

II.
Reform and Socialism:
Behne's Start as a Cultural Critic

"I am a Socialist from the depths of my soul; with my entire being. But not a practical Socialist!"¹

– Franz Marc, 1915

Behne and Germany's Cultural Reform Movement

Behne's earliest work as a freelance critic after 1910 immediately engaged him in two distinct branches of the larger effort to reform art, design, and culture in modern Germany. The first was the cultural reform movement centered around figures such as Friedrich Naumann, Eugen Diederichs, and others who had helped found the German Werkbund in 1907. The second was Germany's Socialist party's attempt to create a working-class culture. While enmeshed in these larger struggles for cultural reform, Behne also entered ongoing debates outlining the principles of modern art for the first time.

Behne began his studies with a pragmatic architecture education, and began his career as a critic writing for Naumann's Die Hilfe and related journals. But as he began

¹ "Ich bin Sozialist aus tiefster Seele, mit meinem ganzen Wesen--aber nicht praktischer Sozialist"; Franz Marc, letter from field, June 21, 1915, quoted in Diether Schmidt, ed. Manifeste Manifeste (1965), p. 103.

to teach at several public adult-education schools (*Volkshochschulen*), he published ever more in Socialist newspapers and journals. He also became increasingly involved with the experimental art of Berlin's Expressionist avant-garde. He was a fan of early avant-garde theater, literature, and art. The newest art in Berlin seemed to confirm his teacher Heinrich Wölfflin's ideas that all true art strove to be autonomous and ideal, rather than merely a representation or means of communicating.

As a young man still working to establish his position in the complex political climate of Wilhelmine Berlin that pitted conservative museum officials against radical gallery owners, for example, he was reluctant to link art and to specific political positions. Instead, Behne began to define an approach for his criticism that I call "cultural socialism," a form of Socialism concerned more with the individual fellow man and the sense of belonging to a common humanity, than with party politics and organized Socialism. With the rise of Behne's increasing belief in cultural socialism he began to abandon the more bourgeois art reform movements and to stake out a new critical position on modern art and architecture to which he would cling for the rest of his life--he sought to find a modern art and architecture which was based on the spiritual (though not religious) and functional needs of the individual modern man. This chapter will investigate how Behne's criticism and ideas on modern art moved gradually from the reform movement over to socialism, and how he began to define for himself the role of an art critic within the development of modern culture.

Architectural Training

Adolf Behne's career opens in the fall of 1905 with four semesters of rather traditional architectural studies at the royal Berlin Polytechnic (Königliche Technische Hochschule) in the western suburb of Charlottenburg.² By attending the elite university rather than a more vocationally oriented *Baugewerkschule* (building trade school) such as the one his father had attended in order to become a contractor, the nineteen-year-old Behne showed his thirst for academia and the world of high culture. The polytechnic was the most prestigious of many options in Germany's exceptionally competitive and pluralistic architectural education system, as well as a prerequisite to any Prussian civil service career in architecture.³ Fellow students studying architecture in Charlottenburg during these years included Walter Gropius and the future architectural critics Walter Curt Behrendt, Gustav Adolf Platz, and Heinrich De Fries. However, besides Gropius, it produced few of the important future designers of Weimar Germany.

The Berlin Polytechnic had emerged with the merger of Schinkel's Bauakademie (Building Academy) and the Gewerbeakademie (Applied Arts Academy) over the course of several years around 1880. It featured a traditional educational system that

² For biographical sources, see chapter 1.

³ Rosemarie Haag Bletter highlights four distinct degree programs for studying architecture in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century: 1) the architecture departments in the art academies; 2) the elite polytechnics, including the conservative Berlin and the liberal Munich and Stuttgart institutions, which required graduation from the Gymnasium; 3) the apprenticeship system; 4) the *Bauschule* (building school) or *Baugewerkschule* (building trade school), which combined academic and apprenticeship training; Bletter, "Introduction," in Behne, *Modern Functional Building* (1996), pp. 15ff.

emphasized memorization and rigorous day-long examinations.⁴ Gropius reported to his mother that he was taking seventeen courses per semester, which kept him in class literally all day.⁵ Behne later recalled taking courses in construction, stereotomy, descriptive geometry, physics and chemistry; he also remembered vividly drawing acanthus leaves and intricate shade and shadow exercises.⁶ As is still common in German architectural education, and as was more common for students attending a vocational *Baugwerkschuleschule*, Behne also participated in various practical building internships, working on the construction sites of the Hohenzollern-Lyceum in Schöneberg and of a locomotive shed in Grunewald.⁷ Here he likely drew on the

⁴ On architectural education in Wilhelmine Germany, see Erich Kontor, "Architekten Ausbildung," in Eckehard Mai, Hans Pohl et al., Kunstpolitik und Kunstförderung im Kaiserreich. Kunst im Wandel der Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (1982). On the origins of the Berlin Polytechnic in particular see most recently Erich Kontor, "Königliche Bau-Akademie zu Berlin, die Institution," in Mythos Bauakademie, ed. Frank Augustin (1997).

⁵ Gropius attended the Munich Polytechnic for a semester in summer 1903, and the Berlin Polytechnic from fall 1905 to spring 1907 (Behne started in the fall of 1905). Reginald Isaacs characterized the Berlin curriculum as time-consuming, pedantic and boring; see Isaacs, Walter Gropius. Der Mensch und sein Werk (1983), pp. 66-68, 76-77; in the abridged English version, Isaacs, Walter Gropius (1991), pp. 10-17.

⁶ Postcard with autobiographical synopsis, Behne to Walter Dexel, (Apr. 12, 1926), Dexel Papers, Archives for the History of Art, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities. Republished in Walter Vitt, ed., Hommage à Dexel (1980), p. 99; and Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 10.

⁷ Postcard Behne to Dexel, April 12, 1926. Although he was little more than a construction hand, Behne certainly influenced the design of many buildings through his criticism, and, as shall be discussed, may even have had a direct hand in the design of a few buildings by architects he championed. Sauer's Allgemeines Künstler Lexikon vol. 8 (1994), p. 305, lists without a source that Behne participated in the design of the waiting room of the Barmen train station (1912/13) and the Düsseldorf train station (1932/36).

practical experience he had gained through his father's work as a developer and builder of speculative apartment buildings in the working-class districts of eastern Berlin.

Although the polytechnic was one of the leading architectural schools in Germany, its conservative faculty included none of the more famous "father figures" of modern architecture such as Fritz Schumacher at Dresden, Theodor Fischer at Stuttgart (and after 1909 at Munich), Hans Poelzig at Breslau, Peter Behrens at the Kunstgewerbeschule (Applied Arts School) in Düsseldorf, or Hermann Billing at Karlsruhe.⁸ Nor did the faculty at the Berlin Polytechnic did not include any of the leading architects practicing in Berlin, such as Alfred Messel, Ludwig Hoffmann, Paul Wallot, Ernst von Ihne, Bruno Möhring, Cremer and Wolfenstein, or Bruno Schmitz. Instead, Behne took classes with the historian Richard Borrmann, the urbanist Joseph Brix, the Renaissance specialist Heinrich Strack who taught composition, Hugo Koch who taught construction, and the drawing instructors Günther-Naumburg and Julius Jacob.

University Art History

Behne and Gropius were soon deeply disappointed and bored by the pedantic and pragmatic education they were receiving. Both left their architectural school training in the spring of 1907. The more well-to-do Gropius began with an extended

⁸ Behne regularly cited the "father figures" Otto Wagner (in Vienna), Hendrik Petrus Berlage (in Amsterdam), and Alfred Messel (in Berlin), and occasionally referred to Auguste Perret and Louis Sullivan.

study trip to Spain and later gained practical experience working in Behrens' architecture office. Behne moved to what he hoped would be a more intellectually expansive course of study in art history at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität in central Berlin.⁹ In this prestigious department, Behne was inspired by the art historians Heinrich Wölfflin and Karl Frey, lectures by the sociologist Georg Simmel, the social philosopher Alois Riehl and the social historian Kurt Breysig.¹⁰ Fellow students at the university in these years included the future art historian Paul Frankl, and the future art critics Paul Westheim and Carl Einstein, who influenced the profession of modern art criticism and publishing.

Behne's formal university training had a profound effect on his future career as a critic. His professors opened his eyes to the broadest possible range of scholarship and art: typologically, chronologically, geographically, and stylistically. He became equally interested in the complete spectrum of the fine and applied arts from all periods and from all over the world. In some of his earliest published essays he wrote for several Socialist youth magazines, for example, he drew casually from his studies of the entire range of human cultural production, alternating between famous works of art in

⁹ Gropius toured Spain from September 1907 - spring 1908, when he began working for Peter Behrens; see Isaacs, Walter Gropius (1991), pp. 78, 90.

¹⁰ Behne, "Lebenslauf," n.p. Behne also lists studies with the Assyria specialist Friedrich Delitzsch (1850-1922), the ancient Greek and Roman specialists Paul Herrmann (1859-1935) and Reinhard Kékulé von Stradonitz (1839-1911), Baroque specialist Werner Weisbach (1873-1953), art theoreticians Oskar Wulff (1864-1946) and Max Dessoir (1867-1947), and the young modernist Hans Hildebrandt (1878-1957), who would become an influential professor at Stuttgart and later would translate Le Corbusier's books into German.

the public National Gallery, more ordinary applied arts recorded in obscure research volumes, and even examples of popular material culture from the streets of Berlin. As a self-proclaimed "people's critic," Behne wrote for a wide array of audiences, including workers, professionals, as well as the educated, intellectual elite. He adjusted his writing style, the nature of his arguments, and even the content to accommodate his targeted audiences, but the underlying goal of his work remained relatively constant: to make the transformative power and beauty of all art appreciated by all, and to create a new, modern art, and a new, more socialist society.

Following the example of his teacher Wölfflin, but also indicative of his own populist stance, Behne increasingly focused on architecture, a more public form of art than the paintings which were typically located in exclusive museums or galleries. Gradually he made a transition from considering architecture as a pragmatic, technical discipline to studying it as an art form that emphasized creativity, intuition, emotion, and the human spirit. Although over the course of his career he would write more on art than on architecture, he wrote his dissertation on architecture, and always came back to architecture as the fundamental vehicle through which to understand broader creative and cultural values.¹¹ In his 1911 article "Peter Behrens and Tuscan

¹¹ Wölfflin reinforced the intellectual connections of art history and architecture in 1908 when he commissioned Peter Behrens to give drawing lessons to his art history students at the University of Berlin so they might develop a more experiential approach to understand form and space. Although Behne was studying at the university then, there is no evidence he attended Behrens' classes; see Tilmann Buddensieg, ed., Industriekultur: Peter Behrens und die AEG, 1907-1914 (1979), pp. 117, D292; translated as Industriekultur: Peter Behrens and the AEG (1984), pp. 231, 499. Unless otherwise noted, all references are to the original German edition.

Architecture of the 12th-Century" that developed out of his dissertation research, for example, he analyzed how two new exhibition pavilions by Behrens borrowed the overall forms and even some decorative motifs of Tuscan Gothic architecture, but also embodied a personal expression of architecture that was thoroughly modern.¹²

In the course of his university studies Behne became familiar with the leading art historical debates of the day. He became involved in defining what is the nature of art its role in modern society. He read widely and historical ideas began to frame his views on contemporary art and architecture. Above all, he was caught up in heated debates about the autonomy of art. On the one hand, art could be interpreted as a product of a zeitgeist and the geographic, social, and cultural milieu in which it was made. This view was represented by the so-called "social historians of art," perhaps most famously in Behne's day, by the French art historian Hippolyte Taine.¹³ In this view art was inevitably a product of its socio-cultural milieu, and thus a tool for social action; it could reflect reality as well as promote ideologies.

On the other hand, through his studies with Wölfflin, Behne also began to understand that art could be interpreted as an autonomous artifact within modern

¹² Behne, "Peter Behrens und die toskanische Architektur des 12. Jh," Kunstgewerbeblatt N.F. 23, no. 3 (Dec. 1911): 45-50. Behne discussed Behrens' AEG pavilion at the 1908 Marineausstellung in Berlin and the Crematorium at Hagen.

¹³ See Heinrich Wölfflin, Klassische Kunst (1898), translated as Classic Art (1952). Wölfflin began to define a new, more form-based art criticism, and decries Taine's conception of art as a "translation of life," p. 287. On Taine, see Mary G. Morton, "Art History and the Academic Fringe. Taine's Philosophy of Art," in Art History and Its Institutions, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (2002), pp. 215-228; and Leo Kofler, "Hippolyte Taine," in Klassiker der Kunstsoziologie, ed. Alphonse Silbermann (1979), pp. 11-27.

society, one understood through formal analysis and intuition about the underlying "idea." This Neo-Kantian position had its origins in philosophical Idealism such as that professed by Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer, who insisted that the *Idea* was the central element in the creation of all great art. According to this anti-materialist stance, all pre-defined principles, rules, and other external material factors lead only to poor imitations, not great art.¹⁴ Art, they insisted, is about *Idea*.

This latter position found particular resonance in the culture wars of Wilhelmine Germany. As Frederic Schwartz has summarized in his discussions about the intellectual and philosophical arguments that were waged in the name of creating "Culture" in the face of bourgeois materialism in pre-war Germany, "Idealism" was a way that "bourgeois thinkers characterized their desire to break through the forms of technological Civilization to a transcendent Culture."¹⁵ In this view, art provided a

¹⁴ Behne explicitly cites Kant as the source of these ideas in Behne, "Kunst und Milieu, (II)," Die Gegenwart 42.2, no. 39 (Sept. 27, 1913): 619. For the connections in Wölfflin, see Joan Goldhammer Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," Art Journal 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 292-300; Eleftherios Ikononou and Harry Francis Mallgrave, eds., Empathy, Form, and Space. Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-1893 (1994); Francesco Dal Co, "Projects, Words, Things," chapter 2 in Figures of Architecture and Thought (1990); Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 17, no. 3 (March 1959): 287-310. On connections to Schopenhauer, see Heesen-Cremer. "Zum Problem des Kulturpessimismus. Schopenhauer-Rezeption bei Künstlern und Intellektuellen vom 1871 bis 1918," in Ideengeschichte und Kunstwissenschaft: Philosophie und Bildende Kunst im Kaiserreich, eds. Ekkehard Mai, Stephan Waetzoldt et al. (1983), pp. 45-69; and Lucian Kruowski, "Art and Ethics in Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer," Via 10 (1990): 7-17.

¹⁵ Frederic Schwartz, The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War (1996), p. 21, and more generally chapter 1, "Style vs. Fashion: The Werkbund and the Discourse on Culture in Germany," pp. 13-73. Iain Boyd Whyte sees anti-materialism as a general hallmark of Expressionism; Whyte, "Expressionistische

means to escape from the materialism of the day. In the wake of revolutionary activities after World War I, when Behne frequently wrote for a more consciously Socialist and anti-bourgeois audiences, he would interpret the very concept of "Idealism" as bourgeois, claiming that any attempt to separate art and real life was anti-Socialist and conservative.¹⁶

These opposing views of art led Behne to confront one of the most fundamental paradoxes of modernity: modern art could be simultaneously an autonomous object of the avant-garde and also politically and socially engaged for the masses.¹⁷ Behne's early engagement with Germany's cultural reform movement, his increasingly Socialist leanings, and his avid interests in contemporary culture provided a variety of potential answers. As Behne encountered the work of sociologists such as Simmel and Max

Architektur - der philosophische Kontext," in Das Abenteuer der Ideen, ed. Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani (1987), pp. 167-184. On the longer tradition of Idealism in German architecture, see Hermann Bauer, "Architektur als Kunst. Von der Grösse der idealistischen Architektur-Ästhetik und ihrem Vervall," in Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttheorie im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Hermann Bauer et al., pp. 133-171.

