey in his late career, “striving to establish a cosmopolitan ethics in architecture” (36). Hereby, Akcan rightly differentiated between Taut’s earlier utopian architectural visions subject to this discussion, which exhibit, as has already been put forth, features of Orientalism. Consequently, Akcan’s discussion offers an interesting insight into Taut’s individual development as an architect, but does not contribute to an understanding of the utopian architectural project as a site of cosmopolitanism, which this thesis is dedicated to.

42 This is easier to accomplish in German than in English, because in the compound Weltbürger the Proletarier may simply substitute the Bürger, whereas the term cosmopolitan cannot neglect its bourgeois ‘polis’.
specific realization of a cosmopolitan movement (363). Hereby, Delanty observed, that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive. Kampffmeyer’s text can, as a matter of fact, serve as an exemplary illustration of Delanty’s case. But why is it necessary to introduce the concept of cosmopolitanism when the term ‘internationalism’ seems to capture the defining features of the architectural utopian program? I believe that an essential dimension of the utopian architectural project is overlooked once Gutschow’s interpretation of expressionist utopias as forms of socialist internationalism remains unquestioned. After all, Behne explicitly stated that the utopian architectural program rejected national, as well as international aspirations. In his essay, “Vorschlag zu einer brüderlichen Zusammenkunft der Künstler aller Länder”, published in the Sozialistische Monatshefte in 1919, Behne wrote:

KUNST ist Menschentum. Kunst ist daher nicht international […]. Kunst ist anational, weil sie den Begriff Nation überhaupt nicht kennt. Auf dem Weg ihrer Vollendung ist das Nationale eine Schranke die sie durchstoßen muß, wenn sie wahrhaft Kunst werden soll. (155)

Even though, Behne’s call for an artistic brotherhood was published in the socialist organ Sozialistische Monatshefte, where Kampffmeyer’s celebration of the Socialist International appeared in the same year, Behne claimed a distinct, namely ‘anational’, alignment of the dream for a social human community which the utopian architectural program lay out. He put forth that the ‘new’ community would be built upon a feeling of global brotherhood and belonging that excluded identification with the nation state. While Tönnies’ defined community as a limited and bordered entity, which might host guests but not accept them as equal members (248), Behne conceptualized the ‘new’ community as an ever growing and inclusive entity. He argued in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst that the architecture of glass would nullify “[d]as alte banale Schachtelsystem der Welt” (56). Behne envisioned a world without borders in which humans live together in harmony. The transgression of national and individual boundaries towards an organic community was illustrated by Behne in “Vorschlag zu einer brüderlichen Zusammenkunft der Künstler aller Länder”, where he envisaged how artists from all over the world come together by flying to a congress in Bangkok:

Es würden dann sicherlich Menschen zueinander kommen im neuen Zauberland, das alle gleichermaßen mit einem Katzenjammer über die teure europäische Heimat erfüllte, dessen Herrlichkeit alle Grenzen im Bewußtsein wegsplüste, und nach der einsamen Reise durch die reine Luft aus der herab jeder Teilnehmer zum erstenmal die Erde als Ganzes sähe, ohne Grenzen, als Weltkörper, als runden Stern. (157)
Taking this quotation, Behne’s rejection of internationalism, and the previous close reading into consideration, I suggest that it is not necessarily the Socialist International movement which inspired Behne’s architectural utopian program (as Gutschow argued), but a Romantic and a Nietzschean cosmopolitanism which the expressionist utopist revived. As has already been pointed out, research has usually defined ancient Greece and Enlightenment as periods during which the cosmopolitan idea flourished, while the medieval age and Romanticism are usually connected with a decline in the concept of cosmopolitanism (c.f. Delanty 357-368). In contrast, Pauline Kleingeld, professor of philosophy at the University of Groningen, stressed the adaptation and redefinition of the cosmopolitan ideal during Romanticism in a cosmopolitan reading of Novalis’ “Die Christenheit oder Europa”. Kleingeld described Novalis’ representation of the Middle Ages as a cosmopolitan ideal which was both past and future oriented. According to her, it constructed a collective memory of the Middle Ages as a time characterized by the experience of a harmonious religious community and an ideal for which the contemporary society should strive for (280). Indeed, Novalis explicitly spoke of the undermining of the “religiösen kosmopolitischen Interesses” held amongst the medieval community by the principalities (73), emphasizing the need to return to a spiritual form of human coexistence: “Die Christenheit muß wieder lebendig und wirksam werden, und sich wieder eine sichtbare Kirche ohne Rücksichten auf Landesgrenzen bilden, die alle nach dem Überirdischen durstige Seelen in ihren Schoß aufnimmt” (88).” With reference to Assmann, this close reading has already explored how the utopian architectural project imagined the Gothic cathedral to be a memorial and equally utopian place, which needed to be constructed in order to ‘build’ a ‘new’ human community. Against this background, it is possible to maintain that Behne’s architectural program in fact revisited Novalis’ romanticized religious cosmopolitanism.

This is not to forget the even more considerable influence of Nietzschean cosmopolitanism on the utopian architectural fantasies of the expressionist avant-garde. After all, Martina Prange’s article on “The cosmopolitan praxis of Nietzsche’s good European” reads like an interpretation of Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst. Although, Behne at first formulated that the transformation of the European into a human being is the ultimate goal of glass architecture (65), Nietzsche’s “good European” may nevertheless serve as a model for the ‘new man’, which the utopian architectural project envisioned. Only a few pages later, Behne called the future ‘new’ human being “de[n]
neue[n] Europäer” (69). Prange identified three main practices which Nietzsche’s “good European” performs in order to assume the position of a “citizen of the world”, namely “travelling, learning, and establishing agonal relations of hostility and friendship with the self and others (270).” These are precisely the motives which the previous close reading of Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst has presented as constitutive elements of the utopian architectural program. First, Prange stressed that Nietzsche’s cosmopolitanism is based on the notion of “leaving the […] homeland” (271). His cosmopolitan European is a wanderer. It is this attitude which Behne celebrated, as he used the dynamic participal “weiterfliegend” to describe Taut’s utopian ideas formulated in Die Stadtkrone und Alpine Architektur (Wiederkehr 59).43 Likewise, Behne’s dramatic declaration of the world and the Orient as home, which has been discussed earlier, corresponds with this reading. Secondly, from this rejection of Europe as home results, the recognition of the “native or foreign” as a “master” who may teach Nietzsche’s cosmopolitan European, who holds the role of the “student” within this learning relationship, presenting an alternative way of life in harmony and beauty (271). This reevaluation of the ‘primitive’ and the Oriental was equally highlighted as common theme throughout Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst which introduces the Orient as an ideal of social coherence. While pointing towards the role of the master which the Orient assumes in Nietzsche’s fantasies, at the same time Prange inferred that the ultimate goal of Nietzsche’s cosmopolitan learning from primitive cultures is that the “student” “win[s] over the master” and “overcome[s]” himself as well as the current state of society (271).44 This Eurocentric dimension of the Nietzschean cosmopolitanism, according to which the European rises from the unsatisfactory student to the brilliant ideal, had already been expressed by Novalis, who wrote: “Die anderen Weltheile warten auf Europas Versöhnung und Auferstehung, um sich anschließen und Mitbürger des Himmelsreichs zu werden (88).” As expected, Behne’s utopian architectural program adopted these visions of a pioneering role of the Europeans. While Behne loudly and vehemently opposed to Eurocentric world views, as has been discussed earlier, he valued Taut’s utopian glass architectures as an explicitly European project which would be ground-breaking for the transformation of the entire world: “Taut […] schuf […] unserer Zeit das größte europäische Architekturgebilde […] die

43 Similarly, Taut, in his programmatic text “Für die neue Baukunst” published in 1919, called out: “[S]eid Wanderer und Gäste auf Erden!”