¹⁶ See Behne, "Sozialismus und Expressionismus," Die Freie Welt 3, no. 23 (June 9, 1921): 179-180; also republished in an unknown socialist journal, a copy of which exists in the Behne papers at the Bauhaus-Archiv.

¹⁷ Bushart discusses this opposition in reference to the postcard from Apr. 12, 1926 reference above that Behne wrote to his close friend Walter Dixel, in which he sketches out a brief autobiography, listing important dates. He titles his chronology, and thereby his life "Lenin der Kunstgeschichte" (The Lenin of Art History). Bushart too sees this as one of the most fundamental oppositions, though she at times focuses on the contradictions it elicited in Behne's work, rather than the synthesis it inspired. Bushart claims that in the end Behne evaded the paradox by believing that art was neither autonomous, nor popular, but rather a larger metaphysical category, alongside politics and religion one of the primary sociological forces that structured human life and existence; see Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 11.

Weber, philosophers such as Alois Riehl and Friedrich Nietzsche, and economic and cultural theorists such as Werner Sombart, Friedrich Naumann, and Theodor Heuß, and later cultural theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Sigfried Kracauer and Ernst Bloch, he continued to expand and refine his initial positions on the proper role of art in society.¹⁸

Behne's Dissertation

Inspired by the lectures of the Renaissance art historian Karl Frey, in 1910 Behne began his dissertation on the foreign influences on polychrome incrustations in the medieval churches of Pisa, Lucca, and Florence during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. His study built on the works of nineteenth-century German-speaking theorists such as Carl Bötticher, Gottfried Semper, Conrad Fiedler and Alois Riegl, but also of English writers such as John Ruskin and Owen Jones, all of whom studied ornamental traditions in order to arrive at a new understanding of the role of the applied arts in the development of architecture.¹⁹ Not straying far from the ideas of his professors, Behne's dissertation was a conventional art historical investigation of style and formal influences, with no inklings of the modern art and architecture that would shortly capture his professional attention.²⁰ In the course of his research, Behne

¹⁸ David Frisby, "Social Theory, the Metropolis, and Expressionism," in Timothy O. Benson, ed., Expressionist Utopias. Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy (1994), pp. 88-111. See also Markus Bernauer, Die Ästhetik der Masse (1990);

¹⁹ See, for example, Deborah Schaffer, The Order of Ornament, the Structure of Style. Theoretical Foundations of Modern Art and Architecture (2003).

²⁰ Adolf Behne, "Der Inkrustationsstil in Toscana." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Berlin (1912).

traveled to Tuscany in the fall of 1910, closely studying the cathedral complexes in Pisa and Florence. On his travels to and from Italy he later recalled visiting important landmarks, museums, and art collections in Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Colmar, Freiburg, Basel, and Munich. Behne submitted the dissertation that resulted, "Der Inkrustationsstil in Toscana," to the medievalist Professor Adolf Goldschmidt, and the young classical archaeologist Richard Delbrück.²¹ He defended it cum laude in July of 1912. [Figure 2.1]

In his dissertation Behne attributed the polychrome incrustation of Pisa to influences from Armenia and Syria-Mesopotamia. His thesis confirmed the controversial theories of the art historian Josef Strzygowski, and refuted the more common notion that the Tuscan style derived from Arab or Byzantine sources.²²

Despite the role of foreign influences, however, Behne claimed that the overall system

²¹ Behne, "Inkrustation." The dissertation was published in 1912 by Emil Ebering. Paul Zucker's review in Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft 13.2 (Oct. 1920): 327-328, implied it was also republished after World War I by the "Zirkel Verlag," which also published Bruno Taut's magazine Frühlicht as well as other books on architecture. On the progressive Zirkel Verlag see Jaeger, Neue Werkkunst, p. 145. A further review of Behne's dissertation was by F. Schillmann, in Mitteilungen aus der historischen Literatur N.F. 4 (1916): 78-79.

Adolf Goldschmidt (1863-1944) was one of the most admired and sought after dissertation advisors on the broadest range of topics; his list of students forming a virtual "Who's Who" of modern art scholarship: Max Deri, Alexander Dorner, Hermann Giesau, Hans Jantzen, Erwin Panofsky, Carl Georg Heise, Kurt Weitzmann; see "Goldschmidt, Adolf," in Metzler Kunsthistoriker Lexikon, ed. Peter Betthausen et al (1999), pp. 125-127; and Kathryn Brush, The Shaping of Art History: Wilhelm Vöge, Adolf Goldschmidt and the Study of Medieval Art (1996).

²² Later in his career, Behne would label Wölfflin as old fashioned compared to Strzygowski (1862-1941); Behne, "Kunstchronik," Die Welt am Abend 8, no. 76 (Mar. 31, 1930): B.2.

of Pisan incrustation was a new invention. In contrast to the better known mosaics in Florence, Pisa's mosaics were "organic" in their comprehensiveness, they were tectonic and haptic, and all the pieces were subordinated to a higher idea. Unlike the Pisan incrustation, the Florentine mosaics lacked plasticity, serving merely as ornamental surface cladding (*Verkleidungsprinzip*), and were therefore Byzantine in inspiration. The value of Behne's work, the young historian Paul Zucker later commented, was to show the complexity and inter-twined nature of multiple influences, conclusions that could only come through objective research not beholden to any particular theory or implication.²³

Although Behne is best known for his criticism and writing on modern art and architecture, he would continue to undertake traditional art historical investigations throughout his career. In tandem with his criticism, Behne wrote many general historical pieces that served as primers on "art appreciation" for lay audiences, including youth groups and Socialist working-class organizations. Art history also allowed him to engage in less controversial work than the radical criticism and commentary on modern art and architecture for which he became known. When Behne's writing began to be censored by the Nazis, for example, Behne turned almost entirely to writing general art historical works. His popular Die Stile Europas, a layman's guide to architectural styles, and In Stein und Erz, a survey of historical German sculpture, for example, were written for a working-class book-of-the-month

²³ Zucker review in Monatshefte.

club long after Behne stopped writing about divisive contemporary issues during World War II.²⁴

Earliest Articles: Reviews for Reform

In the spring of 1910, even before he finished his dissertation, Behne began publishing short reviews of art books and exhibits in popular magazines, literary reviews, and newspapers, and was soon able to support himself and his young family as a freelance writer. For the first two and a half years he wrote exclusively for two journals. Die Hilfe (Help), was the official publication of Friedrich Naumann's progressive Christian-Social reform movement. The upstart, populist journal Wissenschaftliche Rundschau (Scientific Magazine), sought to bring the latest research and discoveries from all branches of knowledge to a wider, lay audience.²⁵ Although

²⁴ Behne, Von den Griechen bis zum Ausgang des Barocks (1938); and Behne, In Stein und Erz. Meisterwerke deutscher Plastik von Theodorich bis Maximilian (1940), both published by the Deutsche Buch Gemeinschaft, a working-class subscription book club.

²⁵ The only articles he wrote for other journals were the article on Behrens mentioned above and Behne, "Zwei Ausstellungen," Der Sturm 3, no. 107 (Apr. 1912): 19-20, an exhibition that launched Behne on a more progressive and avant-garde path. Friedrich Naumann founded Die Hilfe in 1894 as organ for his political movement; see Heinz-Diedrich Fischer, ed., Deutsche Zeitschriften des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts (1973); and Fritz Schlawe, Literarische Zeitschriften 1910-1933 (1973). The journal had a circulation of 12,500 in 1912. The bi-monthly journal Wissenschaftliche Rundschau, to which Behne contributed 11 articles, beginning with vol. 1, no. 6 in Dec. 1910, was first published in Oct. 1911 by the Theodor Thomas Verlag in Leipzig. It was one of the many new journals founded in the late Wilhelmine era to capitalize on and promote the explosion of knowledge and the increased interest in all manner of science and "Wissenschaften" in this age of materialism. Its first subtitle was "Journal for the general continuing education of teachers," and changed to "Bi-monthly journal for advancements in all knowledge areas" by vol. 3. In 1913 the magazine was folded into

not affiliated with Naumann directly, the educational mission of the second journal was part of the larger cultural reform effort in Germany of which Naumann was a leading force.

The journals for which Behne first wrote and the cultural reform efforts to which they were connected held ideological appeal for the young critic. The early texts published in Die Hilfe and Wissenschaftliche Rundschau must be interpreted as part of the larger reform and public education effort promulgated by Naumann and others. The critic and his publishers sought to make art accessible and understood by a larger public. In hindsight, both were inherently conservative periodicals that advocated a top-down reform program for modern Germany that Behne eventually spurned as his interest turned increasingly to modern art and Socialism.

Naumann, a neo-liberal politician with strong social views, had worked tirelessly on many fronts to combine bourgeois and Socialist aspirations for creating a stronger Germany through reform and public education.²⁶ He was the founder of the short-lived National Social party, through which he sought to establish an intermediate position between Germany's increasingly powerful Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the more conservative right-wing parties associated with the Kaiser, the army, and the

the more popular Die Umschau, published by the Frankfurt publisher Bechhold, with the subtitle Illustrated Weekly on Advancements in the Sciences and Technology, to which Behne contributed 7 articles from 1913 to 1915 and in 1932.

²⁶ Overviews of Naumann's (1860-1919) ideas can be found in Joan Campbell, The German Werkbund (1978), pp. 16-18; H. Ladendorf, "Nachwort," in Friedrich Naumann, Werke vol. 6, Aesthetische Schriften (1964), pp. 603-618; Julius Posener, Berlin auf dem Wege zu einer neuen Architektur (1979), pp. 50-54; Matthew Jefferies, Politics and Culture in Wilhelmine Germany (1995), chapter 4.

aristocracy. A staunch nationalist, Naumann became a leading advocate of improving the status, joy, and qualitative output of the German worker. He pushed to revitalize German culture by exploiting the modern technology and industrial capitalism that had made Germany an economic and military force in a globalizing marketplace. In 1907 Nauman played a central role in founding the Werkbund. His belief in the social and political significance of aesthetic questions led him to promote the invention of new design ideas in order to represent German modernity. He sought more respect for the creative power of individual personalities and ultimately and ambitiously the German State. His journal Die Hilfe in which Behne published his first articles, was full of essays by academics, professionals, and politicians seeking to "help" educate and indoctrinate a less sophisticated public about the path to a reformed culture.

Behne also wrote for the neo-conservative publisher Eugen Diederichs, another important reformer and Werkbund founder.²⁷ Diederichs was a spokesman for the quasi-mystical reform movement to which he gave the name "New Romanticism." In the face of the chaos of German modernization as well as the decadence of the Kaiser's taste, they advocated looking to the past, especially the order of the bourgeois Biedermeier period, for clues on how to develop a more coherent society and culture. Although he advocated social and cultural reforms similar to those professed by

²⁷ On Diederichs (1867-1930) and his publishing company, see the book catalogue Die Kulturbewegung Deutschlands im Jahre 1913 (1913); as well as Gary D. Stark, Entrepreneurs of Ideology: Neo-Conservative Publishers in Germany, 1890-1933 (1981), chapter 3, pp. 58-110; Campbell, German Werkbund, pp. 21; and George L. Mosse, Crisis of German Ideology (1964), pp. 52-63.

Naumann, he remained unconvinced that genuine reform could be politically mandated or implemented. Rather he dedicated himself to education and public indoctrination, promoting his more conservative ideology through publishing to a wide range of audiences.

Behne did not find opportunities to publish with Diederichs until 1913, but he went out of his way to praise the press and its books for their commitment to reform and education of a broad public, particularly on matters of the arts and culture.²⁸ Diederichs himself had modeled many of his ideas on the conservative art and culture critic Ferdinand Avenarius, founder of the popular Der Kunstwart (Warden of the Arts) magazine, and of the Dürerbund, a populist national reform association to which Behne may have had ties.²⁹ Similar to Avenarius and Naumann, Diederichs espoused an intriguing blend of nationalism, bourgeois conservatism, and reform-minded cultural policies. Seeking to counter the perceived materialism and cultural degeneration of Germany, they tended as easily towards a conservative "cultural despair" as to progressive reform.³⁰ Each saw art and a harmonious culture as a key to national

²⁸ See Behne "Kunstwissenschaftliche Neuerscheinungen," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 2, no. 2 (Oct. 15, 1911): 44. Behne published extensively in Diederich's Die Tat after 1913, and contributed to Bruno Taut's book Die Stadtkrone published by Diederichs in 1919.

²⁹ Although this author has uncovered no evidence Behne belonged to the generally conservative Dürerbund, Bernd Lindner has suggested that Behne became a member of the Werkbund in 1913 through his affiliations with the Dürerbund; Lindner, "Mut machen zu Phantasie und Sachlichkeit," Bildende Kunst 33, no. 7 (1985): 292. In 1917 Behne published a guide to the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg as part of the Flugschriften of the Dürerbund.

³⁰ The literature on German "cultural despair" is vast. See most importantly

renewal and strength. Only by returning to the values and aesthetics of a more harmonious past could Germany establish herself as a power among the nations of the world.

Generally short and unremarkable, Behne's early book and exhibit reviews in the reform-oriented journals are key to understanding his earliest positions on modern art, as well as his critical direction. Often published in small print in the back pages of the journals and easy for contemporaries and historians alike to overlook, their inclusion was an argument for the cultural currency of fine art within this reform movement.³¹ Through education, Behne and his publishers sought to raise the awareness of their readers of a common cultural heritage, and simultaneously to reform the cultural institutions and publications that were not appropriately or effectively contributing to this campaign.

Behne's very first article in Die Hilfe, on the landscape painter Otto Reininger, was the beginning of a series of sympathetic reviews that he wrote on established Impressionist painters from the Berlin Secession such as Lovis Corinth, Max Klinger,

Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (1965); and George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (1964).

³¹ Of the 161 publications found so far that Behne wrote before 1915, only 71 were included in the extensive bibliography compiled by Haila Ochs in Behne, Architekturkritik in der Zeit und über der Zeit hinaus. Texte 1913-1946, ed. Haila Ochs (1994); and even Bushart's very complete bibliography missed 35 early essays, including many of the reviews in the Wissenschaftliche Rundschau discussed below; see the notes on Bushart's unpublished bibliography in the bibliography at the end of this dissertation.

Max Slevogt, Ludwig von Hofmann, and Max Liebermann.³² These salon artists were popular with collectors and museums, and well-known to the general public from fawning press coverage. The paintings, however, fit into Naumann's reform program by promoting a naturalist, more accessible school of painting in opposition to the Kaiser's formal, academic and historicist taste. Behne's descriptive texts were not yet pieces of criticism. Taking cues from his teacher Wölfflin, as well as the Impressionist techniques and subjects themselves, Behne highlighted especially the formal, painterly aspects of the art works without tackling their cultural implications. Through this purely formal approach he began to identify increasingly with ever younger, more modern and abstract artists, including artists associated with Expressionism whom he would soon champion.