44 This notion is most prominently expressed with the motif of the equilibrist in Nietzsche’s Also sprach Zarathustra.
‘Alpine Architektur’, durch welche er den Stern Erde schmückt für die ewige Harmonie der Welt (Wiederkehr 59).” Furthermore, this quotation supports the earlier observation that while Die Wiederkehr der Kunst celebrates moments of identification with a world community, which have been referred to by Burke and Stets as events of “depersonalization” (124), the artistic individual takes center stage in the utopian architectural project, as it introduces the transformation of society. In “Der Sozialismus des Künstlers” Taut explicitly characterized the artist as “einsam”, “einsiedlerhaft” and “landstreicherhaft”, finally even explicitly comparing him to the “Ewige[n] Jude[n]” and implicitly introducing the notion of cosmopolitanism to signify the exclusion of the rebellious artist from modern society. Once again this introduced the margins as the stage for social transformation (259). As a result of this strategy, it is no surprise that Prange defined this egocentrism, which celebrates the artistic individual under the disguise of a social dream, as characteristic component of Nietzsche’s cosmopolitanism (272). Nor should it be astonishing that the concept of solidarity, which inspired the cosmopolitan ideal of Behne’s utopian architectural program and Nietsche’s “good European”, has little to do with what Simon Derpmann defined as the feeling of being morally obliged to promote the well-being of other members of a certain community, which results from an identification of the individual with the same (305).45 Instead of a morally inspired concept, the Nietzschean cosmopolitanism, which may be traced back to Behne’s utopian architectural program, should be assessed, like Prange did, as an aesthetic project (272). The following key passage from Die Wiederkehr der Kunst supports this argument. Behne claimed:

Das Glas wird und keine neue Moral bringen, denn wir brauchen vielleicht keine Moral, weil es selbstverständlich sein wird, daß sich die Menschen helfen, nicht aus Sentimentalität […], sondern aus […] Schönheitsverlangen, aus Liebe. Das Schönheitsverlangen wird keinen Schmerz, keine Qual an irgendeiner Stelle dulden, weil es ein Flecken wäre auf dem lichten, reinen Glanze des Lebens. (69)

Prange’s description of Nietzsche’s cosmopolitan “good European”, who “makes himself ‘tolerable’ rather than tolerating by beautifying himself and the world with his art” (279), is equally applicable to the “new European” which Behne’s utopian architectural program envisioned.

45 Moreover, Prange stressed that Nietzsche’s concept of cosmopolitanism, characterized by “selfishness” and “competition”, builds the antithesis to Kant’s ideal of the cosmopolitan citizen based on reason (269).
After all, it is time to concede that Behne and Beck’s glass worlds are imagined as conditions resulting in two very different concepts of cosmopolitanism. Equally employing the metaphor of glass, both authors celebrated the identification with the world, a “Weltbewusstsein” (Behne, Wiederkehr 8), which transgressed and overlooked boundaries of nation states and continents. However, this is about all their respective concepts of cosmopolitanism share. Against the background of Beck’s theory of the “cosmopolitan vision”, which he defined as a reality of our second modernity, it is possible to position Behne’s cosmopolitan ideal, which this close reading encountered in Nietzschean attire, as a contrary concept. From the start, this thesis has been motivated by a specific interest in the role of identity in expressionist architectural utopianism. Finally, the results of the close reading shed light on the ideal of cosmopolitan identification which Behne’s utopian architectural program developed. In the course of the close reading I have extensively discussed, how Behne incessantly called to overcome the identity politics of the European bourgeoisie, which employed bordering strategies, in favor of an all-encompassing, cosmopolitan identity. In order to achieve this harmonious state of human coexistence, he urged for identification with a rebellious community - be it proletarian or artistic - responsible for, and capable of initiating the transformation of society towards a ‘new’ human community living together in unity and harmony. Establishing the binary construction of bourgeois and rebel, Behne himself employed ‘othering’ as a technique of identity building, which Beck called the “friend-foe schema”, or “territorial either/or theory of identity” (5). Indeed, it has been shown that Behne continuously erected “mental fences”, while calling to overcome them through glass architecture. Throughout the course of his argumentation, Behne seemed to pay a considerable amount of attention on signalizing his belonging to the avant-gardist elite by incorporating fashionable discursive themes. With Beck, this rhetoric of excluding difference may be classified as a defining feature of the “first modernity” and contrasted with the inclusion and recognition of differences as a characteristic of our contemporary second modernity (15). Beck’s notion of “inclusive differentiation” as a defining feature of the contemporary cosmopolitan condition, did not suggest, like Behne’s utopian architectural dream, that a transgression and dissolution of differences takes place. Behne imagined, in contrast to his own

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46 Beck did not claim that the “inclusive differentiation” completely replaces strategies of exclusion. It merely resembles an opportunity created by the process of globalization, which is, of course, frequently not taken, as discussed in the following.
performance, that the ‘new’ community would be based on social identification and a radical “depersonalization” of the individual. While Burke and Stets defined “depersonalization” as a temporarily moment of social identification, Behne called for the “Dividualist” as an ideal ‘new man’ who would permanently adopt a communal identity. In contrast, Beck did not imply that the cosmopolitan outlook results in one homogenous social community, rather emphasizing that it leads not to the transgression, but the “Anerkennung weltgesellschaftlicher Differenzen” (16). However, Beck did not leave this principle, which suggests a solidly and peaceful human coexistence, unquestioned. Rather, he demonstrated the flip side of the “cosmopolitan condition”, arguing that the consequences of the integration of differences are, first, a declining interest for different cultures and identities, and second, the inability to cope with the perception of a networked world, triggering, according to Beck, the desire to reestablish old and/or new borders (16). Beck noted that the cosmopolitan condition of contemporary society resulted not only in a feeling of a worldwide solidarity, which Beck deemed “kosmopolitische Empathie” (13), but also in a shared experience of crisis (16). Finally, Beck claimed that these were precisely the contradictory moments which defined the characteristic reflexivity of the cosmopolitan outlook (17). As has already been pointed out, Behne claimed in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst that glass architecture will introduce a new reflexivity. Yet, the close reading has shown that the critical reflection which the architectural utopists sought to initiate, corresponded in no respect with Beck’s concept, but might, as has already been argued, rather relate to Schirren’s idea of a Romantic moment of identification (“Weltbild” 100), as well as an aestheticization. Behne’s architectural utopian program envisioned a ‘new’ community of homogeneous beauty, leaving no room for concepts like individual freedom and diversity which reflexive modernity champions (Beck 8). Behne’s utopian program allowed only for revolutionary artists and rebels to lead the path towards the ideal harmonious community, and only encompassed a single, splendid, homogenous ideal of cosmopolitan identification.