In addition to the reviews of individual artists and exhibitions, Behne write reviews of the published media through which art reached the public: museum catalogues, art books, art journals, and reproductions of art. Like Wölfflin, Behne felt contemporary museum catalogues were often useless compilations of material facts, meant more for the curator than for the lay public. Both art historians insisted that catalogues should instead guide viewers through collections and encourage individual exploration, excitement, and a true understanding of the exhibited art, rather than just

³² Behne, "Landschaften von Otto Reininger," Die Hilfe 16, no. 15 (Apr. 17, 1910): 244; Behne, "Lovis Corinth's Golgatha-Bild," Die Hilfe 17, no. 2 (Jan. 12, 1911): 30-31; Behne, "Max Klingers neue Blätter 'Vom Tode'," Die Hilfe 17, no. 16 (Apr. 20, 1911): 255; Behne, "Max Slevogt," Die Hilfe 17, no. 29 (July 20, 1911): 461; Behne, "Ludwig von Hofmann," Die Hilfe 18, no. 7 (Feb. 15, 1912): 111.

the accumulation of facts. Wölfflin had called for catalogues with better descriptive material to guide the viewers' eyes towards greater understanding, while Behne in articles such as "The Museum Catalogue: Principles of a Popular Form" and "An Educational Museum" from 1910 urged curators to devise a catalogue format that would still highlight the best art works, but would avoid the tunnel vision that focused only on masterpieces and ignored lesser or peripheral works of art.³³ According to Behne, such catalogues allowed the individual viewer to determine their own path through the collection and foster their own personal appreciation and understanding of each piece.

Behne's book reviews of art books contained similar critiques. He was reassured by the fact that fewer dilettantes were writing about art, but felt that too much of the recent literature on art focused only on easily understood material such as the history, context, and subject matter of the art piece. These factual elements, once revealed, were easily and objectively understood by all. Such art history seemed to be a mere ordering of art works or biographies of artists, containing scholarship that was primarily "factual,

³³ Heinrich Wölfflin, "Über Galeriekataloge," Kunst und Künstler 6, no. 2 (Nov. 1907): 51-54; and Behne, "Der Museumskatalog. Prinzipien einer populären Abfassung," Die Hilfe 16, no. 17 (May 1, 1910): 272-274; expanded in Behne, "Ein erzieherisches Museum," Die Hilfe 16, no. 52 (Dec. 31, 1910): 835-836; and Adolf Bruno [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Einführung in den Museumskatalog," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 18 (June 15, 1911): 416-419. As with most critics, Behne frequently published similar ideas and even reused entire passages or occasionally entire articles, in other venues. Although subsequent articles often included greatly revised ideas, more often than not the changes were subtle, the republishing done primarily to get the ideas to broader audiences, and to bring in more money, as Behne lived off of his free-lance writing.

statistical" in nature.³⁴ Behne claimed that historians such as Taine, who focused primarily on the surrounding "cultural milieu" and the iconography of art, failed to tackle the true inner values of art.³⁵ Essays on art in most popular journals, he continued, merely described what could be seen or how it deviated from nature, usually in florid prose, with overly sentimental judgements. He complained that the style and content was meant more to sell papers than to understand the art.

Behne considered most books on art and art history, including the standard surveys by Anton Springer and Wilhelm Lübke, inadequate and inappropriate for the average reader.³⁶ The texts transmitted little true understanding or feelings to the layman. Behne suggested instead books such as Salomon Reinach's Allgemeine Kunstgeschichte, Julius Meier-Graefe's books introducing German audiences to the art of Cézanne and Van Gogh (whose art Behne called the path to the future), and even

³⁴ Wölfflin too had complained of the lackluster state of art history, see his "Über kunsthistorische Verbildung," Neue Rundschau 2 (1909): 275; and the closely related Adolf Bruno, [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1911): 248.

³⁵ Behne alluded to Taine's theory as early as his article "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," and reviewed Taine's book in Behne, "Kunstwissenschaftliche Neuerscheinungen," (Oct. 1, 1912). Behne also included Wilhelm Hausenstein's "sozial-ästhetisch" approach as an example of an "Impressionist" art history focused on cultural milieu rather than the essence of art.

³⁶ Wilhelm Lübke, Grundriss der Kunstgeschichte 5 vols, 13th ed. (1907), translated as Outlines of the History of Art (1911); Lübke, Geschichte der deutschen Kunst von der frühesten Zeit bis zur Gegenwart (1890); Anton H. Springer, Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte 5 vols. (1911-1912). See Adolf Bruno [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Zur Einführung in die Literatur," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 6 (Dec. 11, 1910): 135-137; Behne, "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," 247-250; Behne, "Kunstwissenschaftliche Neuerscheinungen," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 2, no. 2 (Oct. 15, 1911): 44-45.

Paul Schultze-Naumburg's Kulturarbeiten, which despite being a bit doctrinaire, he considered "educational and didactic," and therefore useful for Naumann's reform program.³⁷

In articles such as "Popular Art Books," and "Domestic Art Collections: Helpful Hints" from early 1912, Behne insisted that all genuine understanding of art required intense visual investigation. Although he urged his readers to inspect the original art works, he also called for better reproductions of art to overcome the inconvenience and expense that prohibited a broader public from visiting museums.³⁸ Photography and graphic reproductions of art in journals, books, and individual prints had been a much discussed area of concern for German critics since before the turn-of-the-century, when technical reproduction processes, especially photographs of art works, began to make mass reproduction of art more affordable and widespread.³⁹ He praised the museum catalogue of Berlin's National Gallery for providing small photographic reproductions

³⁷ [Behne], "Zur Einführung." On Schultze-Naumburg see Norbert Borrmann, Paul Schultze-Naumburg. Maler, Publizist, Architekt 1869-1949 (1989); and Kai Gutschow, "Cultural Criticism, Classical Vernacular and the Modern in Schultze-Naumburg's *Kulturarbeiten*," in North-South. The Modern, the Vernacular and the Mediterranean, ed. Jean-François Lejeune (in press);

³⁸ Adolf Behne, "Populäre Kunstbücher," Die Hilfe 18, no. 7 (Feb. 15, 1912): 107-108; and "Häusliche Kunstsammlungen / Praktische Ratschläge," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 2, no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1912): 229-232; [Behne], "Zur Einführung in die Literatur."

³⁹ Paul Schultze-Naumburg, "Die Bedeutung der illustrierten Zeitschriften für die Kunst," Die Kunst für Alle 8, no. 7 (Jan. 1, 1893). Wilhelm Worringer's Lucius Cranach (1908), also had a discussion of "multiple production of images." See Beth Irwin Lewis, Art for All? The Collision of Modern Art and the Public in late Nineteenth-Century Germany (2003), p. 172; and the wide-ranging series of articles by Bernd Weise, "Pressefotografie," in Fotogeschichte (1989-1996).

of all paintings so that a viewer might orient him or herself more readily. The photographs made vague verbal descriptions unnecessary, and allowed curators in their written sections to focus on guiding the viewer's eye to the most important elements.

Behne noted that the technical process of publishing photos had made great advances, but that reproductions differed from the original as much as photos of people differed from their personality. He lamented that much valuable detail about the process of artistic creation, including layers of paint and individual brushstrokes, was lost in most reproductions. Changing the scale, proportions, and framing of the original paintings were too often changed drastically merely to suit publishing formats, often making the art unrecognizable. Such differences between original and reproduction also made viewers lazy, Behne surmized. Original paintings were no longer studied and analyzed in depth. Instead, art museum visitors merely "matched" what they saw to reproductions they knew.

Behne also noted in the 1912 articles that as reproduction quality and quantity had increased, the quality of the accompanying art historical texts had gradually diminished. Authors and publishers realized that many art books were selling primarily because of illustrations, not for their texts. In this period of the proliferating media, which Behne called the "age of reproduction" in 1917, images and reproductions were replacing originals and true understanding.⁴⁰ Instead of buying a book with two

⁴⁰ In 1917 Behne published an essay on art in the "age of reproduction," in the short-lived Expressionist journal Marsyas, in which he repeated many of these same

hundred illustrations and poor texts, Behne suggested to his readers that they use their money to buy a few big, well-made reproductions and study them intensely, or better yet, spend more time in museums examining the originals.⁴¹

As a "people's critic," an intermediary between art and the public, Behne was as much concerned with the original art as with reproductions, museum catalogues, art books, and magazines that allowed art to be disseminated more widely. Through these publications, art became part of the wider public discourse and had the possibility of effecting change in other areas such as politics, education, or the urban context. The conditions under which art was viewed, the quality of art reproductions, and the effectiveness of various media to transmit authentic images were vital parts of the effort to educate people and reform German culture and society at large.

arguments he had made in articles from 1910-1912; Behne, "Das reproduktive Zeitalter," Marsyas no. 2 (Nov./Dec. 1917): 219-226. Arnd Bohm has argued that Behne's 1917 essay was the unacknowledged source of Walter Benjamin's much more famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt (1968, orig. 1936); see Bohm, "Artful Reproduction: Benjamin's Appropriation of Adolf Behne's 'Das reproduktive Zeitalter' in the *Kunstwerk* Essay," The Germanic Review 68, no. 4 (1993): 146-155. Although Bohm offers a convincing case for crediting Behne, as the previous note indicates, these ideas were already circulating widely in the late nineteenth century. See Lewis, Art for All?, on the discussion about reproductions in the nineteenth century; and Fritzsche, Reading Berlin 1900 (1996), on the proliferating media and its effects on culture around 1900.

⁴¹ Behne, "Populäre Kunstbücher." There were many companies that produced reproductions of art works. In the early 1920s, Behne himself would be responsible for publishing a series of reproductions with the Photographische Gesellschaft in Berlin from; see Behne, ed., Der Sieg der Farbe. Die entscheidende Zeit unserer Malerei in 40 Farbenlichtdrucken (1920-1925).

The Nature of Criticism: Seeking the Scholar-Critic

Through these early reviews from 1910 to 1912, Behne developed his personal conception about what constituted the essence of art and what constituted good criticism. In a complex, non-linear evolution, Behne moved from more objective reporting of facts, to more subjective interpretations and empathetic translations of the art to his audience. His essays struggled with what goals a critic should have, what qualities a good critic needed to have, and what relationship a critic was to maintain with the artist as well as with the public that viewed art or read about it in the press. In his struggle to define the nature of art criticism Behne delved into a minefield of conflicting ideas that had been discussed widely by artists, critics, and the press since the beginnings of modern art. Beth Irwin Lewis, in her recent analysis of Germany's art scene in the last decades of the nineteenth century, dealt extensively with the heated debate about the nature of criticism just before Behne began his career in 1910.⁴² With evidence taken primarily from art journals of the period, Lewis described the growing split between the public and the dangerously inter-dependent artists and critics. Journals from 1870 to 1910 reveal how the art-viewing public went from being heralded as democratic patrons of national art, to being demonized by critics and artists as an irresponsible, alienated "rabble" that did not understand what it was to be an artist or the true essence of art.

At the turn-of-the-century, there was great debate among critics about who was

⁴² Lewis, Art for All?, esp. Part II "The Public and the Critic," pp. 140-183.

responsible for this rift that affected not only the art market, but also the nation's pride and cultural reputation. Was it the artists, who were creating ever more modern and unfamiliar art? Were artists painting only for an elite--either the conservative academics or the liberal patrons who purchased the newest artistic experiments--and unwilling to respond to the artistic desires of the public? Or was it the public, who in the eyes of critics and artists, were too uneducated, uncultured, unartistic, stubborn, or conservative to accept anything new? Or was it the critics? Were critics too defensive of the artists? Were they too beholden to a specific art-buying clientele? Were they merely intent on creating controversy and selling newspapers? Lewis describes how conservative nineteenth-century writers such as Friedrich Pecht, Adolf Rosenberg, and Ludwig Pietsch categorically refused to sanction or embrace anything new, intent on defending the academy, its "star" artists, and the status quo. As Lewis explains, younger, more progressive critics such as Meier-Graefe, and Schultze-Naumburg, whose work Behne lauded, worked tirelessly to explain the new art to the people in a more comprehensible way. Despite the best efforts of these and other critics, however, modern art remained strange to the general public, out of reach emotionally and culturally foreign. It would be up to Behne's generation to close this divide.

In the introduction to his analysis of the effect of criticism on the work of Kandinsky and Klee, Mark Roskill analyzes how the gap between artists and the public was gradually closed in the years before World War I, just as Behne was beginning his

career as a critic.⁴³ Roskill documents the changing nature of art criticism as it moved from being a primarily descriptive reporting of facts during the late nineteenth century, to becoming ever more evaluative and opinionated in the twentieth century. This change, Roskill argues, had been motivated by the need to justify modern art's worthiness of being included in the salons after the emergence of a consolidated avant-garde in the 1880s. Roskill shows how critics moved progressively further away from merely enumerating or explicating what the artist had done, to "highlighting," "mediating," and "evaluating" the art work. Critics increasingly sought to explain the artist's intentions and values, such as an interest in new formal techniques such as wild color or representational styles such as primitivism. In addition, critics increasingly offered opinions on the place of specific artworks within larger social and cultural contexts, as well as relationships to artistic "language."⁴⁴ In his well-known biography of Van Gogh, for example, Meier-Graefe took account of the social context in which the French artist worked, and in the process made the evaluation relative to this context.⁴⁵

⁴³ Mark Roskill, "On the Role of Criticism in the Development of Modern Art," Klee, Kandinsky and the Thought of their Time (1992), pp.1-27.

⁴⁴ Roskill, Klee, Kandinsky, pp. 1-5.

⁴⁵ Julius Meier-Graefe, "Über Vincent van Gogh," Sozialistische Monatshefte 10, no.2 (Feb. 1906): 145-151; and his famous book, Vincent van Gogh (1910), actually part of his earlier book Der moderne Impressionismus (1903-1904). On Meier-Graefe and the context of his criticism, see Patricia G. German, "The Invention of History: Julius Meier-Graefe, German Modernism and the Genealogy of Genius," in Imagining Modern German Culture, 1889-1910, ed. François Forster-Hahn (1996), pp. 91-106; Robert Jensen, Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe (1994), esp. the section "Der Fall Meier-Graefe," pp. 235-263; Karl Ulrich Syndram, Kulturpublizistik und nationales Selbstverständnis, Untersuchungen zur Kunst- und Kulturpolitik in den Rundschauzeitschriften des deutschen Kaiserreichs (1871-1914) (1989); and Kenworth

As a result, art moved from being defined primarily as a physical object of culture that could only be objectively described according to academic and elite formal values, to being the product of a particular milieu and the personal context of the artist, which made the artists more approachable to the public.

In Germany this trend of highlighting the subjective creativity and invisible forces shaping art was continued both by the formal analysis of Heinrich Wölfflin and the psychologically-based criticism of Wilhelm Worringer, both of whom had a profound impact on Behne at the start of his career.⁴⁶ By avoiding discussion of the subject matter and focusing instead on form, Wölfflin highlighted the artistic processes and the artistic decisions that went into the artwork. According to Roskill, a "psychological mode of criticism" by writers such as Worringer, interpreted art works according to broad cultural impulses that expressed themselves in the form of psychological or spiritual forces. They stressed that creativity derived from inner personality and temperament, not any outward or objective standards.⁴⁷

Kandinsky, an artist influenced by these Wölfflin and Worringer, summarized the trends in criticism when he professed that the ideal critic is one who would "try to feel the inner effect of this or that form, and then communicate to the public in an

Moffett, Meier-Graefe as Art Critic (1973).

⁴⁶ On Wölfflin's impact on Behne see above; on Worringer's impact see chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Roskill, Klee, Kandinsky, p. 13.

expressive way the totality of his experience."⁴⁸ As will be discussed in the next chapter, this liberating push to focus on subjective interpretation of the art by critics and art writers would have a tremendous impact both on the development of artistic Expressionism, and on the public's embrace of the new art. Behne's early career would in large part be played out in the context of these changes in the nature of art criticism.