4 Visiting Filip Berte’s House of Eutopia

The Belgian artist Filip Berte, an educated architect, is currently touring Europe with his House of Eutopia installation, in order to construct a space which triggers public reflection about past, present and future alternative constructions of Europe. Hereby,
Berte recalls and reinterprets some of the motifs which this thesis has encountered in Behne’s utopian architectural program. Berte’s artistic objective is to literally build the *House of Eutopia* in the administrative district of the European capital Brussels. The house is planned to encompass five rooms, namely the so-called “Protected Landscape” on the ground floor, the “Collective Memory Mass Grave” in the cellar, the “Graveyard” in the garden, the “Blue Room” on the second floor and finally the “White Space”, or “Mirror”, in the attic. So far, Berte’s artwork has not yet found its place in the administrative center of Brussels. Instead, Berte outsources the ‘building process’ from the destined construction site and travels a number of European cities with different sections of his house. His “Protected Landscape” was presented over the course of the “Kunstenfestivaldesarts” at the European Centre for Contemporary Art in Brussels in 2009, and his “Collective Memory Mass Grave” at the “Four Days Festival” in Prague and the “Centrum Beeldende Kunst” in Utrecht in 2010. In addition to these physical architectural spaces, Berte’s *House of Eutopia* can be accessed via the digital space of the artistic website, which parallels the installation. The website provides the visitors with brief information about the individual rooms, as well as pictures and videos. The cameras induce the interconnection between the physical and the media space of Berte’s *House of Eutopia*. Berte states on the website that: “The ‘pars pro toto’ principle applies to the rooms: each section reflects the whole, which is an architectural ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ [sic].” This statement can be broadened to include the relationship between the website and the installations. Berte expresses that he perceives the procedural building process while travelling and encountering different audiences to be “as important as the final result”. As a consequence, Berte accompanied his “Collective Memory Mass Grave” to Utrecht in a “mobile office”, which was set up at the exhibition site as an attempt to interact with the visitors (Centrum Beeldende Kunst Utrecht). Berte’s *House of Eutopia* is not just characterized by its ‘homeless’ wandering about in Europe, but is, also meant to represent a timely “bridge […] between past and future, between the unconscious past or collective memory and new visions of the future” (Berte). The different time orientations find their symbolic spaces in the cellar and the attic. Berte explains online:

> Whereas the cellar embodies the dark side of the European past, the attic aims to cast a utopian light on the European future. It is a place for reflection, where I will invite philosophers, writers and artists as well as politicians, sociologists and historians to take the floor and formulate a possible new or utopian future perspective for Europe in a changing world.
The notions of creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, recalling collective memories, emphasizing movement and employing the metaphorical meaning of glass, as a means to envision an alternative Europe, have already played a central role in the previous discussion of Behne’s utopian architectural program. As a result, I wonder what is feeding the fascination of constructing architecture as expressions of social utopianism, as well as how Berte encompasses the themes and motifs of the utopian project of the architectural avant-garde in his *House of Eutopia*, in response to contemporary discourses and social realities. A central concern here will be to shed light on the role which the category of identity plays within this utopian architectural project.

### 4.1 Expressing Social Identities

Initially, this thesis defined utopia as a non-existant and ‘other’ place. Considering the physical realization of Berte’s *House of Eutopia*, this previous classification could disqualify Berte’s artwork for a discussion within the framework of this research. The press sees Berte’s *House of Eutopia* as “een vrijplaats […] die het mogelijk maakt om maatschappelijke verandering teweeg te brengen” (Verlaek), or, in other words, “une façon de penser L’Europe autrement” (La Libre Belgique 23-23). In light of these statements, Berte’s installation does not become imaginary, but the reviews point towards the fact that the utopia which Berte envisions, lies beyond his physically built rooms. According to this critique, the artwork lives up to its name representing an ‘other’ place; the ordinary form which Berte’s *House of Eutopia* assumes however, built architectonically quite simply of two small floors, a saddle roof of glass and a small garden, which together is more representative of a prefabricated town house than a utopian space. The “vrijplaats” is not merely created by the materiality of Berte’s *House of Eutopia* (Verlaek), but by a symbolical dimension being fixed to the building through the means of naming the rooms, commenting on their metaphorical meaning on the webpage, the installations in the interior which have yet to be discussed and, most importantly at this point of analysis, the position of the rooms in relation to the existing architectures of the city. As installations, Berte’s travelling rooms are set up and receive visitors in urban artistic areas. They are integrated into a series of temporary exhibitions or artistic events, and as such become part of a creative sector which is commonly expected to raise questions about the way society is organized, living and thinking. Berte’s *House of Eutopia* may, in contrast to the avant-gardist utopian architectural utopia, be classified along the lines of Foucault as “heterotopia”. In “Des espaces
autres”, Foucault defined utopias as “emplacements sans lieu reel”, whereas he introduced the term “heterotopias” to refer to utopias which actually possess a real place in society (46-49). Furthermore, Foucault deemed cemeteries and archives characteristic “heterotopias”, both of which are included in the “Collective Memory Mass Grave” in Berte’s House of Eutopia (46-49). Foucault assigned two different functions to the heterotopic space. First, the heterotopic may challenge existing spaces, and second, it may create an ‘other’ place which is organized in a more ideal way (46-49). Berte’s House of Eutopia establishes a space which requests the audience to reflect the current state and develop future visions of Europe, as well as of the construction of European society.

Even though the utopian character of Berte’s and Behne’s architectural projects may be defined by different characteristics, they both envision ‘other’ spaces as means to challenge contemporary and seek to trigger alternative processes of identification. Referring back to the initial hesitation to interrelate utopias and identities, it may be argued through Hetherington that utopianism is likely to be accompanied by visions and performances of alternative identities, based on practices of “expressivism” (9). Hetherington’s publication “Expressions of Identity”, explicitly dealt with the interrelatedness of utopias and the construction of social as expressive identities, which he broadly defined as identities which are derived from the identification with “‘alternative’ lifestyle interests” (3). He also introduced ‘spatiality’ as a category linking utopianism and processes of identification, emphasizing that “identity involves an identification with particular places, whether local or national”, adding that this “means that certain spaces act as sites for the performance of identity (105).” Hetherington introduced the utopian space as an “elsewhere” (124) and an “‘other place’” (125), hereby, tackling the ambiguity of the utopian no-place as a good-place which More juggled with. Decisive for this research is, however, Hetherington’s belief that “[s]uch [‘other’] spaces facilitate opportunities for being different and the constitution of new identities (107).” Hetherington regarded the practice of constructing utopias as a “political as well as cultural act”, which, according to the author, provides the opportunity for identity (re)building and may be read as an “act of resistance or transgression” (138). Transgressing one’s place in society, and structuring a utopia in
opposition to the former society, implies rethinking and potentially rebuilding one’s identity in contrast to the rejected ‘other’. Wolfreys, who discussed the relation between transgression and the construction of identity in more detail, wrote for example:

Transgression […] indicates a moment of becoming […]. Transgression takes place, where it takes place, as an always ‘foundational interruption’ (Badiou 2005, 81); always foundational because, as one breaks the compact with oneself, so one rebuilds one’s identity. (15-16)

Of course, it needs to be acknowledged that transgression is always defined in relation to a norm. With reference to Behne’s utopianism, it has been observed that by employing popular themes and motives of the fashionable avant-gardist discourse, the author signalized his rejection of the bourgeois society on the one hand, and his belonging to the artistic intellectual elite on the other. However, utopianism does not merely present the chance to translate the redefinition of values into a spatial practice and to perform an “expressive identity”, it also places the “expressive”, which Hetherington defined as “shared feeling” (53), back at the center of attention. Hetherington rightly stressed this, recognizing its quality as a source for social change and alternative identifications. In other words, Behne and Berte conceptualized their utopias not only as signifiers for a rebellious or “transgressive” movement, but also as an opportunity to frame a shared spatial experience as a premise for an alternative communal identification. Therefore, Hetherington coined the term of the “expressive utopic”, characterized by certain “key features” among which he identified practices of movement and translations of margins into centers, which offer the chance for identification (135), and resemble constitutive elements of both Behne’s and Berte’s utopian project.

4.2 Sharing Space and Memories

The observation that both Behne’s and Berte’s utopian project conform to Hetherington’s typology of utopia, should not be mistaken as an argument suggesting that their goals correspond. Although both utopian programs envision ‘other’ spaces, which call for alternative identifications and engage in similar themes, their works are of course guided by the specific position they assume in regard to the respective political and social situations. Hence, I am curious to know how Berte alludes to an identity ideal, which differs from the Nietzschean cosmopolitanism which Behne framed, as he adopts characteristic motives of the expressionist utopic, such as
movement and shared experience. I viewed the practice of movement which Behne’s utopian program celebrated, as a strategy to represent the alienation from modern society, resulting in the experience of exclusive homelessness and rootlessness and the idea of seeking ‘other’ places in order to initiate the transformation of human society. I noted a dynamic which alluded to Nietzsche’s concept of overcoming the human, symbolized by the equilibrist balancing on the tightrope and, similarly drawing on Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*, identified an aesthetic of the sublime. In his conception of the *House of Eutopia*, Berte grants a key role to movement. He designs travelling installations and incorporates a variety of motives related to movement in the exhibition design of the “Protected Landscape”. Geert Opsomer, a researcher on audiovisual and performing arts at the Erasmus Hogeschool Brussels, described his visit to Berte’s installation the “Protected Landscape” as follows:

We wander around in a landscape with a central political fortress that is protected like a fenced-in concentration camp. The inner circle is a closed circuit in which trains travel in circles and there are white Lippizaner horses. […] We are struck by the fact that there are more horses than people in the landscape. […]. Horses on guard like Lippizaners, and domestic horses in the paddock, but also black stallions who appear to be rising in revolt, who want to escape, but in all the turmoil smash into the walls of the fort, of the protected landscape, horses on the edge of the abyss.

Opsomer went on to write that he associated the horses displayed with a Nietzschean perspective on European cultural history, which emphasized the need to overcome contemporary society for the sake of the “good European” who is to follow.48 Indeed, the installation undermines the euphemistic title “protected landscape”, with the representation of Europe as a fortress. It sketches an image of a brutal reality which challenges positive perceptions of Europe and has to be overcome through the achievement of “Eutopia” as, literally meaning, ‘good’ place. Nevertheless, I understand Berte’s installation as a comment on European Union policy, rather than a renaissance of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Hereby, I follow Berte’s official comment on the installation taken from the website:

The visitor is invited to cross the threshold, enter the closed entity and follow a route that takes him past various landscapes, some familiar, some archetypal, so he can form his own view of the themes they symbolise: migration, the

48 Opsomer did not explicitly refer to the equilibrist in Zarathustra, but to the mystification of Nietzsche’s death, according to which, Nietzsche embraced a horse and went mad.
protection and control of Europe’s outer and internal borders, asylum policy and the process of European integration.

Berte’s installation wishes to challenge the success story of mobility in the European Union, securing and enhancing the free movement of people, goods and services. “Immerse yourself in a continent with a wealth of traditions and a history as rich and varied as its many peoples and landscapes, […] a dynamic, multinational environment”, reads one of the key messages of the Global Promotion Project, developed by the European Union to attract students and researchers from outside of Europe. Berte’s “Protected Landscape” argues that this welcoming gesture contradicts the often repeated claim of the European Union as a ‘fortress’. Hence, Berte’s House of Eutopia addresses, in a utopic form, the notion of progress and acts as a social and political critique of two dimensions of mobility in the European Union. Firstly, Berte shows his installations at artistic sites, where the majority of the visitors experience free movement as a reality and as a matter of course, the exceptions and exclusions to this rule. Secondly, Berte’s House of Eutopia changes its location and moves around freely in Europe, not to assume a sublime aesthetic, but in order to reach a wider European audience. Thanks to its mobility, Berte’s installation offers the opportunity of a shared aesthetic and contemplative experience among visitors across national borders.