In articles such as "About the Art Writer" from 1913, Behne insisted that writing on art was particularly tricky, even unique.⁴⁹ Through publications such as Wissenschaftliche Rundschau, specialized knowledge from all fields was becoming increasingly accessible to an ever wider audience. But art criticism required more than a clear explanation of facts. According to Behne, it required an emotional engagement (*empfinden*) with the art work, which was much more difficult to achieve.

In Behne's eyes few writers had the qualifications necessary to act as good critics. In his article "The Artist as Art Critic," he claimed that until recently artists themselves--usually second-rate ones--had been the primary art critics of their day. Behne felt this led to wholly biased evaluations of limited scope, completely inappropriate for an overall appreciation of art.⁵⁰ A good critic, Behne insisted, should

⁴⁸ Wassily Kandinsky, "On the Question of Form," in Der Blaue Reiter, ed. Kandinsky and Paul Klee (1912), pp. 74-100, German reprint, Klaus Lankheit, ed., (1965), and translated as The Blaue Reiter Almanach (1974), 147-186; cited here in Roskill, Klee, Kandinsky, p.15.

⁴⁹ Behne, "Kunsthilfen," Die Hilfe 18, no. 30 (July 25, 1912): 477; Behne, "Vom Kunstschriftsteller," Kunstgewerbeblatt N.F. 24, no. 8 (May 1913): 154.

⁵⁰ Behne, "Der Künstler als Kunstkritiker," Hamburger Schiffarts-Zeitung, no. 202 (Aug. 29, 1913): 13; Behne, "Fortschritte in der Kunstkritik," Kunstgewerbeblatt 24, no. 3 (Dec. 1912): 46. On the changing nature of art criticism and the constant battle in

aspire to be unbiased, broadly educated, and trained to be able to evaluate a broad range of art. He speculated the like the general public, even rigorously trained art historians tended to be biased in favor of older, more conventional art. They resisted the new and more challenging contemporary art, and were thus unqualified to serve as critics.⁵¹

Reflecting back on this period later in his career, Behne claimed that in the vibrant art market of Wilhelmine Berlin, when people still visited galleries and bought art in vast quantities, critics served primarily as taste-makers for the constituent readers of their particular newspaper.⁵² Readers sought to get the critics' opinions after each art opening in order to have the "correct" opinion for discussion in entrenched social circles. The public demanded extensive coverage, and knew where to find it: *unter dem strich* (under the line), the colloquial though literal location in most traditional German newspapers for the *feuilleton* section.⁵³ Much like the rest of the newspaper, the

the nineteenth century between artists and their critics claims for authority, see B.I. Lewis, *Art for All?*; also Mark Roskill, *Klee, Kandinsky, and the Thought of their Time* (1992)

⁵¹ Behne, "Majorität und Qualität," *Kunstgewerbeblatt* 27, no. 10 (July 1916): 190-196.

⁵² Behne, "Über Kunstkritik," *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 36.1 (Feb. 17, 1930): 149; Behne was responding to Alfred Kuhn, "Ueber den Kunstkritiker," *Frankfurter Zeitung* n.580 (Aug. 6, 1929).

⁵³ Behne, "Über Kunstkritik," *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. The *feuilleton* is the cultural section of German newspapers, even today. It is akin, perhaps, to our "Arts and Leisure" section, though it covers a broader range of culture, criticism, and observation. The *feuilleton* can be readily found either in its own section, or "under the line," literally placed under a heavy horizontal line in the newspaper, usually on the bottom of the second or third page of each edition of the daily newspapers.

reporting by art critics was meant to transmit the latest "news" on particular shows, paintings, or artists, with an emphasis on speedy reporting so the discerning public could be "in the know." But in this scenario critics were not the leaders that Behne wanted them to be. They did not play a significant role in discovering or selecting the successful artists--that was done by gallery owners and juries of the various art organizations which hosted the exhibits.

The *feuilletonists*, or journalists who wrote on all aspects of culture in Germany's newspapers but had little technical training in art history, were the source of great contempt in the early reform movement, as well as in avant-garde Expressionist circles. In assessing the state of Germany's applied arts in 1907, for example, Hermann Muthesius, criticized generalist journalists for promoting poor taste and poor quality in art and the applied arts. He called for more critics who were trained in or were professionally knowledgeable about architecture to replace the droves of amateur critics who too often knew little about the field.⁵⁴ Muthesius urged that educated critics work specifically in the mass circulation media, not only in professional journals, so as to have the maximum possible impact on the public and thereby help to reform culture.

In his 1912 article "Advancements in Art Criticism," Behne called somewhat self-servingly for "a new type of critic . . . the artistically educated scholar-critic."⁵⁵ These

⁵⁴ Muthesius, *Kunstgewerbe und Architektur* (1907), p. 57ff. On Behne's relationship to and critiques of the Werkbund, see chapter 6.

⁵⁵ "Wenn also die Jugend nicht im Dunkeln bleiben, nicht das Schicksal der meisten Erneuerer teilen soll, die auf einer anderen Welt schufen, so muß ein anderer Typus des Kritikers in die Bresche springen: der kunstwissenschaftlich gebildete Kritiker"; Behne, "Fortschritte in der Kunstkritik," (1912), p. 50.

scholar-critics, he argued, were to possess not only an understanding and feeling for true art, but also the ability to relay it to others effectively. They should be without biases against new or old art. They need not be formally trained in art history, he admitted, though in order to understand the artistic problem with which each artist is engaged, they needed to have seen and experienced the broadest possible range of art and have a comprehensive overview of art's development. The scholar-critics should be able to make connections between even the most distant problems, ideas, and solutions in art works. Appropriate subjects for these professional critics, Behne argued, would be the "presentation of the process of artistic creation of an artwork, its significant elements, explanation of the artistic achievement, mention of the inner growth of the artist, and expressing why an artists' mature works exceeded his early work."⁵⁶

For Behne, the focus of good criticism was to be less on deciphering the iconography and more on exploring the psychic expressions of the artwork. Above all, he declared, the good critic must have a "feel for quality" (*Qualitätsgefühl*)--though he admitted this was a rare talent. Critics needed both to act in concert with the artist as a translators, intermediaries, and illuminators of the artists' creativity and intentions, and to communicate the experience effectively to the public.⁵⁷ The role, indeed the

⁵⁶ "Das natürliche Bett für unsere Literatur wäre: Darstellung der künstlerischen Leistung, hinweisen auf das innere Wachsen eines Künstlers, Darlegung der Gründe, die seine reifen Werke über seine Frühwerke erheben, hinführen auf ein Erkennen der besonderen Größe eines Künstlers und anderes dieser Art"; Behne, "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," p. 248.

⁵⁷ Behne, "Künstler und Kritiker" *März* (Feb. 1917); Bushart, "Kunst-

responsibility of any person writing or publishing about art, was to reveal and relay the quality of the artistry that could be felt in the presence of the original work.

Following the prevailing trends towards more subjective criticism described by Lewis and Roskill, Behne began to emphasize "feeling" as the primary attributes of a good critic. Much as the mere words of an Ibsen play or the mere notes of Beethoven's "Eroica" alone did not constitute the essence of their artistry, Behne insisted in his 1911 essay "Popular Art History" that the essence of art lay beyond the intellect, in the realm of feeling and cosmic understanding.⁵⁸ These feelings, he insisted, were not the individual and mostly arbitrary "associations" that all the arts inevitably bring up, different in each person. Rather they were a vague but objective "artistry" (*das Künstlerische*) that every person, if properly trained, could observe in a true work of art. Subjectivity was not a substitute for education, but rather an outgrowth of it. Yet unlike "taste," it was not something accessible only to those with the requisite experience and social class. Although objective and universal, such an understanding of art was at its root irrational and intuitive, part of a larger trend in turn-of-the-century conception of art and culture celebrated in the writings of Nietzsche and Bergson, whom Behne quoted often.

Behne struggled to find to find a comfortable position. In a 1914 article "Goethe and Nietzsche on Popular Knowledge," published in the minor literary journal Die Lese

Theoreticus," p. 23.

⁵⁸ Behne, "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," (Mar. 1911), p. 247, on this and the following.

in Stuttgart, Behne picked up on Muthesius' earlier criticism of *feuilleton* writers. Citing the words of Nietzsche, who had great contempt for the common masses, Behne argued that professional art critics and theorists were better qualified than lay ones to judge and write about art for the public, even if their tone and their training limited their ability to communicate with the people on their own level.⁵⁹ A few years later, Behne pulled back from this elitist defense of the expert when he made distinctions between the critic, the aesthete, and the historian. An expert historian, Behne now maintained, sought facts (*Kenntnisse*); an aesthete revealed underlying principles (*Erkenntnisse*); while a good critic issued judgements (*Bekanntnisse*), which was the hardest of all.⁶⁰

Behne was especially cautious about the role of overly professional writers in the technical field of architecture. Architects such as Muthesius often insisted that only "experts" such as trained engineers and schooled architects write about architecture. But Behne argued ever more fervently that such narrow-minded "experts" (*Fachmänner*) too often expressed the attitude that architecture was primarily about material technique and stylistic consistency. They emphasized facts that could be learned, rather than the inner, spiritual dimensions through which Behne defined genuine art. In articles such as "The Call for Experts," Behne argued that these professionals too easily

⁵⁹ Behne, "Goethe und Nietzsche über Popularwissenschaft," *Die Lese* 5.1, no. 17 (1914): 277-278.

⁶⁰ Behne, "Historische, ästhetische und kritische Kunstbetrachtung," *Das Hohe Ufer* 1, no. 6 (June 1919): 134-136. On the notion of "expert," see also Fredric J. Schwartz, "The Eye of the Expert: Walter Benjamin and the Avant Garde," *Art History* 24, no. 3 (June 2001): 401-444.

rejected any sort of metaphysical conception of art, and discounted the role of empathy and individual creativity in understanding art movements and in defining public taste.⁶¹

The underlying themes in these early articles would set the stage for Behne's post-war career and mission in the art world: to publicize and highlight good art, to provide better art scholarship and writings enabling viewers to form their own opinions and personal understanding of art, and to make good art more accessible to a broader range of the lay public. From the beginning of his career, Behne turned his role as an art critic into a personal mission. He saw himself as a critic working in the service of the public, especially the working class, with which he empathized. Bringing good art to a wide populace, especially those who had so little access to art, was both his career and social cause.⁶² Although he always had strong opinions on what was good

⁶¹ Behne, "Der Schrei nach dem Fachmann," Die Weissen Blätter 2, no. 7 (July 1915): 935-937. Behne's arguments against the *Fachmann* would become one of the primary theoretical principles of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst after World War I. Seeking to escape the strictures of government ministries, state run museums, and even established gallery owners, the Arbeitsrat had no entry requirements, encouraged non-conventional and utopian forms of expression, and solicited "unknown" and non-artists such as workers and children to submit work for exhibitions and publications. On the Arbeitsrat see Regine Prange, "Architekturphantasie ohne Architektur? Der Arbeitsrat für Kunst und seine Ausstellungen," in Joseph Paul Kleihues and Thorsten Scheer et al, eds., Stadt der Architektur der Stadt, Berlin 1900-2000 (2000), pp. 93-103; the utopian correspondence of Bruno Taut and "Crystal Chain" colleagues in Iain Boyd Whyte and Romana Scheiner, eds., Die Briefe der Gläsernen Kette (1986); translated as The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and his Circle (1985); Joan Ockman, "Reinventing Jefim Golyscheff: Lives of a Minor Modernist," Assemblage, no. 11 (1990): 70-106; and Joan Weinstein, The End of Expressionism (1990).

⁶² Cornelia Briel, postscript, "Der Kunst das Volk - dem Volk die Kunst. Spannungspole in Adolf Behnes Konzeption von Kunst und Gesellschaft," in Behne, Schriften zur Kunst, ed. Cornelia Briel (1998), pp. 265-280.

or bad, and he certainly promoted specific artists with great fervor throughout his career, Behne tried to avoid becoming a long-term apologist or propagandist for a particular artist or movement. Over the course of his career, as his values and assessment of social conditions changed, his allegiances to artists and architects would come and go, often with hostile exchanges. What remained constant was Behne's conception about the crucial role of the scholar-critic in developing modern art and architecture, and his desire to help develop a modern art to which every individual could relate spiritually.

Socialism and Professional Aspirations

Hopes for Academia

Despite Behne's successful start as a freelance critic, it may not have been his first career choice. When Behne completed his dissertation in 1912, he sent a copy to Wilhelm von Bode, the influential, newly appointed head of the Berlin museums.⁶³ He was, presumably, looking to start a stable career in the museum world. But positions in museums, government agencies, or universities were notoriously difficult to obtain in Germany. Despite the innovative research and writing that made German scholars world famous in many fields, the academic community was known for its conservative

⁶³ Behne, letter to Wilhelm von Bode (Sept. 28, 1912), #265, Nachlaß Bode, Zentralarchiv, Nationalgalerie Berlin; also excerpted in Bushart, "Kunst-Theoreticus," p. 69n11. Later in his career, Behne became extremely critical of Bode and his lack of interest for adding modern art to the museum collections. See, for example, Behne, "Von Bode," Die Weltbühne 22.1, no. 3 (Jan. 19, 1926): 116-117.

social and political ways, including underlying anti-Socialist and anti-Semitic sentiments.⁶⁴ Although Behne's actual party affiliations, especially those before 1919, are unclear, his growing ties to the Socialist party and an increasing fascination with contemporary cultural developments may have hampered his chances for gaining an academic position or of being employed in the aristocratic, conservative Wilhelmine civil service.⁶⁵

But the antagonism of the establishment and Socialists could go both ways. The prominent Socialist art critic and card-carrying SPD member Wilhelm Hausenstein, for example, deliberately rejected a prestigious academic career in the state's historical commission in favor of a positions in Munich *Volkhochschulen* in 1907. Trained in philosophy, history and economics, and only briefly art history, Hausenstein taught courses in history, the classic texts of Socialism, and eventually art for ten years at both Munich's municipal *Volkshochschule* and in the "Vorwärts" worker education association run jointly by trade unions and the Socialist party. He realized early on that being a staunch Socialist was incompatible with being a German academic before World War I, and turned down his a government post with the explanation: "I am, after all, a Socialist, and if I read Prussian history as Eisner did, my position in the long term is

⁶⁴ Fritz Ringer, *Decline of the German Mandarins* (1969); and Gert Mattenklott, "Universität und gelehrtes Leben," in Gesine Asmus, ed., *Berlin um 1900*, (1984), pp. 151-153.

⁶⁵ One anecdote is revealing: when the Kaiser read a sympathetic review of a Socialist party rally in Hamburg by the academic Leo Arens, Wilhelm immediately had the critic fired, ending his telegram: "I do not tolerate Socialists among my officials, not even amongst the teachers of our youth at the Royal College"; cited in Mattenklott, "Universität und gelehrtes Leben," p. 155.

untenable. . . . I have come to recognize what is in me and what will be expressed, and I see no other means of existence other than a writer or journalist."⁶⁶ Socialism and German civil service, it seems, did not mix.