In addition to the collective spatial experience shaped by the mobile form of the House of Eutopia, in the “Collective Memory Mass Grave” Berte presents visual representations of historical sites and scenes which he believes are, or at least ought to be, decisive for the construction of a collective European memory and identity. These are not restricted to the territories of today’s European Union member states, extending the definition of the European Union, and hereby, continuing to question its bordering strategies. Berte describes his artwork: “The installation shows both natural and urban landscapes that have been harmed in the past. […] Every place, every location, every territory associated with Europe, is subject to an investigation that brings the scars of the past to the surface once more.” Like Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, through his “Collective Memory Mass Grave”, Berte displays the rejection of points of history which are commonly thought of as the basis of a European identity, suggesting alternative starting points to establish narrations of ‘Europeanness’. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Behne’s utopian architectural program dictated an alternative collective memory which praised the ‘primitive’ state of human existence, Romanticism
and the Gothic era as past periods of communal and harmonious living, as well as future ideals, whereas Berte does not construct images of an harmonious European past, instead trying to do the exact opposite by thwarting the dominant role they assume in contemporary discourse. Opsomer rightly emphasized, that Behne highlighted these visual representations of catastrophic times and events in order to oppose frequent claims that Greek culture and Jewish-Christian religious traditions were foundations of European culture and identity. Berte’s selection criteria to show ‘other’ and painful collective memories of Europe result in an archive, mainly compromised of photographs and maps, but also accompanied by some drawings by the artist. The documents are partly exhibited \textit{in situ} in the “Collective Memory Mass Grave”, as well as on the website, complementing the installation with images of war, destruction and death for the most part.\footnote{Among the various representations of the “Collective Memory Mass Grave”, which is accessible online, are photographs of the Holocaust Mass-Grave Bergen-Belsen and of Chernobyl for example, as well as a drawing entitled “Vokovar Massacre” and a portrait of Joseph Stalin.} This hybrid memorial space literally lives up to its description as a “grave”, confronting the visitor with frequently repressed memories of violence. Against the background of these traumatic flashbacks, Opsomer related Berte’s \textit{House of Eutopia} to forms of the artistic avant-garde, where he sees the artwork as a resemblance of Paul Klee’s “Angelus Novus”, quoting Benjamin famous ekphrasis:

\begin{quote}
His eyes are open wide, his mouth is open and his wings are spread. This is what the angel of history should look like. He has turned his face to the past. Where we see a sequence of events, he sees a great catastrophe which continually heaps ruin upon ruin and casts this at his feet. He would like to stand still, waken the dead and assemble what has been crushed. But a storm from paradise rises, is caught up in his wings, and is so strong that the angel is no longer able to close them. This storm irrepresibly drives him into the future. The storm is what we call progress.
\end{quote}

The parallel which Opsomer establishes to the “European pessimism” of the avant-garde is overly dramatic (Delanty, \textit{Inventing Europe} 109). Berte’s representations of death and crisis do not allude to a destruction of European society as a prerequisite for a social transformation process. Instead, Berte exhibits these memories in order to ask contemporary society to reconsider the definition of European belonging and global empathy. Hereby, Berte’s \textit{House of Eutopia} stresses that a ‘good’ European does not yet exist. However, Berte does, unlike Behne, emphasize that contemporary society may become the initiating force and beneficiary of a movement towards an alternative construction of Europe and European identity.
A look at the entire content of Berte’s “Collective Memory Mass Grave”, which is retrievable online, leads to a surprising discovery. Even though Berte himself explains that his aim is to recall traumatic memories of European history, it is not correct that he dedicates his collection entirely to these moments. Among the documents of animosity, fanatical nationalism, fascism and communism is a reproduction of a map, showing a “panorama view on the Gulf of Triest”. Beneath the image, Berte offers a brief dictionary-like description of the history of Trieste whose first sentences read:

Panorama view on the Gulf of Trieste, which is a shallow bay of the Adriatic Sea, in the extreme northern part of the Mediterranean Sea. It is part of the Gulf of Venice, and is shared by Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. Throughout its history, Trieste has been a crossroad of different peoples and religions, and its churches still reveal its cosmopolitan heritage.

Caught in between the representations of cruelty, the text on Trient surprisingly resembles a “cosmopolitan outlook” in relation to meaning which Beck appointed to the term as a perception of the world as place without boundaries (16). Contrary to Beck’s concept of cosmopolitanism, which pointed towards problematic consequences of the cosmopolitan condition (like the tendency to re-erect old borders), the cosmopolitan moment which Berte’s “Collective Memory Mass Grave” shows only represents cosmopolitanism as an ideal form of human coexistence, characterized by what Beck called the “recognition of […] differences” (7). Berte’s agenda for constructing an alternative basis for European identification is not exclusively built on the recollection of sorrowful memories as negative examples and a reminder of the way contemporary Europe is establishing itself as a fortress, but also includes a reference to a historical narration of a cosmopolitan ‘Europeanness’.

4.3 Diversifying Narrations of ‘Europeanness’

Berte’s *House of Eutopia* has receives funding under the “European Narratives Project” scheme, launched by the European Cultural Foundation in 2009. According to the progress report, the purpose of the project is the “exploration” of European narratives as a means to proliferate “European integration through cultural means” (3). It tackles the problem that the majority of people living in Europe, according to various surveys, still express that they “do not feel that they belong to it [Europe]” and see the European Union as a “distant, soulless power” from which they feel “disconnected” or even “excluded” (3). Despite the motivation of the “European Narratives Project” to support identification of people with the European Union, the report states: “The aim is not only
to identify common ground, but also dissonances, paradoxes, conflicting perspectives among European people of all backgrounds and generations (3).” Berte’s *House of Eutopia* builds a narrative which Leerssen, professor of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, has suggested as being the alternative “European master-narrative”, namely “the idea that all European nations have a history of bloody, deep fundamental divisions that, at some point, were overcome” (European Cultural Foundation 9). Despite the position which Berte’s *House of Eutopia* claims as an ‘other place’ of contemporary European society, it does not oppose the identity politics of “unity and diversity” which the European Union pursues. “Unity in diversity” is not only the slogan of the European Union to enhance European integration and dispel fears of homogenization, but also the ideal which Berte’s *House of Eutopia* hints at. Berte’s artwork criticizes ‘othering’ and bordering techniques of identification. It suggests striving towards a cosmopolitan conception of Europe and the recognition of difference, represented by various cultures, religions and personal backgrounds, which the hybrid building techniques and spatial position of the travelling *House of Eutopia* underline.

It remains to be seen whether Berte in his role as an artist lives up to the ideal of diversity which his artwork claims to represent. Jolien Verlaek addressed this issue in her review of Berte’s artwork when she asks: “In hoeverre is de kunstenaar slechts een schreeuwende in de woestijn? Is de kunstenaar daadwerkelijk in staat de sociale realiteit te verbeteren? En is dat eigenlijk de verantwoordelijkheid van de kunstenaar?” The way in which Verlaek initiated the discussion of Berte’s role in the transformation of society expressed that she did not mistake Berte as an artistic leader but rather carefully questioned the impetus art and the artist have on identity politics. This corresponds with Berte’s performance as an artist. In contrast to Behne’s utopian architectural program, which called for the addressees to follow the golden path towards an alternative community, Berte appoints a crucial role to the visitors. The rooms and landscapes he creates are spaces which aim to trigger a critical reflection among the audience. Hereby, Behne averts the danger of creating only one homogeneous perspective, which has been identified as result of Behne’s utopian architectural program. Given that Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* rejected categorizations (while applying them), and celebrated the notion of reflection as an amalgamation of the part with the all-encompassing whole, its communal cosmopolitan ideal lacked a critical dimension. This is a risk which Sassatelli also identified in some narrations, which seek to establish Europe as a
destination of “unity in diversity”. He warned that the “style of imagining a community” as united and yet diverse, may all too easily “become banal” (European Cultural Foundation 13). Sassatelli stated: “Instead of homogeneity, commonality and exclusiveness it [the motto of “unity in diversity”] just sets itself up as opposite: plurality, diversity and multiple allegiances (European Cultural Foundation 13).” Berte’s House of Eutopia dispels this concern as the installation prompts the visitor to reflect upon the images and spaces represented against the background of individual experiences, fears and hopes. Berte’s narrated history criticizes strategies of exclusion, but does not explicitly offer an ideal utopia as an alternative. As a side-note, cosmopolitanism Triest might serve to hint at a world view which the artist favors. However, the concept of cosmopolitanism is only introduced as a historical incident. Berte leaves it up to the visitor to evaluate the use of the concept for an alternative basis of European identification. Berte’s House of Eutopia started out with a spin-off action, the so called “Mobile Embassy / Office” which offered a space, namely an old trailer, to collect individual narrations of ‘Europeanness’. Hereby, Berte showed interest in the alternative, individual narrations of ‘Europeanness’ which the audience constructed. Berte writes on the Dutch section of the homepage:

Als ontvangstkabinet diende Mobiele Ambassade een belangrijke doelstelling van Eutopia nl. de dialoog initiëren en een communicatie- en discussieplatform creëren op lokaal, regionaal, nationaal en internationaal niveau. De participatie van het publiek is van essentieel belang voor een pluriforme vertaling in de constructie van het huis.

Other individual narrations formed after exploring Berte’s installation are expressed in public discussions, which are organized to accompany the exhibition of the artwork. Berte’s House of Eutopia, which only casually envisions a cosmopolitan ‘Europeanness’ as ideal, allows for fears and concerns to accompany this concept. Behne represents collective memories of violence that remind the audience of the tendencies to define belonging based on techniques of ‘othering’. Herewith, he acknowledges the simple fact that the ‘eutopia’ desirable for one citizen living in the “global network society”, might not be desirable for another. Berte’s artwork triggers the ambiguous experience of global crisis and cosmopolitan empathy, which, according to Beck, characterizes the contemporary cosmopolitan condition (16). Berte’s installation does not dictate a project to be implemented and proliferated, as Behne’s utopian program did. The House of Eutopia is built upon continuous negotiations.
While Berte’s *House of Eutopia* reveals widely suppressed memories of European violence dating back to the time before the European Union took its shape, it leaves room for the individual to derive its own conclusions and utopian visions. It depends on the audience whether Berte’s artwork should be interpreted as a comment on the European Union’s border agency ‘protecting’ Lampedusa, or incidents of terrorism in the European Union. Berte replaces the ultimate goal of communal harmony, which Behne’s programmatic texts advocated, with an appreciation for diversity in regard to different backgrounds and lifestyles, but also a variety of role identities one individual may take on. Unfortunately, despite Berte’s rejection to assume an artistic leadership role, the attic of glass remains solely reserved for “philosophers, writers and artists as well as politicians, sociologists and historians to take the floor and formulate a possible new or utopian future perspective for Europe in a changing world (Berte).” By offering this space of foresight exclusively to the European intellectual elite, after questioning the public in the old trailer, the *House of Eutopia* may involuntarily reinforce perceptions which view the attempts to create a sense of cosmopolitan, European belonging, as a project of the elite which is out of touch with local and individual needs and concerns.

**Conclusion**

Drawing on Bletter’s study, which assessed expressionist architecture as “a search for social identity”, I started out by exploring the role of social identity in the development of the expressionist architectural utopian program (43). What remains of Bletter’s interpretation after the close reading of Behne’s *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* from a cultural studies perspective? Bletter, and later Schirren, claimed that the expressionist architectural program employed the light-reflecting and mirroring qualities of glass as a neo-romantic metaphor of identification. I assign a wider role to the category of identity in expressionist architectural utopianism. The close reading has demonstrated that Behne established his utopian architectural program based on a large use of identity politics, such as ‘othering’, and stereo- and prototyping, as well as framing shared experiences and memories. Based on these findings I conclude firstly that *Die Wiederkehr der Kunst* is not primarily a site of identity search, as Bletter suggested, but one of identity construction and performance. This assessment results, secondly, in a reevaluation of the world view the utopian architectural project envisioned. Behne’s
architectural utopianism was, on the one hand, concerned with framing a cosmopolitan identification and world view to signify a radical critique of modern European bourgeois society. On the other hand, Behne was also preoccupied with securing his position among the avant-gardist intellectual elite. Herewith, I follow Hetherington’s insight that utopian space offers opportunities to perform “expressive”, alternative identities (9). As a daring call to literally transform the European through the means of building, Behne’s architectural utopianism remains an example of the emphatic and programmatic tone of the avant-garde. That being said, the focus on identity politics in Behne’s architectural utopianism also allows for relating the findings to Berte’s contemporary architectural utopia, the House of Eutopia. The artwork adopts a variety of motives exhibited in Behne’s utopianism, namely to challenge existing patterns of European identification and advocate a global feeling of belonging.

Before arriving at these general conclusions, I contextualized Behne’s architectural utopia as a narrated space and an exemplary generic expression of the avant-gardist manifest. I examined the ambiguity of the contested prefix ‘u’ (‘no’) of More’s term utopia, which could either point to the non-existence or ‘otherness’ of the utopian space, not only as two mutually exclusive concepts, as research has frequently suggested, but also as decisive characteristics of expressionist architectural utopianism - Taut’s Glashaus literally ‘building’ the only exception. With reference to More’s neologism, two central premises were set, namely, that cultures tend to translate visions of alternative ways of life into spatial relations, and that this spatial relation is frequently defined by one state of being as opposed to an ‘other’ state and place of being. This notion of the ‘other’, which frequently accompanies utopian thought, was alluded to as the central role of ‘othering’ as an efficient identity policy in Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst. Tönnies’ differentiation between society and community built the background against which I decided to replace common definitions of the expressionist architectural utopias as dreams of a ‘new’ society, in favor of an evaluation as dreams of a ‘new’ community. The change of terminology acknowledges the position of Behne’s programmatic text within modern discourse. This went hand in hand with the observation that Behne’s social utopianism reflects the paradigmatic turn towards a positive connotation of utopianism in modern discourse, as identified by Graf (148), as well as the crisis discourse coming to the fore at the beginning of the 20th
century. With this argumentation, I modified Sargisson’s position which suggested that utopian forms resemble reactions to concrete events (36).

The second chapter of this thesis proved the influence of fashionable discursive themes on Behne’s architectural utopianism. Working with Burke and Stets’ social identity theory, the close reading encountered a series of binary oppositions with which Behne represented the abhorrent state of modern society and the harmonious ideal of human community he envisioned. In contradiction to his own argumentative techniques, Behne condemned the European bourgeois of modern industrialized society for maintaining its role merely based on techniques of exclusion. At the same time, the close reading has shown that Behne himself heavily employed strategies of categorization. Behne’s identity politics only allowed for representations of homogenous groups with prototypical characteristics which were easy to reject or to identify with. His idealization of the rebel personified the transgression of social order and highlighted his centrality within the logic of the utopian dream. While Behne discursively performed his membership to the rebellious artistic elite, the close reading questioned precisely this anti-bourgeois position, lending support to Nipperdey’s view of the artistic avant-garde as a legacy of the bourgeoisie. Constructing a representation of the Orient as a ‘primitive’ ideal, ‘Other’ and ‘home’, Behne repeated identical techniques of social identity formation when he reassessed the Orient, marginalized in bourgeois colonial discourse, as a prototypical role model for human community of harmonious cohabitation. While Speidel considered this performance a consequence of a ‘new’ world view (7), I conveyed that Behne’s categorization did not undermine bourgeois Eurocentrism, as he liked to assert, but followed in its footsteps practicing discursive authority. With regard to the initial sub-question which the second chapter of the thesis tackled, namely how Behne identified the means to bring upon social change, two results of the first close reading phase deserve particular attention. First, Behne’s attack of modernized society left the existence of a shared bourgeois ‘Europeanness’ uncontested; this is despite Delanty’s observation that at the beginning of the twentieth century, European identity was an accessory of the intellectual artistic elite (Inventing Europe 11). Secondly, Behne continuously viewed buildings and bodies as signifiers of a state of mind and society. Wilhelmenian style houses represented the rejected stiffness and frigidity of the bourgeois, indigenous huts and the naked body the desired ‘primitive’ ideal. Facing these findings, I once more drew attention to Behne’s
incorporation of modern discursive themes. In the context of the naked Baukörper as a signifying device, the ideals of the Lebensreformbewegung, Loos’ work “Ornament und Verbrechen”, and Simmel’s sociology of fashion and metropolitan culture all proved influential. The discussion of Behne’s ‘semiotic reading’ of architecture brought the introductory quotation of the thesis back into focus, showing that Behne claimed that a certain world view resulted in a corresponding building style and vice versa.

Keeping track of the transformative powers Behne appointed to building, I shifted the focus of the close reading. While the second chapter primarily presented how Behne engaged in identity politics to perform his critique of modern society and defined ideals of communal life, the third chapter of the thesis explored the means necessary to construct a ‘new’ European community according to Behne. He granted the sole capacity and obligation to initiate social change to architects. I noted that the author himself decided who belonged to, and who should be excluded from this group of revolutionary architects. As in the preceding homogenizing description of social groups, Behne defined the prototypical architect in contrast to the stereotypical lyricist. His performance contradicted his ideal of an inclusive human community. Consequently, I evaluated Behne’s characterization of the architect as an artist whose characteristic action is transgression (Wiederkehr 21) as another attempt to blur the evidence of his bordering identity politics. This view corresponds with Behne's demand that the architect, despite its leading role, ought to subordinate himself to the community. Spotting the programmatic use of the inclusive personal pronoun ‘we’ in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, I pointed to the ambiguity of Behne’s performance. On the one hand Behne signalized his depersonalization for the sake of social identification. On the other hand, his discursive style underlined his status among the intellectual avant-gardist elite. Next to the one-dimensional binaries which Behne frequently coined, I drew attention to Behne’s technique of narratively constructing alternative collective memories as points of identification which should initiate the transformation of modern society. Herewith, I supported the skepticism in the research regarding the claim that the architectural utopian program created something entirely ‘new’. Against the background of Assman’s memory theory, I argued that Behne constructs the memory of the Gothic era as a historical moment of ideal religious community in order to create an alternative collective memory which, citing Assmann, “delegitimize[s]” bourgeois society (34). The textual analysis emphasized, that, in its function as “Erinnerungsraum”, the Gothic
cathedral built a constitutive element of Behne’s memory politics and highlighted its ambiguous purposes (37). By using the motif of the Gothic cathedral in his architectural utopian program, Behne sought to create a silent antipode to the life of the modern metropolis, commonly pictured as loud, hectic and overcrowded. The cathedral instead allowed for self-reflection as well as an experience of spiritual community. Moreover, I stressed that the motif of the cathedral in Behne’s works once again reiterated fashionable themes of the European avant-gardist discourse, and signaled the author’s familiarity with, and belonging to, the intellectual elite (38). With the emphasis of a shared spatial experience as the basis for an alternative collective identification in Behne’s Die Wiederkehr der Kunst, the close reading encountered another category which was frequently referred to in expressionist discourse. Under the influence of Uexküll’s socio-biological concept of the “Merk-” and “Wirkungswelt”, Behne granted experience, not knowledge, ultimate access to the world (109). Consequently, the central role which glass assumed as a building material in the utopian architectural project of the avant-garde resulted, partly, from the popular motif of the Gothic cathedral, whose colorful glass-windows framed the space of the collective, spiritual experience. Furthermore, Behne’s utopian architectural program exploited the qualities of glass to underline its revolutionary performance. Distinguished from research which sought to offer a definition of the ‘new’ man and community, which the utopian architectural project envisioned (e.g. Poppelreuter 219), this close reading did not translate Behne’s celebration of glass in Die Wiederkehr der Kunst as flexible, soft, clear, rigid and transparent material into a profile of the ‘new’ man (68). Instead, I noted that Behne’s description of glass explicitly called for a community characterized by mutual responsibility (68), beauty and surveillance (69), supporting the initial research assumption that the strategies of identity construction under which Behne’s use of the motif of glass may be subsumed, inform the reader about the world view which the utopian architectural project envisions.

Tying the particular observations of the previous close reading together, the final sub-chapter of the third section assumed a broader view of Behne’s programmatic architectural utopianism. Against the common classification of the utopian architectural project as a characteristic manifestation of socialist internationalism (Gutschow 67-68), I argued that Behne’s texts equally revived a Romantic and Nietzschean cosmopolitanism. In dialogue with Beck’s social theory, which described the
environment of contemporary society as a “glass world” whose defining feature has become the “cosmopolitan outlook” (8), I interpreted Behne’s utopian architectural program as an expression of cosmopolitan thought. Taking Kleingeld’s study of Romantic cosmopolitanism in Novalis’ Christianity or Europe, I revisited Behne’s representation of the Gothic cathedral as a constructed memory of a cosmopolitan identification with a religious community across national borders. Prange’s discussion of Nietzsche’s cosmopolitan praxis drew my attention to Behne’s use of corresponding strategies. The close reading found that Behne adopted the themes of “leaving the homeland”, recognizing the “native” as the “master” and finally, overcoming the ideal and the self which, according to Prange, determined the specifically Nietzschean cosmopolitanism (271). As a result of the Nietzschean mark the utopian architectural project carried, the thesis revealed that Behne’s cosmopolitanism was, under the cloak of the programmatic call for social revolution, both a Eurocentric and egocentric project. Aestheticism primarily motivated its vision of global human empathy and solidarity. While both Behne and Beck’s notion of cosmopolitanism highlight the experience of belonging to the world, I emphasized that Behne’s utopian architectural program offered a homogeneous perspective, as it strove for an ideal social community which demanded the subordination and depersonalization of the individual. Contrarily, I laid emphasis on Beck’s concept of cosmopolitanism which acknowledged that reflexive modernity has been subjected to the fallacy of the ideal homogeneous community, which all too often curtailed individual freedom and resulted in oppression and exclusion. Consequently, Beck’s concept of the “cosmopolitan outlook” rejected banal perceptions of the world as one human community in favor of a diverse global society which allows for, and acknowledges, the personal development of every individual member (30).