If academia seemed stuffy and closed, the publishing industry, in its zealous desire to report on the vibrant cultural life of Berlin, was open to all able critics.⁶⁷ But Behne's move from his university studies to the milieu of the popular press and its ideological implications did not come without some reservations. In many of his earliest articles Behne chose to write using the pseudonym "Adolf Bruno" (his first and middle names). Perhaps he was evincing a simple lack of confidence in his first writings. Or, more likely, in his quest to seek an official government position, he was seeking to disassociate himself from overly popular or Socialist journals.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Wilhelm Hausenstein, letter to Theodor Heuß (May 15, 1907), reprinted in Hellmut H. Rennert, ed., Wilhelm Hausenstein, Ausgewählte Briefe 1904-1907 (1999); also in Walter Migge, ed., Wilhelm Hausenstein. Wege eines Europäers (1967), p. 41; and cited in Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 14. See also Wilhelm Hausenstein, "Arbeiter-Bildungsbewegung," under the rubric "Geistige Bewegung" in Sozialistische Monatshefte 13, no. 2 (1909): 1058-1059; Alexander Schwarz, "Wilhelm Hausenstein und die Arbeiterbildungsbewegung," Tendenzen. Zeitschrift für engagierte Kunst 23, no. 139 (1982): 12; and Weinstein, "Wilhelm Hausenstein," p. 197.

⁶⁷ Some have even claimed that the proliferation of newspapers and the press meant that they would take anyone who could write, and let the public decide who should be retained.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Adolf Bruno [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1911): 247-250. Based on the bibliography assembled so far for Behne, there is no regular pattern as to when Behne used the pseudonym "Adolf Bruno." He definitely used it for his first four articles in Wissenschaftliche Rundschau (Dec. 1910 - June 1911); for fifteen of his first seventeen articles in the Socialist youth magazine Arbeiter-Jugend (June 1912 - Jan. 1915); for the one article he is known to have written before World War I in the Socialist daily Vorwärts (July 1913); for the fourth of sixteen articles he wrote for the popular

Modern Art and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany

Art and politics were particularly enmeshed in German society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Germany's so-called *Sonderweg* (unique path) to democracy had led its middle class to turn to culture and the arts rather than politics as the primary means of expressing their ideas and challenging the nobility's hold on power.⁶⁹ The clash between bourgeois art and aristocratic politics was provoked from many sides by politicians, artists, and the press. From the very highest levels of government, particularly in Prussia and Berlin, art was part of state policy and a vision for the new German nation.

As Behne noted in his 1913 essay "The Kaiser and Art," published in a special issue of Diederichs' Die Tat celebrating the 25th anniversary of Kaiser Wilhelm's rule, the Kaiser himself had dreamed of leading Germany into a great flowering of the arts and with it to international acclaim.⁷⁰ But according to Behne, the crown had failed

illustrated journal Zeit im Bild (Feb. 1914); and possibly four more short notes signed only "A.Br." He ended the practice, however in 1918, at the end of World War I, when he fully embraced both the avant-garde and the ideology of Socialism without reservation.

⁶⁹ Germany's path to modernity has been described as a "*Sonderweg*," in large part as a means of explaining how unique aspects of Germany's modern culture eventually led to the rise of National Socialism, with politics and democracy a large part of these studies. The prefix *Sonder* (special) was also part of the artistic debates around Expressionism before World War I, for example Kurt Gerstenberg, Deutsche Sondergotik: eine Untersuchung über das Wesen der deutschen Baukunst im späten Mittelalter (1913), which sought to define special characteristic of the Gothic as German.

⁷⁰ Behne, "Der Kaiser und die Kunst," Die Tat 5.1, no. 6 (Sept 1913): 576-587, on this and the following. The conservative Moeller van de Bruck contributed the essay "Der Kaiser und die architektonische Tradition," pp. 595-601 to the special anniversary issue. On the Kaiser's artistic policy see the essays in François Forster-Hahn, ed.,

miserably to advance the arts. Behne railed against Wilhelm's oppressive artistic policy, his complete incompetence to judge and lead artists, and the negative influence the emperor had on the entire German art world. By labeling all modern artists "gutter-artists" (*Rinnsteinkünstler*), Behne felt that Wilhelm had alienated himself, and with it much of German culture, from "true art."⁷¹ The Kaiser praised, commissioned, and promoted a decadent and academic vision of art and architecture, hindering almost all currents of modern art and reform. Behne felt the Kaiser's embrace of monumental art served primarily as propaganda for his regime, drawing art into debates about nationalism and politics. The preservation of teutonic castles and the government-sponsored exhibitions at world's fairs, Behne argued, distorted the word "German" and "national" to mean only "dynastic" or "loyal" to Kaiser. Such royal policies, he felt, led to a national mistrust of all that was foreign or unfamiliar, actions fundamentally at odds with the nature of artistic development.

For Behne, too much of the art that was created and collected in Germany was determined by the conservative institutions loyal to the Kaiser. The art museum directors he installed at the National Gallery and museums all over Germany, the art academies he sponsored, the artists upon whom he had bestowed stipends, and the art commissioned by the crown, all promoted only a dry academic art. Both Behne's

Imagining Modern German Culture, 1889-1910 (1996); Peter Paret, The Berlin Secession (1980); and the catalogue Gesine Asmus, ed. Berlin um 1900 (1984).

⁷¹ The Kaiser's retorts against *Rinnstein-Künstler* were uttered, among other places, at the ceremonial opening of the ensemble of traditional sculpture along the Siegesallee in Berlin in 1901; excerpts in Dieter Bartmann, "Berlin offiziell - Kunst und Kunstpolitik unter Wilhelm II," in Asmus, Berlin um 1900, pp. 199-200.

critique of the establishment and his support for modern, international, and alternative artists must be considered political gestures, part of the reform-movement's effort to counter the Kaiser's decadence.

Artists and critics from both ends of the political spectrum scorned the repressive and decadent artistic culture under the Kaiser. Those not included in the crown's patronage system--including Behne--demanded that support be extended to a greater range of artists. At the same time, they expected complete artistic freedom and even support in their search for alternatives. The first successful rebellion against the Kaiser's control of the German art world was the Berlin Secession of 1898, which started a wave of further secessions, regroupings, and new artistic camps.⁷² Each took its own stance against official Wilhelmine culture. As a result the German art world, particularly in Berlin, became increasingly divided, confrontational, and political, about both domestic and international art.

As has been mentioned, Behne was cautious about overtly introducing politics into his art criticism before World War I and the November 1918 political revolution. He advocated revolution, but more in spirit, art, and culture, than in politics. Nonetheless, his political beliefs can be gleaned in part from his word choice and the similarity of his views to overtly political agents. In a 1913 review on "Populist Art," for example, he maintained that critics and the State's "art politics" (*Kunstpolitik*), had a responsibility to address the public's desire for a more familiar art by working to

⁷² See Paret, Berlin Secession.

promote and enrich the so-called "intimate" and "sentimental" art that was so popular among the common people.⁷³ Art that found a more direct connection to the people, he argued somewhat jingoistically himself, was less likely to be found in antique or Italian art, than in Dutch and Germanic art, or in modern art.

Behne claimed that modern art was more "democratic" than art had been in previous generations, granting more artistic freedom to the artist, and open to a far greater spectrum of society. No longer was art proscribed by guild rules, by a dominant academic style, or by the whims of a few elite patrons such as the church or princes. Behne credited modern capitalist culture and the free market system that prevailed in the galleries--some of the same institutions that he also criticized for the pervading materialism in Wilhelmine culture--for allowing modern artists freedom in the content and form of their art, and in determining the role the artist played in society. The fact that art could now represent and cater to the elites and to the working-class through inexpensive prints or reproductions, for example, created a huge reservoir of possibilities for modern art that Behne hoped would lead soon to great new art. Expressionism in particular, he was convinced, was an art with which the people could connect, an art with a social if not Socialist conscience. Impressionism, on the other hand, he considered "bourgeois," "undemocratic," and even "imperialist" because of its focus on materiality and imitation rather than spirit and abstraction.⁷⁴

⁷³ Behne, "Populäre Kunstwerke," Sozialistische Monatshefte 19.1, no. 7 (Apr. 13, 1913): 425; also in Behne, "Volkstümliche Kunst," Allgemeiner Beobachter 4, no. 2 (May 15, 1914): 19.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Behne, "Impressionismus und Expressionismus," Der

Behne's "Cultural Socialism"

Scholars as well as Behne's daughter have consistently labeled Behne "Socialist," a "majority Socialist," and a "leftist Socialist," implying specific political affiliations that have been difficult to document.⁷⁵ Based on his associations with various artistic and political groups, others have stated more directly that he was actually a member of the SPD, while others have speculated that after 1917, he belonged to the USPD, since he was art editor for the USPD's primary newspaper, Die Freiheit from March 1919 to September 1922.⁷⁶ Still others have pointed to his editorship at the Communist daily Die Welt am Abend from September 1924 to February 1932, as well as his memberships and activities in the revolutionary Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Working Council for Art), the Gesellschaft der Freunde des neuen Rußlands, (Society of Friends of the New Russia),

Zeitgeist, insert to Berliner Tageblatt 42, no. 39 (Sept. 29, 1913): 1; repeated in Behne, Zur neuen Kunst (1915), p. 23.

⁷⁵ According to Franciscono, Behne's daughter Julia told the historian Allen Greenberg that her father was a "majority Socialist"; cited in Marcel Franciscono, Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar (1971), p. 107. See also "Behne" in Lexikon der Kunst vol.1 (1987), p. 462; Bernd Lindner, "Mut Machen," p. 292; Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed., German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism (1993), p. 60; and Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 11, for related identifications of Behne as Socialist.

⁷⁶ Whyte, Bruno Taut, p. 126; Weinstein, The End of Expressionism, p. 19; Joan Weinstein, "Wilhelm Hausenstein, the Leftist Promotion of Expressionism, and the First World War," in The Ideological Crisis of Expressionism, ed. O.K. Werckmeister and Rainer Rumold. (1990), pp. 193-217, here p. 203; and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, "Introduction," The Modern Functional Building (1990), p. 7, all claim Behne belonged to the SPD. Lindner, "Mut machen," p. 293; Heinz Lorenz, Die Universum Bücherei (1996), p. 85; O.K. Werkmeister, The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920 (1989), p. 166; and Bletter, "Introduction," p. 7, note correctly that he was a member of the USPD after World War I, though do not mention it was only "for a few months."

the Bund für Proletarische Kultur (Association for Proletarian Culture), the German PEN Club, and the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller (Club for the Protection of German Writers) as evidence of even more radically left-leaning and Communist political convictions.⁷⁷

Behne's relationship with Socialism and politics more generally has been the source of much misunderstanding. His exact party affiliations will probably never be known. But in documents recently uncovered by the author that Behne himself submitted to the Nazi Reichsschriftumskammer (Writer's Ministry) in 1933 and 1938, Behne claimed to have had "no previous political affiliations," except for "a few months in 1919-20," when he admitted belonging to the leftist USPD.⁷⁸ These documents were no doubt filled-out under some duress and may have intentionally under-represented his party affiliation for fear of reprisals. But the fact that Behne, whose rights as a free-lance modern art critic had slowly been taken away by the Nazis, mentioned only a brief membership with the USPD, is significant. Although Behne published for the Socialist press and held great sympathy for the Socialist cause, he portrayed himself as not overtly politically active in party politics. When he did join a party--the USPD--it was a short-lived, left-leaning splinter group, not the main-line Socialist party.

The issue of political affiliations is especially significant in a country as

⁷⁷ On Behne's memberships see biographical dictionaries such as Lexikon der Kunst, vol. 1 (1987) p. 462; and Who was Who among English and European Authors 1931-1949, vol.1 (1949), p. 121.

⁷⁸ See Behne file in the Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Reichskulturkammer BA-RK (BDC)2101/0700/12, copies kindly provided by S. Langner.

politically turbulent and often troublesome as Germany. Since modern unification in 1871, political affiliation in Germany has always been taken seriously, with one's reputation and fate often closely connected to that of a party. Actual party affiliation--whether one was a "card-carrying member" of a party--carried real implications for life and career, not to mention subsequent moral judgements. While distinctions between left, center, and right, and extremes within that spectrum may suffice in other countries, Germany's fractured political landscape made the need for precision especially important. As many historians have speculated, it was to a large extent the fractions within Germany's gigantic Socialist party that caused many of the rifts and political stalemates in Weimar Germany, and ultimately allowed the rise of the Nazi party. Behne's criticism was profoundly determined by the complex history of Socialism in Germany: Bismark's "Socialist Laws" (*Sozialistengesetze*), the rise of the German SPD into the world's largest Socialist political organization, the SPD's decision to support Germany's entry in World War I through a "Castle Peace" (*Burgfrieden*) with the Kaiser, the defection of the Independent Socialists (USPD) and the Communist Party (KPD) from the main party in 1917, the failed Socialist revolution in November 1918, the revolts by right-wing troops in the early years of Weimar Germany, and of course the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party after the perceived "failure" of socialism to solve Germany's problems. Although Behne died in 1948, before the establishment of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), his close and self-defined affiliations to Socialism made him a favorite son of often ideologically motivated Socialist East German

historians. They, along with West German historians since the 1970s interested in understanding the political underpinnings of modern art in Germany, played a large part in beginning to uncover Behne's key role in the rise of modern art and architecture in Germany.⁷⁹

The attempt to clarify Behne's political ideology and affiliations must be put in the context of the many famous German architects and historians who went to great lengths to deny or hide any connections to politics in their private or professional lives.⁸⁰ Behne's writings offer clear and incontrovertible connections of modern art and

⁷⁹ Behne's most ambitious (though unpublished) biographer and bibliographer to date was the late Jürgen Scharfe of the University of Halle in the GDR. Scharfe worked for years editing in fastidious detail an anthology of comrade Behne's writings for the Socialist VEB Verlag. His personal research notes are included with the Behne papers in the Bauhaus-Archiv. On the history of this collection see Appendix 1. Publishers in the GDR republished several of Behne's articles as late as 1987 (for example Behne, "Otto Nagel," Die Weltbühne 82, no. 42, no. 23 (June 9, 1987): 727-728), and Behne featured prominently in several important East German exhibition catalogues such as Christine and Christian Suckow, eds., Revolution und Realismus: Revolutionäre Kunst in Deutschland 1917 bis 1933 (1972); and Roland März and Anita Kühnel, eds., Expressionisten. Die Avantgarde in Deutschland 1905-1920 (1986), as well as articles commemorating Behne's 100th birthday (for example Bernd Lindner, "Mut machen"). Behne's hometown of Magdeburg in the former GDR has even named a street after him: "Behneweg." Early West German works featuring Behne include: Ulrich Conrads, Fantastische Architektur (1960); Frecot, "Bibliographische Berichte"; Wend Fischer, ed., Zwischen Kunst und Industrie (1975); and Freya Mühlhaupt and Karin Wilhelm, eds., Wem gehört die Welt? (1977).

⁸⁰ Both Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, for example, repeatedly denied that their architecture was at all related to politics and over the course of their careers went to great lengths to create this illusion, though scholarship since their deaths has increasingly revealed the political convictions and connections they maintained. See, for example, Richard Pommer, "Mies van der Rohe and the Political Ideology of the Modern Movement," in Mies van der Rohe, Critical Essays, ed. Franz Schulze (1989), pp. 97-134; Richard Pommer and Christian Otto, Weissenhof 1927 (1991); or Winfried Nerdinger, ed., Bauhaus Moderne im Nationalsozialismus (1993).

politics. As a person committed to the pure expression of art and its dissemination to a broad populace, Behne did not seek to participate in day-to-day politics and in the large bureaucratic machines that were the essence of most political parties. Nonetheless, his affiliations with many Socialist and Communist publications over the course of his career, his interest in social aspects and the internationalism of modern art and architecture, and his fervent support of many anti-establishment artists, especially those who dealt with the reality of working-class life in Berlin, have correctly placed him in the center of studies regarding political aspects of modern German art. Behne himself claimed that he was released by the Nazis from his teaching duties at the continuing education college Humboldt-Hochschule, "because of my political convictions."⁸¹

But his position within Socialism was far from clear, certainly not mainstream, a condition which often left him vulnerable to criticism. In a letter to the family friend Grete Dixel, he complained bitterly about being rejected from many newspapers and journals: "*I am sick of the German press! For the Socialists I am not bourgeois enough, for the bourgeoisie I am too proletarian, for the Communists I am too bourgeois.*"⁸² He

⁸¹ Behne, "Lebenslauf," June 29, 1945, Hochschule der Künste, Berlin, Personalakte Behne; also cited in Janos Frecot, "Bibliographische Berichte: Adolf Behne," Werkbund Archiv Jahrbuch 1 (1972), p. 81.

⁸² "*Mir hängt die deutsche Presse zum Hals raus! Den Sozialdemokraten bin ich nicht bürgerlich genug, den bürgerlichen zu proletarisch, den Kommunisten zu bürgerlich*"; letter Behne to Grete Dixel (Nov. 25, 1925), in Dixel Papers, Getty Research Institute, Santa Monica, partially republished in Walter Vitt, ed., Hommage à Dixel (1980), p. 97, emphasis in original. Behne wrote this because he was frustrated by many rejection letters from publishers, who he said failed to understand his articles, which seemed to the publishers "zu sachlich oder fachlich oder ernst oder streng oder schwer oder sonst was" (too objective or factual or serious or extreme or difficult or something). He then also blamed his own political stance for the many rejections.

wrote this letter in 1925, but the same sentiments must have applied before World War I as well. Behne's views on art and society led him to a position that I will call a spiritual or "cultural socialism," a socialism focused on the development of individuals and their cultural enlightenment. This emphasis on non material issues often clashed with the ideology and policies of the party bureaucracy. A detailed and more nuanced exploration of Behne's involvement with Socialism reveals a great deal about his particular vision of modern art, as well as the role that he played in forging a modern art and architecture in Germany.

Although Socialist cultural institutions, including that of adult education, the press, artistic policies, and early reforms of worker housing have been studied, the specific influences these institutions had on the development of modern art and architecture have not been adequately investigated. The role that critics played in transmitting ideas and initiating connections is rarely discussed. Behne's influential criticism, rather than being isolated within the art world, ran parallel to and drew from the reform sensibility promoted by the many arms of the Socialist party apparatus. Behne acted as a translator between these cultural institutions. By addressing a variety of audiences, including the general public and workers, Behne's own ideas began to change. As will be shown, his conception of modern art was in part determined by the varied non-art related Socialist institutions in which he worked.

Germany's inequitable three-tier voting structure kept the SPD from exercising political power in proportion to their voting strength until after World War I. But

official Socialist party had a powerful influence on nearly every aspect of German society and culture. After being partially banned by Bismark's "Socialist Laws," the SPD made huge strides in organizing and representing the interests of the working class in the decades around the turn-of-the-century.⁸³ In 1912, just as Behne was finishing his studies and encountering the artistic avant-garde, the SPD garnered a record 34.8% of the vote and claimed 110 seats in the Reichstag, more than double the 43 seats of 1907. Its membership drew heavily from the lowest working-classes--who voted in overwhelming numbers for the SPD--but also increasingly from a segment of the middle class that sought change. Before the war, SPD membership spanned from hard-line Marxists seeking a proletarian revolution, to the mainstream "right-opportunists," Socialists who were willing to engage with the ruling party and undertake evolutionary reform rather than revolution. The tensions within this broad spectrum of ideologies was palpable, and often a hindrance to the progress of the party as a whole.⁸⁴

⁸³ Fearing the "extremely dangerous efforts" of Socialists, Bismarck banned most Socialist party activities and gatherings from 1878 to 1890 with the *Sozialistengesetze*, which allowed the police to dissolve all Socialist clubs, to require registration for all Socialist propagandists and writers, and to censor or ban all Socialist newspapers and publications.

⁸⁴ In 1917, in the middle of World War I, internal tensions caused the SPD to split, the German Communist Party (KPD) and the Independent Socialist (USPD) seceding from the main-line Socialists, unable to support the SPD's *Burgfrieden* with the Kaiser and general unwillingness to take firm oppositional stances. It was at this point that Behne and many artists associated with the avant-garde and the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Working Council for Art) joined the USPD. See Weinstein, The End of Expressionism, esp. chapter 2; Richard Sheppard, "Artists, Intellectuals and the USPD 1917-1922," Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft N.F. 32 (1991): 175-216; and David W. Morgan, The Socialist Left and the German Revolution. A History of the German Independent Social Democratic Party, 1917-1922 (1975).

With expanding public interest, party membership and affiliated union organization, if not political power, the party worked to create a distinct Socialist sub-culture. It turned its attention and resources to issues such as equality in the voting system, social insurance, the eight-hour work day, and lifestyle-reform.⁸⁵ To some extent Behne had begun absorbing aspects of Socialist cultural policy in his earliest youth while living among the factories and working-classes in Eastern Berlin. He could hardly have been unaware of, or untouched by, the advances of the SPD and its program for a Socialist sub-culture. Behne was increasingly, and in different manifestations, *Socialist*.

Volkshochschule as Socialist Sub-culture

Throughout his career Behne sought to expand public interest in art. He wanted to educate the masses about his particular views on an appropriate modern art, and at times worked to contribute officially to the development of a Socialist artistic sub-culture. Teaching as a docent at several adult-education schools (*Volkshochschulen*) in Berlin was one of Behne's earliest and enduring cultural missions.⁸⁶ *Volkshochschulen*

⁸⁵ On the creation of a Socialist or proletarian sub-culture, see Vernon Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (1985); Willi L. Guttsman, *Workers' Culture in Weimar Germany* (1990), chapter 1; Frank Trommler, "The Origins of Mass Culture," *New German Critique* no. 29 (Spring - Summer, 1983): 57-70; Will van der Will and Rob Burns, *Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik* (1982), chapter I; and Christoph Engels, *Auf der suche nach einer 'deutschen' Kunst* (1997), pp. 42-43.

⁸⁶ Definitive records on Behne's teaching at the various *Volkshochschulen* are scarce. The CV he filled out to teach at Berlin's Hochschule der Künste in 1945 indicated he had been teaching since finishing his studies; see Behne "Lebenslauf." The

emerged in the nineteenth century as a way to "wake and expand the spiritual and intellectual forces already latent in the people," as one course catalogue proclaimed.⁸⁷

These schools were meant to supplement Germany's elite humanist educational system by providing courses for those not admitted to the university, and as a means for adults to explore topics outside of their formal professions. Both the private and municipally funded schools were open to all audiences, including the working-class; early on they

earliest evidence we have of his employment is his article "Der Künstler als Kunstkritiker," Hamburger Schiffarts-Zeitung, no. 202 (Aug. 29, 1913): 13, which he signed "Dr. Adolf Behne, Dozent an der Freien Hochschule Berlin." His own stationary included the title "Dozent an der Freien Hochschule Berlin" in the header at least as early as July 1914; cf letter Behne to Gropius (July 7, 1914) Gropius papers, #123 (= Arbeitsrat für Kunst) = GN 10/197, Bauhaus-Archiv. These all point to an earlier starting date than the fall 1916 teaching at the Humboldt Hochschule indicated by Bushart as the start of Behne's teaching career based on course catalogues she inspected; see Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 73n87. Frank Trommler notes that Behne worked for a "Marxistische Arbeiterschule," in Sozialistische Literatur in Deutschland: ein historischer Überblick (1976), p. 576; cited in Bohm, "Artful Reproduction," p.148.

⁸⁷ Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin, Arbeitsplan, n.p. The earliest continuing education in Berlin was provided in the People's Libraries (*Volksbüchereien*). *Volkshochschulen* began after the founding of the Reich, with the establishment of the "Gesellschaft für die Verbreitung von Volksbildung" in 1871, and the bourgeois "Humboldt-Akademie" in 1878, the oldest and biggest true *Volkshochschule* in Germany. *Volkshochschulen* that also catered to working-class students began to appear after the lifting of the *Sozialistengesetze* and included the science-oriented "Urania" after 1889, and the "Lessing-Hochschule" and "Arbeiterbildungsschule" after 1891. The "Freie Hochschule" was founded in 1902 by Max Apel, Bruno Wille, and Wilhelm Bölsche. For information on the *Volkshochschulen* in Berlin see Konrad Hirsch, "Die Humboldt-Hochschule, Freie Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin und die Volkshochschulfrage" (Diss. 1927); Dietrich Urbach, Die Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin 1920 bis 1933 (1971), pp. 10-17; C. Reckenfelder-Bäumer, "'Wissen ist Macht - Macht ist Wissen,'" in Berlin um 1900, pp. 405-416. For a complete course listings, locations of classes, and short statements about the purpose and philosophy behind the schools, see publication series such as Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin, Arbeitsplan, Mitteilungen der Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin, Humboldt-Blätter, course catalogues, and newsletters in the SBPK as well as announcements in the Socialist newspapers such as Vorwärts or Freiheit (after World War I).

emphasized "continuing" education, "scientific thinking" and vocational training not available at the university, rather than remedial or populist courses.

After the lifting of the *Sozialistengesetze* at the end of the century, however, these schools opened their doors increasingly to working-class students, though most remained politically neutral. Behne began teaching in 1912 at the Freie Hochschule Berlin, which merged with the more prestigious Humboldt-Akademie during World War I to become the Humboldt-Hochschule. In the aftermath of the war these schools were subsumed under the Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin, an association founded by the Socialist municipal government of Berlin, several large trade unions, as well as the university and the technical university. The *Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin* was "the first in Germany to offer popular education (*Volksbildung*) based on a cooperation of the working classes and academics."⁸⁸ It was created to accommodate a burgeoning interest in continuing education, especially among workers, and to decentralize the *Volkshochschulen* into smaller, local, more easily accessible schools that nonetheless featured similar curricula.

Teaching provided Behne with opportunities to bring fine art directly to the public, at first primarily to middle-class students, but increasingly also to the leftist

⁸⁸ "Aufruf!," *Mitteilungen der Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin* 3, no. 1 (Nov. 1922): 1; and "Was will die Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin?," *Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin: Arbeitsplan* (Jan.-Mar. 1920), p. 3. At the 1902 opening of the Freie Hochschule, Bruno Wille, a founder of both the Freie Hochschule and the German Garden City Association, declared it a "college that is free, that is independent of the State, a counterpoint to the outdated, medieval character" of the universities; cited in Reckenfelder-Bäumer, "Wissen ist Macht," p. 413.

working-class. The Volkshochschule Groß-Berlin drew its teaching staff from a broad spectrum of unaffiliated academics, private businessmen, and university professors. But, as the example of Hausenstein mentioned above makes clear, teaching in these more populist, private and municipally funded *Volkshochschulen* was interpreted as something of an ideological statement. This was especially true before World War I, when positions in the more prestigious state-financed art and university system were rarely opened to self-avowed Socialists or other minorities.

Behne taught one to three art courses several nights a week each quarter for over twenty years at various *Volkshochschulen* in Berlin, taking time off when health or writing demanded. Classes were held in rented school rooms, worker clubs, or eating establishments throughout Berlin. The atmosphere was reportedly quite informal, with classes often accompanied by food and drink.⁸⁹ Behne's courses "Tours through the Kaiser Friedrich Museum" or "Italian Painting, guided tours" were held in museum galleries to bring students directly to the art. In addition to offering a chance to air some of his ideas on art in public, the teaching represented a reliable income to supplement his erratic pay as a freelance critic.⁹⁰ The *Volkshochschule* also provided

⁸⁹ Lidtke, *Alternative Culture*, pp. 175-176.

⁹⁰ *Volkshochschule* students paid for classes by purchasing individual class tickets at various points throughout Berlin. Although we do not know how much Behne was paid, O.K. Werckmeister has noted that one reason that Paul Klee taught at the Bauhaus was to insure a steady income in the turbulent economic times, though a full-time master was paid much more than a local *Volkshochschule* instructor. Unlike the volatile art market, or the work of the free-lance critic, salaries at the Bauhaus were indexed to inflation; see Werckmeister, *Making of Paul Klee's Career*, pp. 242-243.

Behne with opportunities to interact with faculty colleagues such as economist Werner Sombart and philosopher Alfred Vierkandt, both frequently cited in Behne's writings. Fellow art historians at Berlin's *Volkshochschule*, who taught very similar courses in different locations, included Max Deri and Ernst Cohn-Wiener, both Jews who had studied with Wölfflin and Goldschmidt just before Behne.⁹¹

In line with one of the six program points of the *Volkshochschule* to "deepen interest in the fine arts (poetry, visual art, music) through intellectual discourse," Behne's courses in art history stressed general art appreciation.⁹² Since Behne left no papers related to his teaching, the specific content of his courses remains unknown. Course catalogues indicate that he taught a range of topics such as "Antique Art," "Representation in European Art," and "Introduction to Viewing Art," as well as more cutting edge topics such as "The New Art: Futurism, Expressionism, Cubism and Dadaism," "The New Art as an Expression of Our Times," "Art and Politics," or "Industrial and Commercial Buildings."

⁹¹ On Max Deri and Ernst Cohn-Wiener, see Ulrich Wendland, Biographisches Handbuch deutschsprachiger Kunsthistoriker im Exil Leben, vol. 1 (1999). Cohn-Wiener (1882-1941) taught a wide range of art history courses at the Humboldt-Akademie and then the Humboldt-Hochschule from 1908-1933, heading the art division after 1919, and president of the entire schools faculty after 1926. His courses regularly drew 300 to 400 people. He also taught at the Jewish Volkshochschule. Deri (1878-1938) worked for the gallery owner Paul Cassirer, was a regular art critic for the BZ am Mittag newspaper, and taught for years at the Lessing-Hochschule.

⁹² "Was ist die Humboldt-Hochschule?," Vorlesungsverzeichnis der Humboldt-Hochschule (July-Sept. 1919): rear cover.

Behne's Publishing in Socialist Journals

In conjunction with early *Volkshochschule* teaching, after 1912 Behne began publishing ever more extensively in a wide range of explicitly Socialist-oriented venues, including Sozialistische Monatshefte (Socialist Monthly) and Arbeiter-Jugend (Worker Youth). Between June 1912 and November 1918 Behne published over thirty pieces in the party-sponsored Arbeiter-Jugend. This "Socialist educational organ" was part of the SPD's increasing involvement in worker education and cultivation (*Erziehung*), hoping to introduce Socialist youth and young workers to a broad spectrum of mainstream cultural and academic fields, including technology, philosophy, the hard and social sciences, aspects of popular culture, and the arts.⁹³ With a circulation reaching over 100,000 workers and clubs all over Germany by 1914, it provided Behne with a much larger audience than his teaching, or indeed than most of the other arguably better

⁹³ The Arbeiter-Jugend, the official mouthpiece of the popular Arbeiter-Jugend Association, was published in Berlin from 1909 to 1933 by the official SPD publisher Vorwärts, Paul Singer G.M.B.H. On the Arbeiter-Jugend see Dieter Fricke, ed., Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1869 bis 1917 (1985), pp. 573-584; the preface to first issue of Arbeiter-Jugend, cited in its editor K. Korn's Die Arbeiterjugendbewegung (1922), p. 177; and Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," pp. 24-25. Behne published in the Arbeiter-Jugend mostly under the pseudonym "Adolf Bruno." Twelve more articles were written by his wife Elfriede Behne, or at least listed her as author. See Bibliography I for a complete listing of articles. Elfriede Schäfer Behne, a kindergarten teacher, also helped support her family through writing, very often in journals to which Adolf Behne also contributed. The topics of articles on which her maiden name appear in Arbeiter-Jugend are virtually indistinguishable from those of her husband; for example "Der Holzschnitt," "Vincent van Gogh," "Das Tier in japanischer Darstellung," and even "Ludwig Richter als Graphiker," about whom Behne was writing his book Von Kunst der Gestaltung at that time for the Arbeiter-Jugend Verlag (though it was only published in 1924). See below for more on Elfriede Schäfer Behne.

known bourgeois cultural journals for which he wrote. Much like his *Volkshochschule* courses, Behne's essays were largely simple art appreciation lessons and canned art historical pieces. He wrote in a jargon-free, conversational style, that was less provocative and less partisan than that of his other critiques. To draw in and inspire his young, working-class readers, and to help the novice visualize ideas, the articles were almost all accompanied by line drawings extensive photographs--the latter still not a common feature of non-art publications before World War I.⁹⁴

Behne's articles in the Arbeiter-Jugend as well as in his teaching at the *Volkshochschulen* were intended to expand his students' academic knowledge and real-world experience, and to inspire them to consider how art might be useful in their daily lives. He did this primarily by making the art icons of bourgeois society approachable, by breaking down the psychological and class barriers that traditionally kept workers out of bastions of elite culture. His articles focused often on masterpieces of traditional European as well as non-Western art rather than contemporary art experiments. Yet one can begin to discern the same passion and theoretical understanding of art that Behne expressed more provocatively in his professional criticism on modern art. While he hoped to explain basic information about artistic technique and art historical facts, he stressed that these were secondary to understanding the passion and spiritual energy that the artists endowed in their work.

⁹⁴ The much wider circulating SPD illustrated magazine Die neue Welt, by contrast, contained only line drawings, as photographs were considered too expensive; see Guttsman, Worker's Culture.

Behne's June 1912 article "Why do we need art collections?," passionately defended museums as repositories of man-made beauty invaluable for inspiration and the human spirit.⁹⁵ He wrote short introductions to Rembrandt, Millet, and the Egyptian sculptor Thutmes, overviews of Greek Life, Russian Culture, and the art of Islam, as well as encyclopedia type articles on "The Beginning of Art," and "Towers"--a look at various towers in architectural history. In "The Creation of a Painting" (1913), Behne used a painting by the popular Impressionist painter Max Liebermann to explain how an artist works, the step-by-step process from first sketches to finished idea. Behne discussed the process of applying paint in the next article, "The Technique of Painting." He expanded these articles into an entire primer on art appreciation, Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein, using a popular realist painting of the same name by Hans Richter in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie.⁹⁶ [Figure 2.2] The book, completed in 1914, but only published by the Arbeiter-Jugend publishing house in 1924, introduced high art to a public that had little or no exposure to ideas such as composition, balance, dynamism, and color selection. Behne inserted his own diagrams of difficult formal concepts, and

⁹⁵ Adolf Bruno [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Weshalb brauchen wir Kunstsammlungen?," Arbeiter-Jugend 4, no. 12 (June 8, 1912): 190-191.

⁹⁶ Behne, Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein. Eine Einführung in die Kunst (1924). This book was erroneously listed as "published 1914" in the back of Behne, Oranienburg (1917). Behne addressed the painting again in Behne, "Unser Titelbild: Ludwig Richters 'Der Schreckenstein'," Die Lesestunde 5, no. 29 (Jan. 1, 1929): i; and his wife Elfriede Schäfer wrote "Ludwig Richter als Graphiker," Arbeiter-Jugend 8, no. 19 (Sept. 9, 1916): 148-150; and celebrated the artist's 125th anniversary with "Ludwig Richter, der Zeichner des Volkes und der Kinder," Die Lesestunde 5, no. 18 (Sept. 15, 1928): 455-457. See also Adolf Bruno [pseud. of Adolf Behne], "Die Entstehung eines Gemäldes," Arbeiter-Jugend 5, no. 10 (May 10, 1913): B.155-158; and Adolf Bruno, "Die Technik des Malens," Arbeiter-Jugend 5, no. 20 (Sept. 27, 1913): B.316-38.

made references to popular photography as a way of demonstrating how even the most realistic details in an artwork are not purely imitative and reveal an artists' intention.

[Figure 2.3]

Two articles Behne published in the Arbeiter-Jugend in the fall of 1914 on the "Die gotische Kathedrale" (The Gothic Cathedral) and "Das Glashaus" were noteworthy for how closely they followed Behne's more professional modern art criticism. They were also the first in the magazine that he signed with his real name rather than his pseudonym (Adolf Bruno), clearly claiming their position as his own. As in nearly all his articles in Arbeiter-Jugend, Behne dealt extensively with technical matters, appealing to the interests of his largely working-class readership. For the Gothic, he discussed masonry, the pointed arch, the developments of ribbed vaulting, and the multiple origins of the Gothic style. He explained the pejorative origin of the term Gothic. Like Worringer and many Expressionist artists and critics, he contrasted the Gothic to the art of the Renaissance, which he claimed strove merely for balance of man and his surrounds. Alluding to the commencement of fighting in World War I in France, and specifically to the controversies circulating amongst historians concerning damage done by German armies to monuments in Rheims and elsewhere after September 1914, Behne noted that German troops were being exposed to some of these great Gothic monuments, and that he hoped that the monuments would be spared more damage. "Today, more than ever," he professed to his readers in closing, "we once again recognize that the Gothic was the highest and most amazing flowering of all

architecture."⁹⁷ In the end he pronounced that today the Gothic represented a super-energized art that aspired to great new heights.

In his Arbeiter-Jugend article from 1914 on Taut's Glashaus at the Cologne Werkbund exhibition, Behne presented some of the central ideas of the most avant-garde Expressionist art and architecture to his readers as fact, rather than as new theory. He illuminated the technical difficulties still encountered with the relatively untested material, especially in the construction process and in the thermal attributes of double-glazed walls.⁹⁸ He also stressed the positive health effects of living with more light (fewer bacteria), and the unparalleled beauty, purity, and lightness that was possible. He pointed out that although glass was expensive and seemed a luxury reserved for the upper classes, Gropius' Werkbund factory had proven it economical even for industrial and commercial purposes. To convey some of the novelty and artistry that could be expressed with glass, Behne quoted several of Scheerbart's aphorisms, such as (Without a Glass Palace, Life is just a burden), or "Backstein vergeht, Glasfarbe Besteht" (Bricks pass, but Colored Glass endures).⁹⁹

Behne's criticism in the Socialist journals rarely advocated specific political

⁹⁷ For the following, see Behne, "Die gotische Kathedrale," Arbeiter-Jugend 6, no. 24 (Nov. 14, 1914): 323-326.

⁹⁸ Behne, "Das Glashaus," Arbeiter-Jugend 6, no. 20 (Sept. 26, 1914): 291-293; was revised from the similarly introductory Behne, "Das Glashaus," Die Umschau 18, no. 35 (Aug. 29, 1914): 712-716; republished in Ochs, Architekturkritik, pp. 26-29.

⁹⁹ Scheerbart's aphorisms, first written down in a letter to Taut, are published in "Glashausbriefe," Frühlicht, part of the professional planning journal Stadtbaukunst alter und neuer Zeit 1, no. 3 (1920): 45-48. The letters were republished in Ulrich Conrads, ed., Frühlicht (1963), pp. 18-23. See also chapter 4.

agendas, the tone of his short, focused articles is for the most part descriptive and non-confrontational. He presented his ideas on Expressionist art without attribution or disclaimer. He tended to mask both the radical, oppositional nature of much of the new art, and any implied criticism of the older art. His ideas about the light, spiritual nature of the Expressionist architecture of the Glashaus, for example, can only in hindsight be read as criticism of the classical facades of the Crown's newest official building projects in central Berlin such as the Siegesallee or the new Prussian State Library by Ernst von Ihne, to which Behne had made reference in other Arbeiter-Jugend articles.

Despite the clear connections of the schools and journals to the Socialist party or the political affiliation of his audience, Behne refused to use art as a mechanism to achieve political goals or as tools of political criticism. His foremost goal was to convince his readers about the intrinsic, *geistig* value of art itself, both for individual enrichment, and to promote a sense of community. Echoing Leo Tolstoy, a favorite of Socialist teachers, reformers, and literary figures at the time, Behne argued that art was a form of expression and thus a means of inter-personal communication, which could lead to an enhanced sense of community.¹⁰⁰

Just as significant, art was an end itself, one of the most important sources for pure, inspirational beauty in life.¹⁰¹ Behne urged his readers to visit museums, because

¹⁰⁰ Behne often referred to Tolstoy and his book Was ist Kunst? (1902, 1911), translated as What is Art? (1898, 1960): first in Behne, "Kunst und Gesetzmäßigkeit," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 3, no. 3 (Nov. 1, 1912): 49; in Behne, "Jean Francois Millet," Arbeiter-Jugend 10, no. 24 (Nov. 30, 1918): 188; and here from Behne, "Kunst und Bildung," Der silberne Spiegel 1, no. 1 (July 1, 1919): 3.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, [Behne], "Weshalb brauchen wir Kunstsammlungen?,"

unlike so much of the urban environment or the objects which they encountered in daily life, the museum was full of carefully and conveniently pre-selected beauty. He cautioned readers not to rush when looking at art, to take the time and effort to look, understand, and appreciate the beauty of what they were seeing. Encountering great paintings in person, he claimed, would help all people recognize beauty elsewhere, including in the world around them. While nature undoubtedly contained much beauty, its beauty, was random and arbitrary especially the unusual sights most highlighted in the guidebooks. He claimed that art, by contrast, reflected the artist's inner will to create a higher beauty through their unique ability to recognize, and then to create, an underlying, organic order among forms.

A different, more overtly political explanation was given by the Socialist critic Wally Zepler, who claimed that an engagement with artistic beauty could become part of the Socialist struggle for emancipation and revolution. Art could not only be an end it could become the end of social revolution. Zepler argued that "the experience of great art and of all that was beautiful would in a measure anticipate for the worker the better society for which he was fighting."¹⁰² For both critics, art was not merely an object, or a personal expression, but a means to improving the quality of individual lives and of the community more generally, as such, it was a part of "cultural socialism."

although he repeats this argument elsewhere.

¹⁰² Wally Zepler, "Die psychischen Grundlagen der Arbeiterbildung," Sozialistische Monatshefte 16.3 (1910): 1551-1559; also cited and translated in Guttsman, Worker's Culture, p. 35.

Reformed Socialism, Education, and Art

Behne's thinking on art was greatly influenced by the specific ideas on art promulgated in the *Volkshochschulen*. Although Berlin's *Volkshochschulen* before World War I were not officially run by the SPD, they were included in a larger cultural and educational program that was at the heart of the Socialist political agenda. The German Socialist labor movement in fact grew out of societies for worker education, beginning as early as the 1840s. In 1872, Karl Liebknecht had exclaimed in a famous critique of the bourgeois biases of Germany's education system that "Knowledge is Power, Power is Knowledge."¹⁰³ But it was only in 1907 that the SPD launched an official education initiative, the Central Educational Council (*Zentralbildungsausschuß*), for which Behne would write the text for several slide-lecture kits that were distributed to worker clubs all over Berlin in 1915.¹⁰⁴ The Council, which was dominated by orthodox Marxists, was charged to give the working class "the highest scientific and cultural ideals of our time" in order to enlighten and prepare comrades for the impending revolution and its aftermath, and "to do so in clear distinction to bourgeois ideology and to bourgeois science and art."¹⁰⁵ In addition to running several schools to train party functionaries,

¹⁰³ Liebknecht complained that Germany's educational system along with the army and the popular press were three major institutions that made the masses stupid; Liebknecht, *Wissen ist Macht – Macht ist Wissen* (1872); see Lidtke, *Alternative Culture*, pp. 160-162.

¹⁰⁴ Behne published a series of ready-made slide-lectures for the *Zentralbildungsausschuß* in 1915 that worker-clubs could borrow from the party headquarters. On the *Zentralbildungsausschuß* see Guttsman, *Worker's Culture*, pp. 28-36; Lidtke, *Alternative Culture*, chapter 7; and Fricke, *Handbuch*, pp. 680-684.

¹⁰⁵ From *Leitsätze, SPD Parteitag 1906*, p. 122, translated in Guttsman, *Worker's*

the Council was primarily responsible for funding and promoting events to educate and entertain people, as well as to provide opportunities for self-improvement and leisure. This included an extensive series of public educational lectures and courses not unlike those offered by the more bourgeois *Volkshochschulen*, as well as many special cultural events such as poetry readings, concerts, festivals, and theater performances. The programs was all justified as ideologically appropriate, though often, especially in the arts, they differed little from bourgeois events.

Despite its clear mandate, there was great debate within the Council about the relevance of traditional bourgeois culture and education for the emancipatory struggle of the working-class. There were widely divergent opinions about the need or value of defining a specifically Socialist science, math, or art merely to overcome "bourgeois knowledge." Since the arts were generally seen as products of genius transmitting beauty and elevated feelings, they were not easily seen in class terms. The problem of establishing a working-class culture was intensified by the fact that except for some poetry, the proletariat was seen to have produced little of quality in the arts. Rather than discarding large part of bourgeois artistic heritage, the Council elected to "interpret" the existing art according to party ideology, to relate art to the worker's struggle and to "promote the combative character of the proletariat."¹⁰⁶ The Council sought to expose the masses only to the highest quality art in order they were better prepared to lift art out of its decadent, materialist state, and take over from the

Culture, pp. 28-29, and expanded upon pp. 179-182.

¹⁰⁶ Clara Zetkin, as translated in Guttsmann, Worker's Culture, p. 169.

bourgeoisie the role as principal bearer of culture. But even before a new Socialist approach was developed, the Council insisted on the value of art education for the masses as a means of inspiring "a strong feeling for life and victory."¹⁰⁷ Zepler asserted, in fact, that the program of continuing education for workers, particularly art education, was so successful specifically because it provided the workers with a sense of hope and concrete visions for a brighter and better future.¹⁰⁸

The courses Behne taught at the *Volkshochschulen* and the articles he published in Arbeiter-Jugend did not reflect the orthodox, Marxist ideology that controlled the *Zentralbildungsausschuß*. It was closer in spirit to that tendency in the SPD known as reformed Socialism.¹⁰⁹ This centrist to right-wing branch of the Socialist party had developed in the last third of the nineteenth century in Germany when critics of Marx such as Edward Bernstein and Ferdinand Lassalle, who is said to have "awakened the German working-class," began to advocate a less revolutionary path to reform. Rather than the chaos of revolution promoted by Marx and the extreme left of the party, these moderate Socialists advocated an integrative, peaceful evolution towards a Socialist society and government. Intent on maintaining good relations with the government in

¹⁰⁷ Guttsman, Worker's Culture, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Wally Zepler, who wrote a regular column in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, noted that the art education for the proletariat flourished despite the fact that workers had few particular abilities and rarely could put their new knowledge to much practical or ideological use; Zepler, "Die psychischen Grundlagen."

¹⁰⁹ On the cultural policy of the reformist wing of the SPD see Weinstein, "Wilhelm Hausenstein," pp. 196-197; M. Scharrer, "'Der Schrecken des Jahrhunderts,' Sozialdemokratie um 1900," in Asmus, Berlin um 1900, pp. 450-461; as well as sources listed above concerning "Socialist sub-culture."

which they were increasingly involved, and on attracting as large and broad a following as possible, reform-minded Socialists insisted that Socialism and a democratic state were compatible. The working-classes, they theorized, in fact required a democratic state to protect individual rights and to maximize the freedom and potential of every individual. This position strengthened the SPD's support not just among the working-classes, where the overwhelming majority voted Socialist, but also among the other lower and middle classes. Many progressive artists and thinkers, including Behne, who longed for a more communally-based society, joined their ranks.

Behne contributed regularly before and after World War I to one of the primary mouthpieces of reformed Socialism, the esteemed cultural journal Sozialistische Monatshefte.¹¹⁰ Originally created as a venue to win over academics to the cause of Socialism, it competed with Marxist-oriented journals, and with more elitist, bourgeois cultural journals for educated readers and followers. As a result the journal published a much wider range of authors and points of view than the more orthodox, working-class Arbeiter-Jugend, but still kept its reformed socialist focus. The journal advocated absorbing and re-interpreting appropriate parts of mainstream bourgeois culture rather

¹¹⁰ Behne published over 70 articles in Sozialistische Monatshefte from 1913-1933, in addition to regular columns "Bühnenkunst," 1913-1914, and "Kunstgewerbe" from 1919-1924. The journal developed out of Der sozialistische Akademiker, whose purpose was "to win over academics to Socialism." It was published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933, and edited by Joseph Bloch from 1910 on, and became ever more critical of the left-wing of the Socialist party. Other important art critics who contributed to the journal included Lisabeth Stern, Ludwig Hilberseimer, and Paul Westheim. See Fricke, ed., Handbuch zur Geschichte, pp. 603-608; 642-643; Alfons Breuer, "Sozialistische Monatshefte," in Fisher, Deutsche Zeitschriften, pp. 265-280; and the informative essays in Anna Siemsen, ed., Ein Leben für Europa. In Memoriam Joseph Bloch (1956).

than demanding a separate proletarian or exclusively Socialist sub-culture. In his articles in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, Behne did not insist on a revolutionary aesthetic, as he had in journals such as Der Sturm, März, Pan. Instead, he explored more traditional realms of art history, to criticize the government and even Socialist art policy, and to issue polemical statements on politics, the war, or society. Behne tailored the politics of his articles to suit the publishing venue, never contradicting himself, but choosing a different emphasis.

Systematic studies of the SPD's cultural and artistic policies and programs have not been attempted. In his study on the SPD's embrace of modern art, however, Richard Sheppard has speculated that the anti-revolutionary stance of the reformist wing of the SPD kept the party from embracing modernist art before World War I.¹¹¹ Despite the policy of the *Zentralbildungsausschuß* require ideologically-based instruction, the SPD focused more efforts on presenting the best of Germany's cultural heritage from the past than on promoting a specifically contemporary Socialist art. When contemporary cultural trends were discussed at all, they tended to be negative critiques of the corrupting quality of much bourgeois culture rather than a positive art policy. Before the turn-of-the-century there had been great debate about the value of the classics of German literature, especially Schiller, for the working class. Pointing out parallels between Socialism and the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudal society,

¹¹¹ Richard Sheppard, "The SPD, its Cultural Policy and the German 'Avant-Garde' 1917-1922," Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur 20, no. 1 (1995): 16-66.

leaders urged workers to read shining examples of that heritage in order that they might make it their own.¹¹² Others sought to associate Socialism with the growing trend of Naturalism in the people's theater (*Volksbühnen*), literature, and the arts, professing the revelatory value of an honest representation of reality, especially the struggle of ordinary people and the dependence of consciousness on social reality. Great debate ensued over the decision to serialize naturalist novels such as those by Zola as well as other more vulgar depictions of working-class life in Socialist newspapers.¹¹³

Discussions swirled around the value of emphasizing high quality art versus the value of showing works that depicted working-class subjects or of overtly promoted class struggle. Behne later entered these discussions when in an essay on Max Liebermann's Impressionist representations of working people, he affirmed their high aesthetic quality, but criticized them for only showing people "at work," and alone, rather than real working-class people in touch with a larger community and environment.¹¹⁴

Debate about the relevance of bourgeois heritage for the emancipatory struggle of the working-class led in 1910-12, to the famous "Tendenzkunst-Debatte"

¹¹² On the "Schiller-Debatte," see Barck, Lexikon sozialistischer Literatur; W. Hagen, Die Schillerverehrung in der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (1977); Guttsman, Worker's Culture, p. 24.

¹¹³ On the "Naturalismus -Debatte," see Barck, Lexikon sozialistischer Literatur, pp. 340-343; Georg Fülberth, Proletarische Partei und bürgerliche Literatur (1972); Guttsman, Worker's Cultrue, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Behne, "Max Liebermann," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 2, no. 18 (June 15, 1912): 372-374; and Behne, "Stilbemerkungen zur modernen Kunst," Die Neue Rundschau 27.1, no. 4 (Apr. 1916): 553-560.

(Tendentious Art Debate) just as Behne was starting his career as a critic.¹¹⁵ The fierce debate was set off by the Dutch Marxist critic Hans Sperber, who inflamed officials by arguing that the Socialist party should be more critical of existing social conditions and less commercial, rather than promoting the classics and rejecting all tendentious art out of hand as inferior.¹¹⁶ He demanded the SPD and worker organizations support only more ideological art. Reformist critics such as Franz Mehring and Heinrich Ströbel countered that Sperber was elevating pro-Socialist literature and art at the expense of artistic quality. Others such as Friedrich Stampfer argued that art criticism in particular could not be concerned with political messages, as art had to be judged solely on aesthetic, ideal qualities.¹¹⁷ For reform Socialists such as Ströbel and Stampfer the positive reception of bourgeois art was part of an evolutionary approach to reform, and it was this mindset that shaped the primary policies for a Socialist art in Germany before World War I.

The rejection of modernist art by the SPD was most clearly articulated in the party's two most effective and ubiquitous means of propaganda: in the Vorwärts daily newspaper, whose primary art editor, Robert Breuer, was one of the early Werkbund

¹¹⁵ Sperber was the pseudonym of Hans Heijermanns. For more on the *Tendenzkunst-Debatte* see documents and discussion in Tanja Bürgel, ed., Tendenzkunst-Debatte 1910-1912 (1987); Fülberth, Proletarische Partei, pp. 123-50; Guttsman, Worker's Culture, p. 34-36.

¹¹⁶ See Sperber, "Kunst und Industrie," and republishing of the entire debate that transpired in the Socialist newspaper Vorwärts and the journal Die neue Zeit. Bürgel has suggested that Sperber's remarks were inflammatory in order to incite vigorous discussion in the media-saturated metropolis; Bürgel, Tendenzkunst, p. xvi.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Stampfer, "Kunst und Klassenkampf."

press secretaries, and in the party journal Die neue Zeit, the theoretical organ of the SPD run by Karl Kautsky.¹¹⁸ Despite Behne's clear and on-going commitment to the establishment of a Socialist culture through writing and teaching, his reputation as an advocate of modern art led him to publish only a single known article in the *feuilleton* sections of each these official SPD periodicals before World War I. Hausenstein, a more established SPD member who was less directly involved in the promotion of artistic Expressionism, wrote extensively for the party-line Die neue Zeit.

The two articles Behne did write in the SPD's official publications focused on non-controversial issues: representations of workers, and critiques of local monuments. Even though critical of the state's official art policy, they were more descriptive and didactic than intentionally provocative. In "Representations of the Worker in Art" from 1913, he sought to disprove the commonly held belief that representing workers in art was a new phenomenon. In the process he surveyed an impressive selection of art works from antiquity to the present, from the Far East to the United States and objects from local history museums.¹¹⁹ In "Berlin's Monuments," Behne lamented that although

¹¹⁸ On the importance of the print media to the Socialists, see chapter 1 and Guttsman, Worker's Culture, pp. 274-286. On these two "centrist" Socialist publications, see Fricke, ed., Handbuch zur Geschichte, pp. 553-559, 561-567, 637-641; Barck, Lexikon sozialistischer Literatur, pp. 354-356, 500-504. On Vorwärts, Berlin's third largest newspaper, with a circulation of 140,000 by 1911, see "Vorwärts," in Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jh., ed. Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (1972), pp. 329-347. On Die neue Zeit, with a circulation of 10,500 in 1914, see Gerhard Schimeyer, "Die neue Zeit," in Deutsche Zeitschriften, pp.201-214; and Emig et al, eds. Literatur für eine neue Wirklichkeit (1981).

¹¹⁹ Behne's only known article in Die neue Zeit is "Die Arbeitsdarstellung in der Kunst," Feuilleton der Neuen Zeit 32.1, no. 68 (Oct. 24, 1913): 129-133.

the German capital was reputed to have more monuments than any other city in Europe, *all* were bad, and none were true sculpture or art with which the people could truly connect.¹²⁰ Taking a stab at the Kaiser and his art commissioners, he declared that all of Berlin's monuments were pompous, inartistic, and poorly sited, commissioned and laid out by bureaucrats rather than artists or planners.

Although it is safe to assume that Behne was largely sympathetic to the (Socialist) political ideologies of the journals and newspapers in which he published regularly, one should be careful to deduce too many specific political connections from his publishing venues. Behne's harsh critique of the Kaiser's art policy and the fact that he directly contributed to official Socialist journals and taught at the *Volkshochschule* constituted political gestures, but did not mean that he embraced the entirety of the official Socialist agenda. Berlin's competitive media market forced even some of the most rabidly political publications to reach out to the broadest array of potential advertisers and to as wide an audience as possible. This was especially true of the large metropolitan newspapers in which Behne worked hard to place his articles, all of which were fighting to attract educated, middle-class readers, in addition to their specific

¹²⁰ Behne's only documented pre-World War I article in *Vorwärts* was "Berliner Denkmäler," published under the pseudonym Adolf Bruno in the "Unterhaltungsblatt" insert (July 3, 1913), pp. 508-509. A related harsh critique of public art commissioned by the Kaiser is Behne, "Der Märchenbrunnen," *Die Hilfe* 19, no. 37 (Sept. 11, 1913): 586. No systematic search through the many daily editions of *Vorwärts* seems to have been attempted yet to search for more articles, so it is possible Behne published more. Richard Sheppard, in his research on the art in the Socialist press after World War I, has documented eight articles of Behne's in *Vorwärts* from 1917-1923; Sheppard, *Avantgarde und Arbeiterdichter in den Hauptorganen der deutschen Linken 1917-1922* (1995), pp. 10-13.

constituencies. In the search for new readers, all but the most radical publications worked hard to maintain a certain degree of "objectivity" and avoid being seen as obviously biased. Most publications searched hard to find experts and specialists in their fields that could deliver well-written, unbiased or at least not overly partisan material. Publishers often invited opposing views, and few if any seemed to require party membership of their authors. Behne's dismissal from Naumann's Die Hilfe after he published an overly friendly interpretation of Pechstein's Expressionism, or the fact that he never published in a journal such as Karl Scheffler's conservative Kunst und Künstler make clear, however, that one's long-term tenure at a journal would require views at least somewhat in-keeping with the editors.

Der Inkrustationsstil in Toscana.

INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION

ZUR

ERLANGUNG DER DOKTORWÜRDE

GENEHMIGT

VON DER PHILOSOPHISCHEN FAKULTÄT

DER

FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT

ZU BERLIN.

Von

Adolf Behne

aus Magdeburg.

Tag der Promotion: 24. September 1912.

Figure 2.1: Cover of Behne's dissertation "Der Inkrustationsstil in Toscana" (1912).

ADOLF BEHNE
DIE UEBERFAHRT
AM SCHRECKENSTEIN
EINE EINFÜHRUNG IN
DIE KUNST

ZUMPF-BOHM

BERLIN
1 9 2 4

ARBEITER-
JUGEND-
VERLAG
BERLIN SW68
LINDENSTR. 3

Figure 2.2. Cover of Behne, Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein. Eine Einführung in die Kunst (1924).

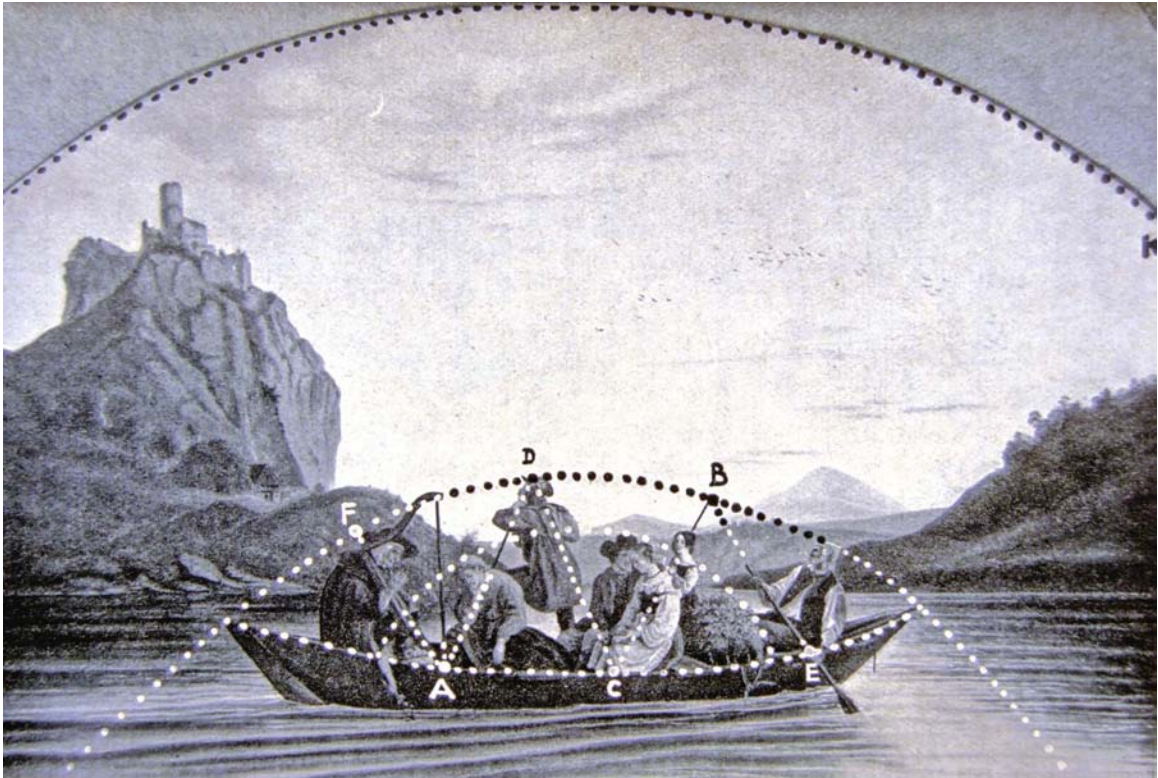


Figure 2.3: Ludwig Richter, "Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein," with diagrams by Behne to help explain to his young, working-class readers, the primary formal and expressive elements of the famous painting. Source: Behne, Die Überfahrt am Schreckenstein. Eine Einführung in die Kunst (1924).