These interim findings, initially, presented as response to the cultural historical research interest of the thesis, also substantiated the final visit I paid to Berte’s House of Eutopia, which appropriates key themes of Behne’s architectural utopianism to his own programmatic message. Like Behne’s utopian program, Berte’s artwork envisions the creation of an artistic Gesamtkunstwerk, constructs collective memories as alternative basis for identification, emphasizes movement, and, in the design of the attic, also uses the metaphorical meaning of glass. Citing Hetherington, I assessed both Behne and Berte’s utopias as projects which challenge prevailing concepts of Europeanness and
seek to construct stages for the performance of alternative identities. However, I found that the parallels between the avant-gardist utopianism and Berte’s *House of Eutopia*, which Opsomer’s review suggested go too far. Although both utopian forms employ a similar motifs, their practices prove their embeddedness in fashionable discourse. While Behne celebrated the anti-bourgeois concept of a harmonious, homogeneous community, Berte fulfills the parameter of postmodernity as his artwork values difference and hybridity. The analysis of his “Protected Landscape” showed that Berte substitutes the ideal of completeness with the concept of diversity. In “The Collective Memory Mass Grave”, he names the cosmopolitan citizen of Trieste a pioneer in this field and continues to challenge violent bordering and exclusion strategies of the European Union. In the end, he leaves it up to the audience to establish an alternative position for the definition of European belonging. At the same time, I argued with respect to Berte’s installation that there are no grounds for Sassatelli’s warning of a simplifying diversity concept. Berte’s critique of ‘fortress’ Europe emphasizes the central role of individual views and identification. Based on these findings, I concluded that global solidarity, which the thesis referred to through Beck as a notion of cosmopolitan empathy (13), plays a key role in both Behne and Berte’s utopian architectural program. At the same time, I showed that Behne and Berte envision this ideal very differently, with Behne a dreaming of homogeneity, while Berte favors diversity.

Based on the central role of memory politics in the course of the argumentation, I would like to conclude with an outlook for further research. Behne’s as well as Berte’s architectural utopian projects construct memorial spaces as a prerequisite for an alternative European identification. At the heart of these two examples of social utopianism is a direct link between memory and future. Finding adequate and effective ways to transmit memories and knowledge to future generations is one of the major challenges of contemporary globally networked society. Recent advances in the cognitive neuroscience have underlined the importance of memory for the future. Cognitive scientists have proved that the human memory serves as a planning device for future actions (Klein 14). Stanley Klein, Theresa Robertson and Andrew Delton showed that past experiences inform future performances (14). These findings might bear implications for this study and offer starting points for further research. Architectural studies have already begun to apply the insights of cognitive science to its field. Lisa
Blackman and Janet Harbord discussed the role of spatial experiences for processes of social identification for example. The authors claimed that environments which allowed for a circulation and transmission of variety of memories made the recognition of difference by the inhabitants more likely (321). Similarly, Elizabeth Sikiaridi and Frans Vogelaar argued that experiences of hybrid spaces, comprised of physical and digital sections, were likely to influence processes of identification and result in the dismantling of binary thinking and the appreciation of “intermixtures, […] interconnections and networks” (524). This hypothesis could shed further light on Behne and Berte’s architectural program as construction sites of social identities. It suggests that Behne’s one-dimensional assemblage of communal memories triggers rather exclusive identifications, whereas Berte’s hybrid spaces and dialogical memoires create a higher chance for a form of social identification which works diversity, rather than discouraging it. If one wished to analyze this hypothesis in detail, one would have to return to reception of the architectural utopias - or take a look at the utopian projects of the young architectural generation. After all, they may demonstrate most clearly how architectural visions change, in order to ground united yet diverse social identifications.

In the framework of the “European Bench” project, initiated by the Foundation Design Den Haag in 2009, students of The Hague University developed architectural concepts for “inter-European meeting places”, equally resembling spaces of diversity as well as environments which trigger shared experiences and a sense of European belonging. The students worked with physical locations as well as digital technology. Their final presentations included a crystalline sidewalk, to be built in various cities, showing footsteps made simultaneously across various European cities. These architectural dreams may remain technical gadgets, but they document the search for ‘other’ places as sites for identification and empathy. At the same time, they envision a glass world accompanied by surveillance. While Behne’s utopian architectural program already worked with the omnipresence of social control, these hybrid spaces nevertheless demand ‘new’ technical and semiotic skills of society.
Works Cited


Rüsen, Jörn. "Utopie neu denken: Plädoyer für eine Kultur der Inspiration."


Annex

*Thesis assessment report (first and second supervisor)*

Both supervisors are requested to explain his/her assessment in a report (see next page for format of report), which will be made available to both supervisors, the student of the thesis, the Directors of Studies (home and host university) and the home and host university coordinators.

The completed assessment forms are to be sent to the coordinators of the student’s home and host university.
**Euroculture Thesis Assessment Form**

Name of Student: 

Thesis Title: 

Home University: 

Host University: 

Name of Supervisor: 

Name of Second Supervisor: 

In this report, please consider the following, by answering the following questions: 

1) **Problem statement, method and theory** 

   a) The aims and objectives of the thesis – are these clearly identified and explained? Is there a well formulated problem statement? Briefly explain. 

   b) Has a suitable methodology and theoretical frame been taken to solve the stated problems? 

   c) Does the conclusion provide convincing answers/proof to the initial questions/hypotheses? 

   d) Does the research constitute an original contribution to the field of knowledge in this field or domain? 

   e) Is the research problem and the discussion of it of sufficient complexity for an MA level? 

2) **Structure:** 

   a) Is the thesis coherently structured? 

   b) Are concepts clearly introduced and explained and critically and consistently applied?
3) Sources (primary and secondary):
   a) Has (enough) relevant (primary and secondary) literature been adequately interpreted and integrated into the thesis?
   
b) Is the bibliography/list of references complete and accurate?

4) Stylistics
   a) Is the use of language (English) acceptable and the required standard (i.e. no spelling mistakes and typos range of vocabulary, grammar)?
   
b) Are references in the text given in a coherent and consistent manner (either in text or as footnotes)?

5) Format:
   a) How is the thesis presented (i.e. constancy in lay-out, choice of fonts, headings, tables and graphs)?

6) General
   a) Have recommended revisions been executed to a satisfying degree?
   
b) To what degree has the student been able to work independently?
   
c) Any other comments

(National) Grade:

ECTS Grade:

Date and Place:

Signature: