CHAPTER THREE

SITUATING STYLISTICS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

> The *style* proper to a period and to a social group is none other than such a class defined in relation to all the works of the same universe which it excludes and which are complimentary to it (Bourdieu 1993:221).

This chapter:

- Interprets stylistic ideologies revolving around the debates of 'internationalism' and 'regionalism'.
- Investigates the international architectural contemporary post-war condition relatable to our agents.

3.2 SELECTED LITERATURE

This chapter refers to literature for the purposes of investigating the second sub question:

What were the global stylistic ideologies that informed the architectural situation relative to our generation?

To support a dialectical undertaking regarding 'internationalism' and 'regionalism', this chapter selects literature accordingly. The first category selects Ideological theories that cover styles relative to architectural discourse during the lifetimes of our agents. The second category situates global domestic styles within a contemporary post-war condition.

3.2.1 Ideological theories

For comprehensive literature, that synthesises Western architectural theory with social and political aspects, Harry Francis Mallgrave's acclaimed *Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673-1968* (2005) provides a balanced non-biased account of both 'international' and 'regional' ideologies that challenge pre-conceived positions surrounding modernist discourse. It is particularly Chapter Thirteen titled 'Depression, War, and Aftermath 1934-1958' that is pertinent to this thesis. Although, the content straddles between Europe and the United States with a small inclusion of Asia and South America, the exclusion of countries beyond the radar of Western discourse fails to make the source truly global.

To substitute this shortcoming, the respected[1].architectural historian, critic and writer William Curtis' most important work recognized as a 'classic', *Modern architecture since 1900* focuses on twentieth

[1] This book won the Alice Davis Hitchcock Medallion of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain in 1984. The third edition received the architecture book prize of the American Institute of Architects in 1997. In 2006, the Museum of Finnish Architecture awarded Curtis its Commemoration Medal of Foundation on the occasion of the museum's 50th anniversary.

century architectural theory and its proponents across the globe, where he has taught history and theory, including the Southern Hemisphere. Curtis' architectural historical knowledge on modernists such as Le Corbusier on one hand and that of the vernacular of the developing world on the other hand, validates general rather than specific referencing to his work.

For more specific referencing, this study includes biographical sources. For instance Meryle Secrest's *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Biography* (1992) highlights the underestimated influence of Lloyd Wright on both international modernity and settler regionalism. The biographical narrative provides an analytical insight of archival material relevant to this thesis regarding rural and suburban discourse. The influence of Lloyd Wright on attempts for a South African idiom we reserve for the next chapter. Donald Millers' admired biography *Lewis Mumford: A Life* (1989) provides an alternative critique of Lloyd Wright's regional and urban arguments.

Through a case study critique, Keith Eggener's article 'A Fortuitous Shadow' In *Places Journal*, extends the trajectory of regionalisms, nationalisms and identities in the United States (1925-1940) closer to the time focus of this thesis. As disclosed in the previous chapter, Eggener's argument describing 'naturalized' rather than the labelled regionalist style for the freestanding mid-century private house are relevant to both South Africa's settler characteristics and our hypothetical interest in the post-war condition. Eggener (2017: 6) provides us with a synthesis of the "international machine made modernism made warmer, woodsier, homier and better sited" as pertinent for study prior to the re-evaluation of the South African stylistic situation in the next chapter.

3.2.1 Domestic styles

Since this thesis is limited to dwelling, this chapter requires an historical overview of domesticity as an informant for house styles across the chosen periods of this research. For a historical relationship of social and cultural factors with dwelling styles, Witold Rybczynski's *Home: A Short History of an idea* (1988) gives pertinent insight particularly regarding seventeenth-century Dutch democratic domesticity. Although, Rybcynski's exposes us to practical and regional informants that constitute stylistic components, he clearly writes from an anti-modernist or post-modernist bias. Other than Rybcyzinski (1988:202) mentioning a "Free World" style, "representing democracy and America in the Cold War", venturing further than the 1930s or earlier than the 1970s is not apparent.

At least for the period prior to the second world, Francis Yorke's *The Modern House* distinguished between "modern architecture" and "traditional styles" that fills a literary void for our dialectical enquiry. Yet, Yorke's *The Modern House in England* (1937) questions the very idea of 'imitative styles' as "superstition" (Yorke 1937:11). However, Yorke contradicts his premise by illustrating a linear progression of houses from the 1850s arts and crafts towards the obvious stylistic validity of the modern 1930s house. Referencing Yorke is highly suitable in providing an international stylistic background for a historical-comparative reading of South African architectural history for the same period.

Deyan Sudjic's *Home: The Twentieth Century House* (1999) delivers a concise source for domestic stylistic ideas organised into decades that correlate with the structuring of this chapter. The value of his

literature lies in relating the impact of technological advances with domesticity and subsequent changes in democratic attitudes. Although text is limited, the book is one of the few sources that embrace the essence of the post-war impact on international domestic character. Particularly the period from 1940s to 1970s is significant for this study.

However, it is Lesley Jackson's *'contemporary': architecture and interiors of the 1950s* (1994) that focuses extensively on an international trend regarding suburban houses and their interiors after World War II. Moreover, Jackson confirms but also improves on Sudjic's stylistic and social accounts especially for the period of the fifties providing an 'international' barometer for comparative analysis for the local stylistic situation.

3.3 FIRST STYLISTIC SITUATION: 1850s to 1920s

3.3.1 Style debates

The Style Debates of the 1900s to 1920s paralleled Heinrich Hübsch' 1828 question: *In welchem Style sollen wir bauen?* (In what style should we build?). The topic of the stylistic debates then, was 'industry' versus 'craft' (Mallgrave 2005:106). One can argue that under the guise of 'Internationalism' versus 'Regionalism', the topic persists today[2]. Therefore, to set the scene for this chapter, we look back at the Great Exhibition of London (1851). Allow Mallgrave (2005:123) to exemplify the polarised positions of the Great Exhibition director and British civil inventor Henry Cole (1808 -1882), against the English art critic and father of the arts and crafts movement, John Ruskin (1819-1900):

> On a rhetorical level, Henry Cole could not compete with Ruskin, but their personal feud marked the larger clash of intellectual, political, and moral forces...Cole, the realist, embraced the machine and the capitalist forces giving rise to a new economic and social order; he was at heart a reformist. Ruskin, the spiritualist, too saw the pending upheaval, but glimpsing as well the inhumanity displayed by those same industrial forces…History, however, is sometimes written in riddles. If Cole's embrace of modernity presages the welcome it received around 1900, it was Ruskin's consciously backward looking views that the next half-century carried the day in much of the Anglo-Saxon world.

Evidently, the Great Exhibition in London posed an industrialised dilemma to the arts. The mixed feelings of international visitors towards global goods on display at Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, resulted in opposing reviews and lectures (Mallgrave 2005:114-117). Certainly, both Cole and Ruskin's opinions spread globally with historians continuing Ruskin's criticism: "capitalism versus socialism, ugliness versus beauty, and industrialism versus piety" (Mallgrave 2005:120).

[2] For instance, Charles Jencks again asks the question 'In what style shall we build?' in *Architectural Review*, March 2015. (https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/viewpoints/in-what-style-shall-we-build/8679048.article).

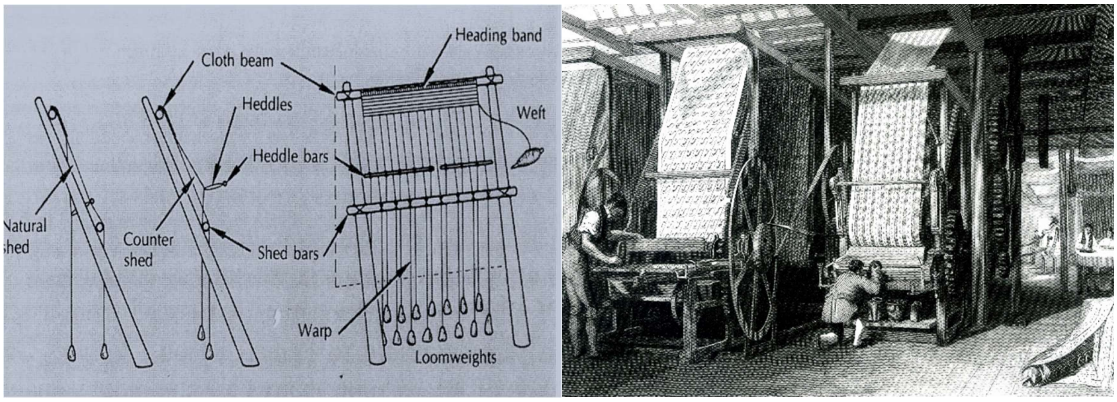

Figure 3.1. Left: *Technē*: Upright Greek loom (Pérez-Gómez 1994:137). **Right**: Technology: Mass produced textiles, c.1835 (Sparke 1987: 39).

3.3.1.1 Industrial invisibility

> The Industrial Revolution was, and still is, most profound and far-reaching: and the displacement of handicraft production by machine production has not only altered the way man makes his living but has changed the condition of man. In this revolution building has moved beyond the grasp of craftsmen and masterbuilders to a state of semi-mechanization, and many new types of building have become necessary (Lipman 1963:31).

Ruskin's dichotomies posed a paradox for the Arts and Crafts 'Aesthetes'. For instance, it was the very forces of eighteenth century British aristocratic desires of consumption, albeit in the guise of decoration and craft, that fed on mass production and thereby a capitalist economic system. By the nineteenth century, a growing affluent consumer society was demanding more and more novel goods. Certain homebased craftwork (textiles and pottery) survived, but continued to be factory produced when they became fashionable. The aristocracy determined both the demand and the 'taste' for the aspiring middle classes (Sparke 1987:10-15).

Although, France was the "home of taste", the search for the fashionably new would mean borrowing styles from 'exotic' places. So for instance in the furniture trade, we see the London decorating firm, Chippendale, obsessed with "decorous ostentation" ranging from ephemeral 'rococo', 'gothic', 'neo-classical' and 'chinoiserie' styles (Sparke 1987:21). The latter being an inspiration from China and oriental trade, which "actually had little similarity to anything Chinese but became nonetheless a highly fashionable furniture style" (Ibid: 22). This raises the question of authenticity and ownership of national styles. Is the factory produced Wedgewood 'Willow Pattern' pottery, for instance, British or Chinese, craft or Industry?

Despite the shift from rural home based guilds of craft to the urbanised industry in factories, it seems that populist opinion spurred on by advertising was of more importance than authenticity. Despite the division in labour, what seemed to persist was the perception of the continuity of craft and artisans. Moreover, commercialization and marketing made a distinction between industrialised goods that were visibly 'crafted beautifully' and those that were invisibly 'machined ugliness'. A good example is the

1908 upright Hoover vacuum cleaner with its purely 'functional' style, which was kept from the householder and therefore deemed *invisible* (Sudjic 1999:31,42).

Nevertheless, what is of interest in this study is the repercussions of early-industrialised thinking and associations on modern Western society and their twentieth century architecture. Besides textiles and pottery in Britain, the evolution of metals had a remarkable role to play in stylistic imagery and relationships to societal classes. The industrial developments in the building industry, from wrought and cast iron to steel products is a vast study on its own. What is particularly of interest is the public perceptions of those 'crude' materials made invisible.

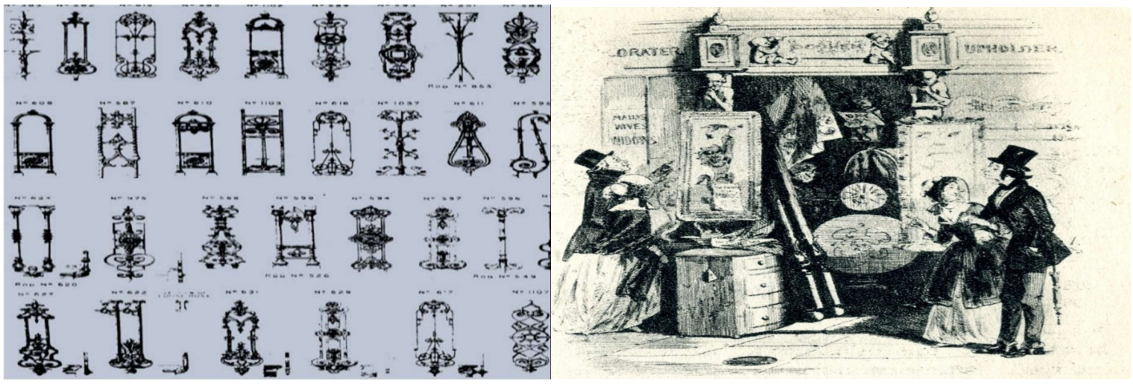

Figure 3.2. Left: MacFarlane's iron foundry, catalogue c.1885 (Guedes 1979:266). **Right**: Victorian "Upholder" shop display (Russell 1947: 25).

Despite, the authenticity of 'making' industrial goods, the 1850s British public despised "the use of visible iron in important buildings" (Guedes 1979:266). Although Ruskin called for iron columns with blacksmith wrought-iron capitals[3], iron foundries such as McFarlane mass-produced cast-iron components for columns and balustrades (Fig. 3.2. Left). By way of catalogues, these products spread to rapidly developing areas where there was no "resistance from established building crafts" such as in South Africa (Guedes 1979:267). The dilemma of exposing imperial steel rolled sections and corrugated iron we will discuss in the next chapter, but of importance now is how the metal window, despite developments in glass sizes, still had to read as 'cottage'. Fisher (1998:132) explains:

> The standard range of steel frame sizes can be traced to the "Home for Heroes" post-first World War campaign of Lloyd George. This required the invention of prefabricated rolled steel profiles, known as F7 and FX7. Production started in 1919 which led eventually to the "British Standard Metal Windows Specification BS990". Ironically the sizes were determined by the available cottage pane glass sizes, based on the subdivision into eight equal parts, vertically and horizontally…which derived from the Georgian windows of the early mass –production of glass. Even when the glass became available in larger sizes these dimensions stuck…

[3] For example, for the Oxford Museum Building (1855-60).

How did the idea of *industrial invisibility* transform the dwelling? Prior to work in factories, society worked from home. Produce was for local rural survival sustained by guilds. However, due to an increase in population, industrialisation "created new roles for men and women. The modern concept of the nuclear family" in an industrial system subjugated women to housekeeping (Sparke 1987:11,85). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the industrialised system distinguished architects[4] from master builders. Despite, the invention of new technologies, the architect's, were more concerned with an exterior style of a building than interior arrangements for comfort, which Victorian Interior Decorators (upholsterer)[5] fulfilled (Fig. 3.2. Right). The decorators were ignorant of mechanization, such as ventilation and gas lighting, and they decoratively covered any of it exposed (Rybczynski 1986:127-132).

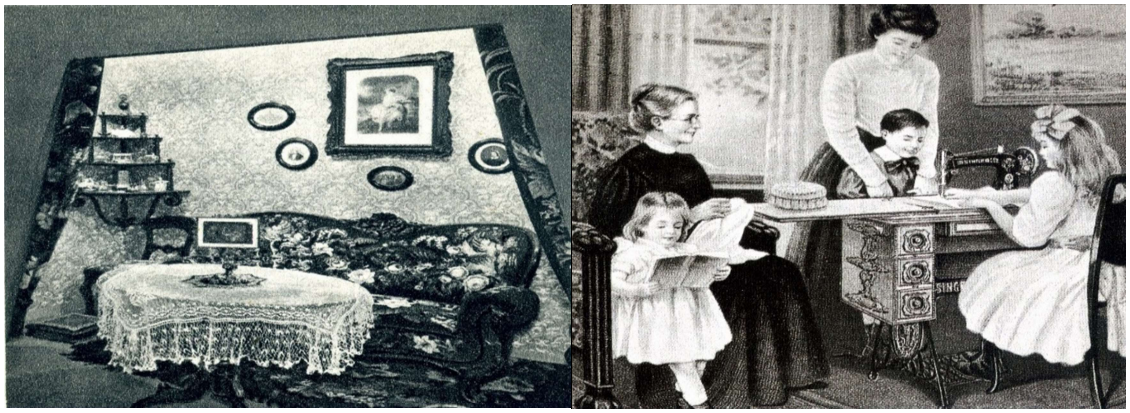

Figure 3.3. Left: Victorian cluttered interior requiring domestic help (Russell 1947:26). **Right**: Singer's sewing machines made to look like domestic furniture (Sparke 1987: 48).

Due to the "smog and smoke of industrialisation", the "smoky fireplaces, open cooking fires, and ill-washed inhabitants", Victorian houses could be characterised as 'smelly' more than 'stuffy' requiring domestic help (Rybczynski 1986:132) (Fig. 3.3. Left). Nonetheless, the priority was rather on the Englishness of "good taste and fashion" than "functional efficiency" (Rybczynski 1986:125). An expanding population and corresponding increase in city pollution inspired the production of domestic appliances and time saving devices for the 'housewife' (Fig.3.3. Right). Considering the repercussions, American home economist Catherine Beecher's (1800-1878) *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* (1841) suggested the necessity of compact homes with "adequate closet space and comfortable kitchens; not with how the house looked, but with how it functioned" (Rybczynski 1986:125).

3.3.1.2 Visibly crafted

The English architect Augustus Pugin (1812-1852) aligned himself with Cole's proto-functionalist thinking. Differing from their position and favorable to artisans, Ruskin therefore propagated the "belief that architecture was an expression of society" (Nuttgens 1997:258). Ironically, Ruskin shared Pugin's

[4] Rybczynski (1988:127) tells, "The architect was primarily a draftsman who prepared drawings for work carried out by others".
[5] In the 1850s, Victorians called upholsterers 'upholders' (Russell 1947: 25).

distaste of "disguising instead of beautifying articles of utility" (Sparke 1987:60). Nevertheless, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1880) underpinned the thinking of the male dominated Arts and Crafts movement, which included the English textile designer and social activist William Morris (1834-1896). Sans the social intentions, the architect Phillip Webb (1831-1915), with the help of William Morris, made his Arts and crafts sentiments visible in the rural architecture of the Bexley Heath 'Red House' (1859-60). Nuttgens (1997:258) explains:

> It is of brick and tile, sparse in detail, substantial in construction and homely in appearance. Webb and Morris set out to create an honest architecture…Having eschewed conventional classical or Gothic details, architects were able to point to the moral virtue of using materials honestly and at the same time enjoy the rich textures and varied forms of traditional native architecture and of craftwork made from natural materials. Hence the revival of interest in native vernacular.

We should remember that many artists aligned the Industrial Revolution with romanticism (Clark 1969:324). Although the reality of industrialization was in the overcrowded polluted cities, the poets, painters and decorators yearned for the "worship of nature" and the "picturesque sublime" (Clark 1969:284). Besides Ruskin's naturalism whereby "Style in Architecture is the peculiar form that expression takes under the influence of climate and materials at command" (Mallgrave 2005:171), the arts and crafts was meant to be also a social movement. Morris' romanticized idea that the 'naturally' inspired decorations from the country would beautify and that the town was an expression for society was somewhat immature. Morris' lucrative decorative arts business seemed inconsistent with the Marxist Socialist League he founded. Mallgrave (2005:177) recounts:

> In his London lecture "The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization" (1881), Morris decries at length the marring of the earth by the "haste or carelessness of civilization," the "sordidness of city life of to-day," and the "universal ugliness" everywhere present. His alternative, the laborer's cottage of "Cotswold limestone" built when "beauty still lingered among peasant's houses," nevertheless seems extreme. In addition, the means that he offers to effect such a change, preservation societies and ridding ourselves "of all the useless luxuries (by some called comforts) that make our stuffy art-stifling houses more truly savage than a Zulu's kraal or an east Greenlander's snow hut, "are both inadequate and affectedly naïve.

Typically, nineteenth century designers used craft sentimentalisms as social while at the same time they ignored "poverty, hunger, plagues, disease" which Clark (1969:323) points out, they regarded "as inevitable – like bad weather". More importantly, is how Imperialism applied this approach in the African colonies, while at the same time transported slaves to America. Therefore, we cannot ignore Clark's (1969:327) observation of "Mass-hypocrisy", when discussing the stylistic situation of the arts and crafts beyond Victorian England. Clark (1969:327) provides perspective:

> For the last forty years or so, the word hypocrisy has been a sort of label attached to the nineteenth century, just as frivolity was attached to the eighteenth century – and with about as much reason.

> The reaction against it continues…The very word 'pious', 'respectable', 'worthy', have become joke words, used only ironically.

Through this lens, we see the spread the Arts and Craft Movement as far East as India via Sir Edwin Luytens (1869-1944) (Fig. 3.4. Left) and far West as America via Frank Lloyd Wright (born Frank Lincoln Wright 1867-1959). A paradox lies in how the movement was utilised to legitimise and construct a regionalism, albeit 'internationally' spread. For instance, the movement first spread to Europe via Hermann Muthesius' (1861-1927) book *Das englische Haus* (The English House, 1904) which influenced the consciously 'crafted' forms of the *Jugendstil* or *Art Nouveau* style (Nuttgens 1997:258). With regards the Arts and Crafts Movement visible to an American public and particularly Lloyd Wright, Secrest (1992:151) writes:

> It seems more likely that the galvanizing event in his [Wright] life may have been the publication in 1893, the year that he left Sullivan, of a new magazine called the *Studio*, which first brought the ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement to a wide audience…Adler and Sullivan, reported that while the firm's office received the *British Architect*, it was seldom read, but the *Studio* and its American version, *International Studio,* were pounced upon…A year later he [Wright] became one of the founding members of the Chicago society dedicated to the Arts and Crafts.

Figure 3.4. Left: Arts and Craft's chimneys, Edward Lutyens. Tigbourne Court, Surrey, 1898 (Curtis 1996:91). **Right**: Fireplace in Lloyd Wright's Oak Park living room, Chicago, c.1896 (Secrest 1992: 126).

Wright's background was Welsh with his family being American settlers. Over and above, the relationship with Celtic land, the settling in the Wisconsin valley by the Lloyd Jones's, as for all immigrants, required an appropriation of the newfound land. One way to mark territory, typical of Christian settlers, was to build a chapel (Secrest 1992:6). For the Welsh, a church was the "true home" and for Wright, the Arts and Crafts movement allowed the notion of a house as a place that "should express the sanctity of family life" (Secrest 1992:199, 152). Therefore, for Wright, the symbol of the home would be the inglenook hearth (Fig.3.4.Right), which reflected the architect Charles Voysey (1857-1941) Arts and Crafts ideals.

The works seen in the *Studio* and *House Beautiful* magazines inspired Wright's Prairie houses with their "characteristically low, massive, all-encompassing roofs with broad overhangs" (Secrest 1992:152-153). Although Wright never labelled his houses for the Midwest prairie as 'prairie houses', he was using romanticized English principles to invent a 'regional' architecture for the rural areas surrounding the city of Chicago (Gössel 1991:18). In so doing, Wright managed to translate the 'international' Arts and Crafts into the 'regionalism' of the American Midwest. Secrest (1992:153) describes the stylistics in relation to the situation:

> And in absorbing the teachings of the movement, he particularly distinguished himself in the way he integrated his Prairie houses with the flat, unending horizons of the Midwest…stressing the horizontal with his spreading roofs and bands of windows, and stretching out porches and pergolas into the surrounding gardens so that the house and its setting would merge and blur into a single harmonious whole. Even his insistence on the use of natural materials inside and out, wood, brick and stone, following another Arts and Crafts dictum, with its overtones of the rural cottage or medieval castle, seemed particularly right, suggesting that the landscapes uncompromising vistas required a similarly direct, unadorned response.

3.4 SECOND STYLISTIC SITUATION: 1920s to 1930s

3.4.1 Social Modernism

After the First World War, German art and architectural theory was in a crisis (Mallgrave 2005:244). The pre-war arts and crafts concerns at the Weimar school (Bauhaus) were not on the post-war agenda. Rather the 'mass production' of urbanised housing was. The irony is how in response to the reality of a post-war context, Morris' 'social' Arts and Crafts ended up being lip service for the *Bourgeoisie,* while the European *avant-garde* embraced the actual socialist concepts of "mechanisation, standardization and mass production" (Sparke 1987:87). Nevertheless, in order for us to read the development of a social modernism in the aftermath of the First World War, the *Weissenhof Siedlung* housing exhibition in Stuttgart of 1927 provides us with a one-stop stylistic situation.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) whose 'concrete house' was published in the 1923 journal *G: Material für elementare Gestaltung* (Material for elementary design), was appointed artistic director (Mallgrave 2005:271,273). With the idea of populating the hillside site with "small single-family houses, Van der Rohe had the difficult task of selecting the names of twenty-five architects to design the "low-cost model dwellings". After deliberations, he finalised the list with Le Corbusier (1887-1965) being allocated the largest budget for the two most important sites (Mallgrave 2005:273). Le Corbusier had already designed the pavilion of the New Spirit (*L'Esprit Nouveau*) at the 1925 International Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris. Many articles written by him culminated in his theories on a family dwelling. Papadaki (1948:22) explains:

> Here we see the relationship between outdoor and indoor living. The demarcation of the various functions of the house integrated into one living space, the careful use of common, ready-made household equipment, and the introduction of works of art as objects of everyday life. Contemporary living has found its plastic expression in this pavilion which, it should be stated, was neither a place nor a shelter for "minimum existence".

Le Corbusier never intended the uninhabited exposition pavilion to be a freestanding dwelling, but as a unit prototype as part of a larger housing block (Fig. 3.5. Left). Therefore, any threshold between indoor and outdoor would be a balcony and not a garden terrace. However, le Corbusier's unbuilt *immeubles villas* imagined twelve storey perimeter blocks organised around terraced courtyards below. Along with his 1922 proposals for the *Ville Contemporaine pour trois million habitants* (Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants) raised on *pilotis* for a continuous green belt, Le Corbusier was hoping to synthesise previous utopian attempts at Garden Cities as social solutions for the reality of slum conditions in industrialised regions (Curtis 1996: 241-248).

Figure 3.5. Left: Le Corbusier's "Taylorised" Vertical Garden City, c.1920s (Papadaki 1948:24). **Right**: Post World War I Arts and Crafts repetitive back-to-back housing (Guedes 1979:83).

Clearly, any housing solution for the urbanised population explosion after the war was not to be resolved with a romanticised arts and crafts idea of freestanding country villas "with their pitched roofs and rustic overtones" (Curtis 1996: 249) (Fig. 3.5. Right). Instead, the *Siedlungen* (housing settlement) would fulfil the design criteria from garden setting right down to the details of a "compact and exceptionally functional 'Frankfurt' kitchen[6]" (Curtis 1996:249). The internationalism of the *Weissenhof Siedlung* for one, was exacerbated by the many writers, correspondents and media agencies that visited the exhibition, including from North and South America making social modernism a movement (Mallgrave 2005:274).

3.4.1.1 'International style'

The Stuttgart exhibition inspired the American historian Henry-Russel Hitchcock (1903-1987) to write *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (1929). Besides praising the principles of the new

[6] The Frankfurt" kitchen was designed by Ernst May.

style, Hitchcock claimed that American romantic arts and crafts architecture, including that of Wright, was outdated (Mallgrave 2005:299). Despite, the criticism of the "monotonous repetition of standardised elements" and lack of the nostalgic idea of 'home', the European Hitchcock and Johnson considered the *Siedlung* a stylistic commodity that could be exported to America (Mallgrave 2005:303).

From our previous chapter we noticed how the American intellectuals escaping totalitarian ideologies, imported European social ideologies they considered superior to those of America. As an admirer of European art, the first director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), Alfred Hamilton Barr (1902-1981) travelled extensively on the continent including visits to the Bauhaus and exhibition housing at Stuttgart. Barr's exposure to the European publications such as Hilberseimer's *Internationale neue Baukunst* (International New Architecture) accentuated American books in contrast as provincial (Mallgrave 2005: 274, 298-300).

Thereafter in 1932, Alfred Barr hosted the *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* at MoMA. The historian Hitchcock and the young philosophy graduate Phillip C. Johnson (1906-2005) were the curators. As MoMA employees, they published an accompanying catalogue titled *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (Fig. 3.6. Left). Their art historic intentions were to choose a title that differed from the European theories of Neo-Plasticism, Futurism, Constructivism, Rationalism and New Functionalism. Furthermore, the curator's idea was to find a common style in antithesis to nationalism (Leuthäuser 1990:7).

One must remember that nationalisms caused the First World War in the first place. Therefore, historians such as the Czechoslovakian Karel Tiege (1900-1951) based their thinking on universal socialism and not on national fashions. For Tiege, Russian Constructivism was less about the national 'ism' than a way towards a "universal creativity" that aligned with socialism and a Marxist worldview of "*maximum functionality*" (Mallgrave 2005:267-268). As Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998) described in his book *The Elements of Functional Architecture* (1931), the "functionalistic principle" was essentially concerned with construction methods. Sartoris' book was fundamentally a survey that included many international examples of buildings that supported a similarity of construction techniques (Leuthäuser 1990:7).

Although, "dedicated solely to the service of the human being" (Mallgrave 2005:276), by 1930 there were already differences as regards approaches to housing. For instance, Tiege criticised Le Corbusier for his "monuments' instead of social 'instruments' (Mallgrave 2005:268). Notwithstanding, the attempt to collaborate was made in 1928 with the founding of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) where the La Sarraz Declaration was put in place to guide architecture in terms of social planning (Mallgrave 2005:276).

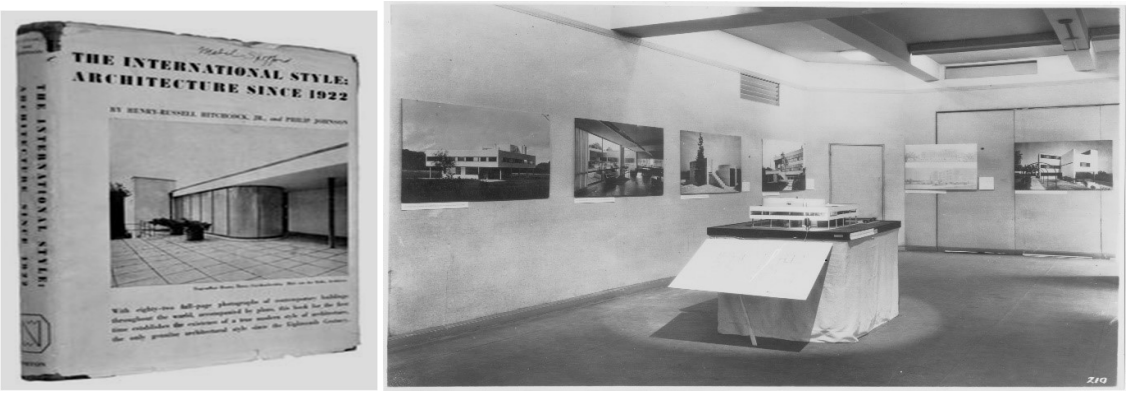

Figure 3.6. Left: Cover of *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*. Henry Russell Hitchcock Jnr. and Phillip Johnson, New York: W. W. Norton. (https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2044_300061855.pdf)
Right: Black and White Modern Architecture: International Exhibition, MOMA, February 9 to March 23, 1932 (https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2044)

However, one could argue that Hitchcock and Johnson aestheticized the European social intentions for an American audience. In their MoMA selection, 'functional architecture' was made uniform in black-and-white images to depict what was on closer inspection a variety of buildings especially with regards "spatial complexity" (Curtis 1987:257) (Fig. 3.6. Right). The curator's attempt to distinguish building as a science and not an art paradoxically visualised the principles of mass, regularity and avoidance of decoration 'artistically.

Despite many misgivings of the exhibition and the critique that "it does not accurately reflect the actual situation", it became the target of attack for regionalists and lumped the variety of modernist approaches "to represent the mainstream of modern architecture from about the 1920s to the end of the 1950s – or possibly the 1970s" (Nuttgens 1997:266). Curtis (1996:239) summarises the stylistic situation:

> It is ironical that this formalist emphasis should have been made in the Depression years and just before the launching of Roosevelt's New Deal, an atmosphere in which stylistic niceties scarcely seemed relevant, but a situation to which the ideological probings of the modern movement might well have been appropriate. In a sense, Hitchcock and Johnson did modern architecture a disservice by presenting it in the way they did. Wright denounced the abstract box-architecture for its lack of an integrated view of man, and its superficial formalism; Regionalists [for example Lewis Mumford] bemoaned the importation of yet another cosmopolitan gloss….

3.4.1.2 Modernistic capitalism

To consider the foundations of an international modernistic capitalist style, we need to recall the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 for the reasons Curtis (1996:51) allows:

> Through a happy coincidence of circumstance and talent, Chicago was the forcing ground of a new synthesis of technology and form. Here and there, the raw conditions and standardized equipment of capitalism were transformed into architectural works of high poetic intensity. By facing industrial realities head on, and reflecting on the essence of their art, Chicago architects contributed a major foundation to a more universal ideal, that of modern architecture.

The importance of this exposition lies not only in the synthesising of the nineteenth-century style polarities of craft and industrial production, but how that synthesis would translate into a 'modernistic' capitalist style in the 1930s. Before, Chicago architects were grappling with the idea of the standardised machine product as 'art'. Following the Universal Paris Exposition (1889) with its blatant engineered Eiffel Tower, the task at the Chicago Fair, was to reconcile the American tall building engineering (function) with architecture (form) as required of the time (Curtis 1996:39). The stylistic question arose once more:

> This skeleton posed teasing problems of architectural expression. Should it be left alone as engineering dictated? Should it be clothed or decorated in some appeasing historical style? Or should it be interpreted as a cultural fact worthy of a new symbolic expression? At issue was the question of appropriateness. What were these new buildings supposed to look like and what did they really represent? (Curtis 1996:39-40).

The hope to turn a stylistically schizophrenic American architecture from "classicism towards a new ideal" was in the hands of the Chicago group of architects exemplified by Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) and Louis Henry Sullivan (1856-1924) (Gössel 1991:14). Although derived from his dictum *form follows function*, Sullivan was highly disappointed with the Chicago Fair, which pre-empted his despair of the inauthenticity of the skyscrapers seen later in the capitalist city of New York (Gössel 1991:10).

> Sullivan's cry reflected a basic dilemma of the artist-architect designing in the commercial world: how – if at all – could the brute 'causes' of finance be translated into the lasting stuff of a profound aesthetic symbolism? (Curtis 1996:225)

The Chicago Exposition was not asking questions with regards architecture for social representation, but rather for the purposes of capitalist progress. The directors gave clues by virtue of the exposition layout of two areas: The White City and the Midway Plaisance. The latter "provided visitors with ethnological, scientific sanction for the New American view of the non-white world as barbaric and childlike" while the former "served as an exercise in educating the nation on the concept of [utopian] progress" (Rydell 1999:274,280).

Concurrent with the exposition, International bodies held congresses where they pinpointed the necessity of "racial purification" for the purposes of progress. They therefore felt it necessary to make a perceptive distinction between non-whites. For instance, Anglo-Saxons considered the Japanese more sophisticated than the Chinese, who therefore declined to exhibit. The Japanese, however, sent their workers to build the Ho-o-den Palace[7] with the intention of convincing the Americans that they were on par with the Caucasian nations "moral and industrial progress" (Rydell 1999:282-283).

[7] Secrest (1992:185) relays that the wooden temple was of the Fujiwara Period and built on an artificial lake at the fair.

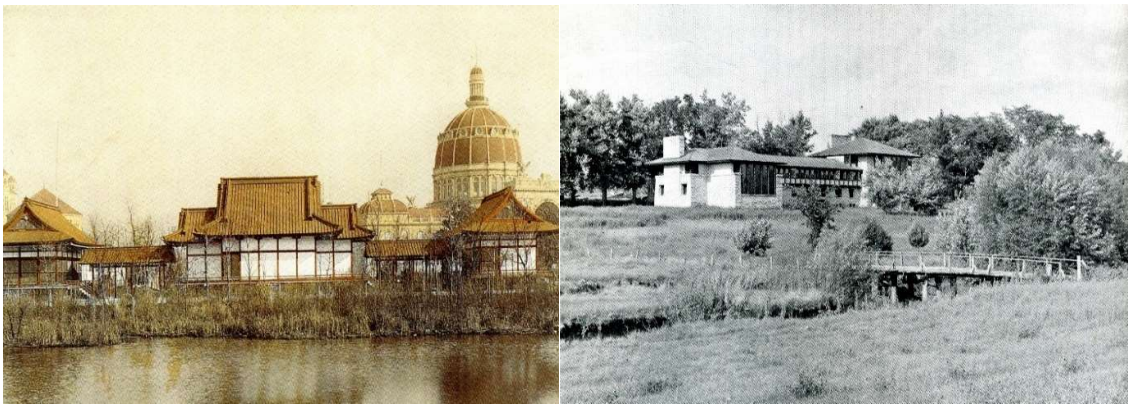

Figure 3.7. Left: Ho-0-den Temple, Chicago Exposition, 1893. (Gössel 1991:14). **Right**: Frank Lloyd Wright's freestanding Hillside Home School, Wisconsin, 1902 (Gössel 1991:22).

Louis Sullivan's draughtsman and protégé, Wright (whose early dwellings we had seen were "stamped with Arts and Crafts values"), was inspired by the reconstructed Ho-o-den Temple at the fair (Fig. 3.7. Left). For him, this Japanese pavilion ironically evoked the American home identity in his 'Prairie' houses (Curtis 1996:39-40) (Fig.3.7. Right). In contradiction with the racist opinions of the congress goers, Wright's admiration of the "pre-Columbian and Mayan architectural forms and motifs" (Fig. 3.8. Left) at the Columbian Exposition, would manifest in his later designs as representative for America (Secrest 1992:181, 265).

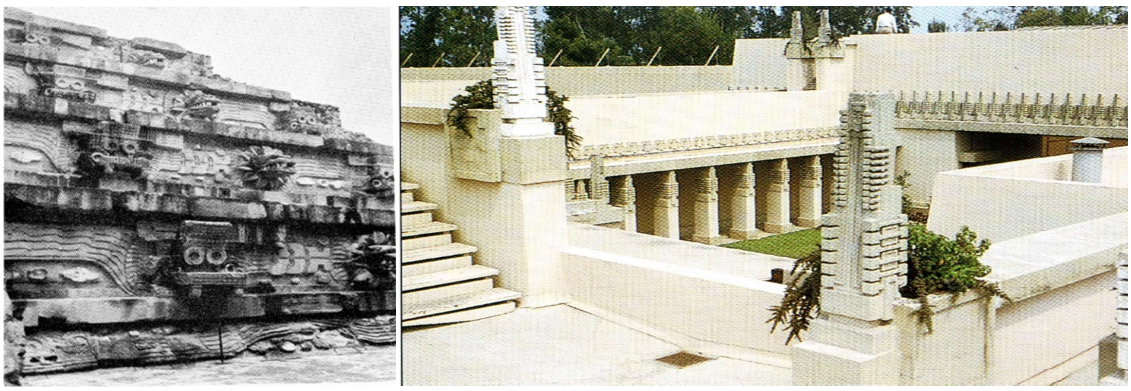

Figure 3.8. Left: Stylistic reliefs of the Quetzalcoatl pyramid at Teotihuacan (Damaz 1963: 29). **Right:** "Echo of Hollywood film set", Frank Lloyd Wright, Hollyhock House, 1920. (Sparke 1987:151).

For instance, we see the decorative motifs in the Larkin Building in New York (1902-1906), the Unity Temple in Chicago (1904-1907) and in his Midway Garden Hotel in Chicago (1916-1921). Interestingly, Wright translated the Temple of Three Lintels (Chichén Itzá, Yucatátan) for the design of the Hollyhock House in Los Angeles (1917-1920) (Fig. 3.8. Right). Thereafter, we see an extension of decorative motifs in his theatrical and monumental Hollywood houses of the mid-1920s. Secrest (1992:289) elaborates:

> Working with his son Lloyd, Wright had hammered out a variation on the design of the humble and inexpensive concrete block, which was easy to manufacture, easy to assemble and apparently

> easy to maintain; he called it the textile block system. It could be made in a variety of patterns, sizes and surfaces…The result was wonderfully solid and imposing inside and outside, with an overtone of theatricality…

The search for an American dress for the capitalist skyscraper was in place, and its source was anything but the bridal purity explored by the Chicago Exposition. By the 1930s, the synthesis of European decorative styles, the Chicago School and Lloyd Wright's motifs, were labelled Art Deco by a "glossy home-renovating journal" (Chipkin 1993:94) This culminated in a pre-depression theatrical style skyscraper in New York (Robinson 1975:4-5). Perhaps the most appropriate example of industrialised steel structure clad in decorative 'curtain' that expressed an *Architecture Parlante* of modern capitalism was the Chrysler Building (1928-30).

> The prevalent New York City architecture of the twenties and thirties also, in fact, reflects an international style, one that for a time was much more widely accepted than *the* International Style (Robinson 1975:3).

3.5 THIRD STYLISTIC SITUATION: 1930s to 1940s

3.5.1 Split stylistics

We have seen Hitchcock and Johnson's attempts at generalising Modernism aesthetically; however, it never was "a single ideological movement" as they seemingly overlooked Mies' exclusion of the architects from the Württemberg chapter of the *Deutsche Werkbund* (German Association of Craftsmen) from his *Weissenhof* list. The *Werkbund* was split between the 'evolutionary' regionalist *Der Block* (the block) up against Mies's 'revolutionary' constructional camp known as *Der Ring* (Mallgrave 2005:307).

Furthermore, those that favoured *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) of the 1890s combined with inherited traditions of the 'right wing', and those that professed 'progressive' constructional forms of the left 'wing', split German architectural learning sites. These opposing approaches related to political stances. For instance, the Technische Hochshule in Berlin was split between the classicism of Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950) allied to the Hitler's National Socialist Party, while that of Hans Poelzig (1869-1936) expressed industrial buildings with communist sentiments (Sudjic 2005:21).

With regards residential architecture, the roof often became the topic of architectural debates. Besides the traditional association of a pitched roof with a 'house', we had seen how important the steep roof with broad overhang was for both the Arts and Crafts movement and thereafter for Frank Lloyd Wright;s 'regional' Prairie house. In addition, the right wing *Der Block* "opposed, in particular, the flat roof because of its incompatibility with the German climate and German customs" (Mallgrave 2005:308) (Fig. 3.9. Left). For houses, Hitler favoured the latter opinion. Mallgrave (2005:309) explains:

> He [Hitler] believed that factories built by the government should be modern, rural youth hostels should be rustic or Alpine, and houses similarly should be vernacular with pitched roofs…The neoclassicism of Speer, which emerged in the second half of the decade [1930s] with Hitler's plan for rebuilding Berlin, was more a reflection of Hitler's megalomania and penchant for state symbolism than his insistence on a classical style.

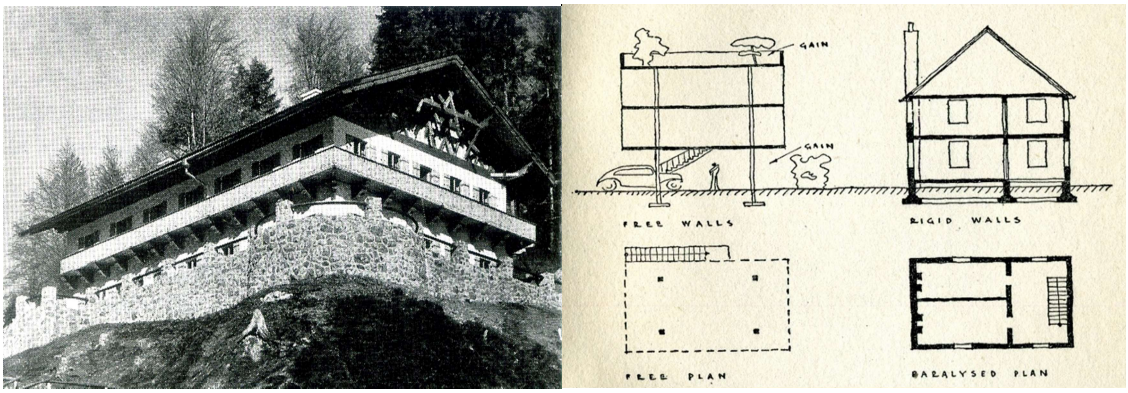

Figure 3.9. Left: Acquired Arts and Crafts for **"**Nazi Regionalism". Karl Vesser Youth Hostel, Urfield, 1935 (Curtis 1996: 357). **Right:** Principles from *Précisions* by Le Corbusier (Yorke 1943: 97).

Admittedly, Le Corbusier's *Apres le Cubisme* (After Cubism) required abstract forms, which the flat roof would reinforce (Fig. 3.9. Right). Nevertheless, we should not forget the vernacular inspirations from the Mediterranean (which includes the region of France) and particularly the roof garden as one of his five points of 'purist' architecture. Inspired by the flat roofs of Tony Garnier's (1869-1948) *Cité industrielle*, Le Corbusier's Citrohan houses "envisaged a way of life freed from the unnecessary clutter of the customary bourgeois dwelling" (Curtis 1996:171). Nevertheless, Yorke (1939:99-100) informs that in cases where large spans occur, a modern architect would utilize a pitched roof, but he legitimizes the option of the flat roof on the following grounds:

> One of the most noticeable and one of the most criticized characteristics of modern architecture is the flat roof…The pitched roof…was developed…to drain rain and snow off roofing surfaces…It is not ideal. It wastes space and is difficult to repair. It governs plan-shape, and makes flexible planning uneconomical if not impossible…It has sloping mitred intersections to give trouble…

Albeit for industry, Garnier's 1917 design, which originated from Morris and Ruskin, was an extension of Ebenezer Howards (1850-1928) Garden City ideas. Yet for practical reasons, the apartment roofs for 35 000 inhabitants were rectangular and flat-roofed for purposes of stacking (Curtis 1996:244). One could argue that this was the same reason for the flat roofs Le Corbusier envisaged as stacking units far larger blocks. We will later dialectically weigh up the modernist blocks up against the sprawl of the suburban freestanding pitched roof dwelling as post-World War housing solutions.

3.5.1.1 Migrated modernism

> In the confused struggle to create a myth of man's spiritual and material unity, the Bauhaus ultimately created a space where the most disparate views could coexist in a state of fruitful tension,

> a coexistence which, however, remained fundamentally paradoxical. These views ranged from conceptions of art and the world inspired by Expressionism, vitalism or theosophy from masters such as Itten, Kandinsky, Klee, Feinenger and Shlemmer, to the technological visions of a trouble-free totally organized planned society in the case of Maholy-Nagy and Hannes Meyer (Colin 1999:25).

In order to build a modern house – *Bauhaus* - that "would be free of the decorative clutter of the imperial era", it was Walter Gropius' (1883-1969) idea to have a design school that would "change the face of society" (*Lebensreform*) (Fiedler 1999:8)., Gropius based the reform programme on the bourgeois and romantic Arts and Crafts philosophies of Ruskin and Morris. However, the German *Werkbund* notions of *Bauhütten* (church mason's guilds) which aimed at "redemption from technological developments", changed into a Bauhaus approach that "proclaimed not the apotheosis of technology but rather its humanization" (Colin 1999:24).

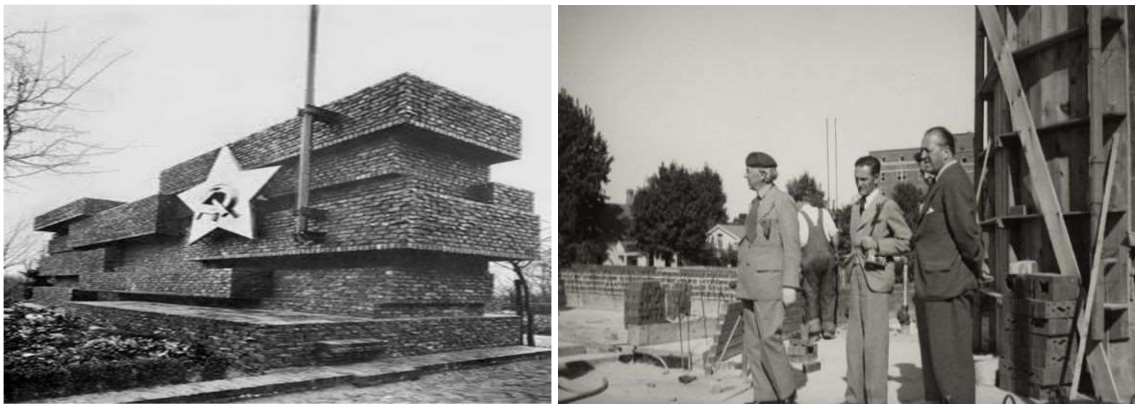

Figure 3.10. Left: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg monument. Mies Van der Rohe, Berlin, 1926. (Curtis 1996:192). **Right:** "Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van Der Rohe, and others at the Johnson Wax building construction site", Racine, Wisconsin, 1938 (https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM131737)

This latter approach by Gropius, the Nazis aligned with Marxist leftist politics. Although, the school consisted of National Socialists and Communists, the political sympathies of both Gropius and van der Rohe (who taught at the Bauhaus) were obvious with Gropius' design for the Palace of the Soviets competition (1933) and Van der Rohe's communist monument to Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (1926) (Fig. 3.10. Left). Politically pressurised, Gropius left Germany in 1934 for England. Three years later, he immigrated to the United States. After closing the doors of the Bauhaus due to the increasing National Socialist student protests, Van der Rohe followed in 1937 (Mallgrave 2005:309-310).

Other prominent émigré architects, known as 'Bauhaus Refugees', were Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953) and Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) who like Gropius landed in North America after a stint in England (Hyman 2001:77). After the United States had signed a treaty with Austria, The young Viennese architects, Rudolph M. Schindler (1887-1953) and Richard Neutra (1892-1970), had already left Europe in the 1920s (the first wave of immigrant architects). Their first port-o-call for émigré architects was at Taliesin to meet Frank Lloyd Wright (Fig. 3.10. Right). Curtis (1996:397) explains the effect of transmigration:

> They brought with them mature philosophies and vocabularies, and their arrival gave immense prestige to the International Modern movement in North America. However, they still entered a culture quite foreign to their original aims; they changed it, but it also changed them.

England was the perfect halfway house for many of the émigré architects on route to the United States. Nevertheless, the English modernist architects approved "their *presence* that proved to be more important than their work" (Hyman 2001:77). It was particularly the English architect and writer Francis R.S. Yorke (1906-1962) who embraced the idea of a partnership with Breuer, while E. Maxwell Fry (1899-1987) collaborated with Gropius (Hyman 2001:78-79). As one of the Modern Architectural Research Group[8] (MARS), he wrote his book *The Modern House* (1934) and therein Yorke (1939:45) considered Maxwell Fry to be the most outstanding English architect in the decade between the 1930s and 1940s:

> …one of the newest and best examples of modern domestic architecture in London – [is] by Maxwell Fry – while other houses in the road were neo-Georgian, pseudo South African Dutch, "arty-crafty", and "suburban speculative", the oldest house within sight being late Victorian. We mention this case because it is typical of the opposition with which sincere modern architects are faced.

Yorke (1939:80-81) spoke of a 'New Aesthetic', which he suggested was "free from traditional *clichés*" and emphasised that it was "an aesthetic *of* the building, not something applied *on* it". He emphasised a style based on the evolution of the plan, the wall and window, the roof, new materials and a new appearance. He explains how the medieval plan revolved around "living needs" and how the nineteenth century manors gyrated around the rich, who could afford to add room onto room (drawing, dining, morning, parlour, study and ballroom) due to the affordability of many servants. The priority for the architect of such houses was to fulfil their owner's desire for status by virtue of the external appearance - like "big doll houses"-.borrowed from the past. He went on to point out the reality of the 1930s economic situation and therefore the demand for a smaller servant-less houses. Yorke (1939:84) elaborates:

> The dwelling house is a complex organism, and its planning problem is one of co-ordinating a number of small room-units, differing in size and character, with an arrangement of services - water-supply, drainage, lighting, central heating, hot water, cooking, vacuum cleaning and radio. The bathroom and wick were early components of the house-machine; since their inception science and industry have supplied us with many hygienic and labour-saving devices.

What Yorke introduces to the debates on dwelling, is an aspect that goes beyond stylistics. Rather he introduces the relationship of everyday living to dwelling. He tells how the subservient lifestyles of the Victorians and the domestic "drudgery" for women were no longer relevant in a time with freer demands (Fig. 3.11. Left). He equates these lifestyle shifts to changes in the floor plan: from possessed clutter encumbering small rooms to the freer spaces of open planning. His proposal for subdividing spaces is by way of dwarf built-in units or "irregularly shaped rooms and breaks in the walls or wall colouring or

[8] The MARS group was the English version of the CIAM

by curtaining" (Yorke 1939:82-87). To exemplify, Yorke (1939:82-87) illustrates the "open" living room of Mies van der Rohe's Tugendhat house in Brno, Czechoslovakia (1928-1930) (Fig. 3.11. Right).

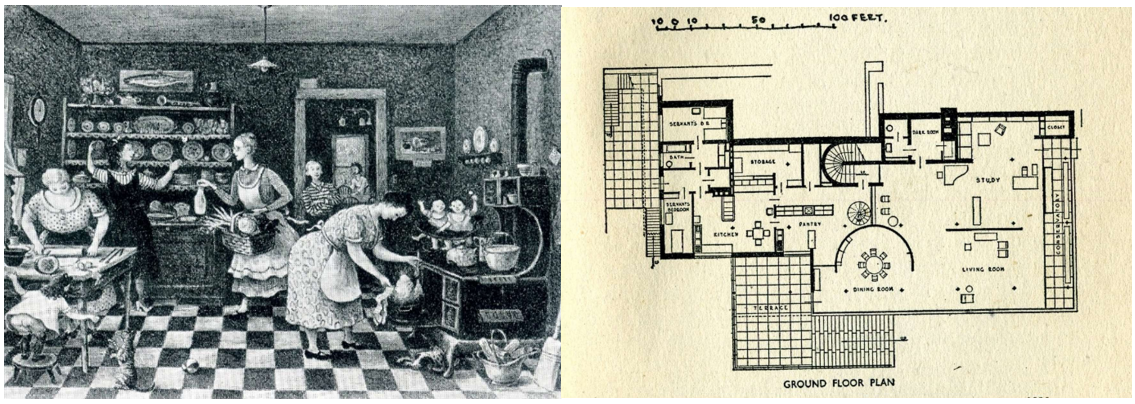

Figure 3.11. Left: "We can't go back", Doris Lee lithograph (Mock 1946: 10). **Right:** "Open" living room, Mies van der Rohe, House at Brno, Czechoslovakia, 1930 (Yorke 1943: 87).

The wealthy Tugendhat clients could test Mies' spatial principles of his uninhabited Barcelona Pavilion (1928-9) as a dwelling (Curtis 1996:308-309). This luxurious double storey house with its massive glass wall that could drop into the basement was very different from the modernist social concerns for mass housing. Nevertheless, enhanced by the expansive glass walls, Mies' "structural and spatial characteristics" formed the basis of his unbuilt courtyard projects (1931 and 1938) "in which inside and outside were linked together as outdoor rooms or interior patios" (Curtis 1996:309).

> Houses with one, two and three courts were planned, and group and row assembly proposed. The free-standing walls under a floating roof plane gave great spatial richness, even to a small house. Mies van der Rohe believed that the essential character of these houses was made possible by the large sheets of glass which allowed every space and building element to be perceived almost simultaneously; he thought that the court house in this form would be an ideal solution for the urban residence (Carter 1999:29).

On closer inspection, the photographs of the International Style exhibition indicate watered down versions and *clichés* of the social modernist proto-types. Curtis (1996:305) puts the *pastiche* down to the "economic depression and the repressive attitudes of totalitarian regimes". Moreover, the migration of modernism from the European centres to peripheries of "different climates, traditions, social projects and ways of building", would pose a problem for traditionalists, regionalists and nationalists. As was the case with the first stages of development of styles (Gothic and Renaissance), modernism too morphed from the 1920s 'smoothness' to a richness in the 1930s (Curtis 1996:306).

For instance, we notice that in his book *The Modern House in England* (1937), Yorke (1937: 58-71) structures the chapter on 'Houses 1934-1937' according to various materials complete with part working drawings that confirms the 1930s shift: "facades became more textured, that finishes rejoiced more in 'natural' effects such as weathering" (Curtis 1996:306). Besides describing the synthetics of 'New

Materials' (for example plywood, cork, vulcanized rubber and plastics), Yorke (1937:24) shows many examples whereby houses have exposed or painted brickwork, stonework or timber boarding.

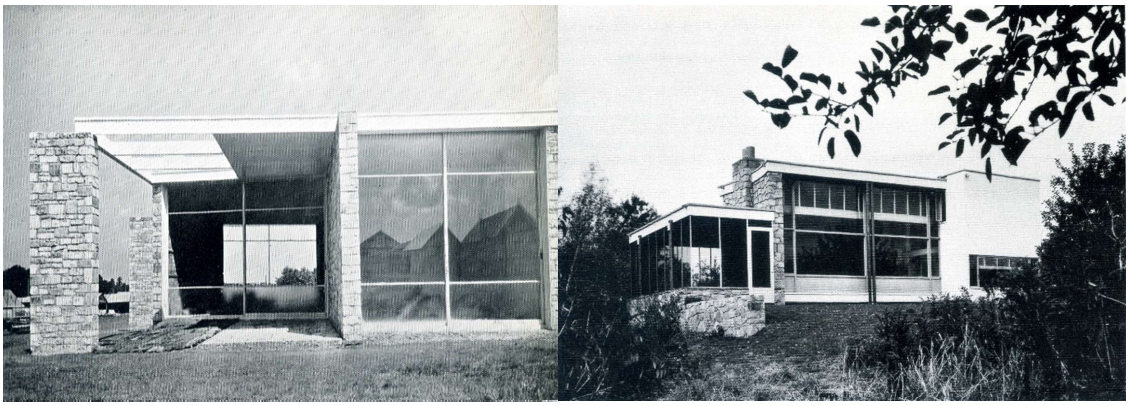

Figure 3.12. Left: Local stone in Marcel Breuer and F.R.S. Yorke, Gane's Exhibition House, Bristol, 1936 (Yorke 1937: 59). **Right:** "Domesticated Modern". Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer Architects, Breuer House, Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1939 (Hyman 2001: 329).

On invitation from the Harvard Graduate School of Design's (GSD), Gropius immigrated to Massachusetts, in the United States of America. Although, he designed a house based on the modernist principles that Yorke described for himself and his wife Ise, he employed the Lincoln 'vernacular' of timber cladding (siding), albeit painted white (Curtis 1996:397). Spurred on by Gropius and much deliberation with Yorke, Breuer too arrived at Cambridge, Massachusetts to take up a post at Harvard. Over and above being colleagues at GSD which they hoped to transform into an "American Bauhaus", they formed a partnership in the firm called 'Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer Architects' (Hyman 2001:94-95).

Thereafter in 1939, the bachelor Breuer, built himself a "domesticated modern" house based on *Wiessenhof Siedlung* principles, but "with curious rustic intrusions such as rubble wall of local stone" (Curtis 1996:397). Unlike Wright's immigrant family that built church 'homes' to appropriate their newfound land, our secularized emigres built modernist 'homes' albeit necessary to anchor "the metonymic association between settler identity and natural landscape" (Bunn 1998:95).

> The fireplace wall curved…and was made of fieldstone; all the rooms had Breuer-designed built-in plywood casework. Two sets of paired columns of wood were anchored in the low stone wall of the screened porch and supported the porch roof beams; another pair of columns stood in front of the south-facing window of the living room to support the cantilevered roof (Hyman 2001:330).

3.5.1.2 Naturalised modernism

> Just as a foreign-born person may become naturalized when moving to a new country, so foreign-born architectural themes were being naturalized through their adaptation to American conditions (Eggener 2017:2)

From our previous chapter, we noticed that in order to alleviate the situation of the Great Depression in America, Roosevelt introduced the New Deal social engineering programmes, such as low-cost housing and urban planning. However, the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) was critical of the Federal's European approach to planning as opposed to their ideas of Greenbelts. Nevertheless, after succeeding to convince the authorities to build some decentralised towns, these garden suburbs proved in 1936 to be unsuccessful due to urban sprawl (Mallgrave 2005:316-318). The issue was, on one hand, imported German housing models versus the single-family house associated with the American lifestyle. Our previous chapter highlighted the necessity of the New Deal having to accept European "cultural supremacy" but more importantly to synthesise them with the American populace – 'The American Dream'. As far as architectural styles were concerned, the quest for American architects was, 'our own building style'. Eggener (2017:2) provides the evidence:

> Starting in the 1920s, there began to appear a series of books that were flush with new-found cultural triumphalism, books with titles such as *The American Spirit in Architecture*, *American Life in Architecture*, and *The American Architecture of Today*. Their authors were confident in tone, hopeful, often boastful, sometimes aggressively nationalistic. They agreed that American architecture, whatever its location, bore material and formal features, and spiritual and intellectual qualities, that marked it as native.

Like most Americans, the historian Lewis Mumford (1885-1990) hailed from an immigration epoch[9] of millions that settled and then *naturalised.* Mumford's maternal family emigrated in the mid-nineteenth century epoch from Hanover, Germany settling in New York City in 1850 (Miller 1989:8). This is no place to delve into the life of Mumford, but it is interesting to note with regards his position on dwellings, that in his autobiography *Sketches from Life* (1982) he latently tells of his supressed childhood and "cynical disdain for family life" and therefore "formed himself in rebellion against his mother and the world" (Miller 1989:6).

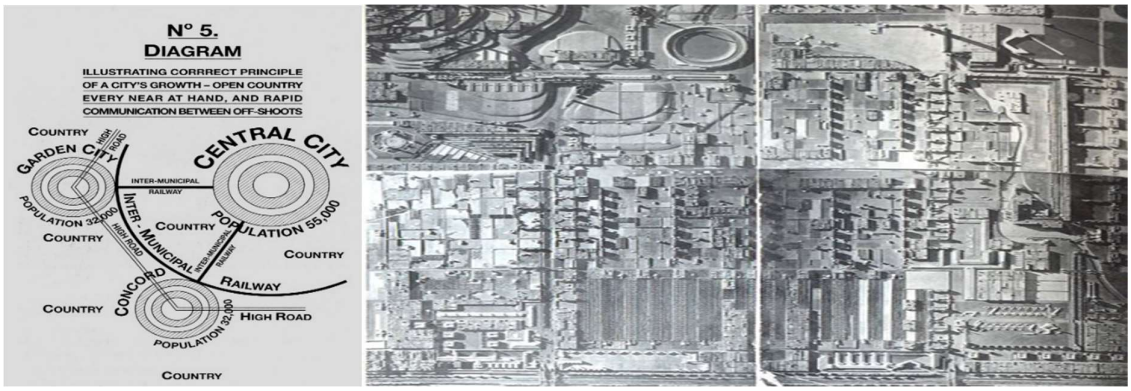

Figure 3.13. Left: Ebenezer Howard's 'Social City' with central city linked to garden satellite cities (Parker 2004: 56). **Right:** Frank Lloyd Wright's 'Broadacre City', 1934-5 (Curtis 1996: 316).

[9] There were four epochs of American immigrations: the colonial period, the mid-nineteenth century, start of the 20th century and post 1965.

As a rebellious intellectual, Mumford was at the forefront in criticizing the New Deal. In fact, he considered the depression crisis as a positive opportunity for a radical socialism and his own version of Americanized communism (Miller 1989:294-295). In his book *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (1924), he called for a "radical reorientation" of an American social order and it was in Ebenezer Howard's garden cities and the RPAA that the solution should be found (Miller 1989:191) (Fig. 3.13. Left).

Thereafter in the 1930s, while employed by the New Yorker as an art critic he wrote *Technics and Civilization* (1934) and *The Culture of Cities* (1938) where he could express his "radical idealism" with "pleas for regionalism, utopianism, satellite garden cities, environmental conservation and urban planning with a sense of order" (Mallgrave 2005:319). One could argue that Mumford's ideas straddle between 'foreign' European modernist concepts and American nationalist constructs.

To exemplify, he disliked the 'international style' of the book *Modern Architecture* that Hitchcock presented to him before publishing (Mallgrave 2005:300). Ironically, without admitting it, he drew modernist ideas, in the late 1920s, from both Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* (translated in English as *Toward an Architecture* 1927) and Gropius' *Die Form* (1925-1926). In order to Americanize the machine aesthetics, Mumford turned Richardson's domestic architecture as an example of regionalised modernity. Allow Miller (1989:178) to explain:

> He [Mumford] found Richardson's shingled cottages, with their long steep roofs, wide windows, and ample bays, superb examples of regional architecture, of a building style in harmony with the land and the climate. If a regionalist movement emerged in America, Mumford hoped that its architects would take inspiration from Richardson's staggering achievement…his contemporaries Sullivan and Root, working in the powerful tradition he had established, carried on the revolution in architecture he [Richardson] had begun…they set out to develop [naturalise] a distinctly American architecture.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, one could agree with Mumford's opinion that Wright influenced the European modernists. However, we must also remind that Wright's influence on Americanism, in the case of the American Art Deco skyscraper, was in turn naturalised by adopting Mayan and Aztec indigenous vernacular motifs. Nevertheless, for Mumford the synthesis of "function and feeling" Americans could find in Lloyd Wrights 'organic' architecture. Although, architects do not design vernacular architecture in the first place[10], Mumford suggested architects look to Wright[11] for the "beauty and worth of vernacular forms, or what is often called architecture without architects" (Miller 173, 182).

Wright's freestanding luxurious dwellings could not easily fulfil the requirements of housing as a 'vernacular' for the large 1930s American population across the vast United States with its various regions. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the 1930s Wright came up with a concept of social planning

[10] The misconception being that 'Vernacular' and 'Regional' are the same
[11] For the relationship between Mumford and Wright, see Miller (1989:183) for further reading.

called ‘Broadacre City’, which he modelled from his book *The Disappearing City* (1932). By disappearing, he meant decentralising and dispersing the mass housing into rural areas as an antithesis to Le Corbusier’s housing blocks (Secrest 1992:447). In keeping with the synthesis of European and American concepts, Mumford disagreed with diffusing single-family houses, but agreed with the order and regionalism of Wright’s proposal (Mallgrave 2005:319,320).

By romanticizing anti-urbanity as garden cities, Wright was reinforcing American populist social ideas not only related to the depression, but also in the construct of an American nationalism. Forty years after the Columbian Exposition, ‘progressive’ concepts consolidated in the Wisconsin Progressive Party’s democratic belief “in the right of men and women to own their own homes, farms and places of employment” and Wright’s Broadacre as “a city in process, rather than a form” was hailed in this regard as “brilliant” (Secrest 1992:448). As an extension of the naturalised Prairie house, Wright’s design of the Usonian house for Broadacres would shift houses from the rich to affordability for an American populace (Mallgrave 2005:320).

Initially, the name for Wright’s low-cost houses was *Erewohn* (Over the Range), the title of Samuel Butler’s book (1872), which is the invention of a fictional country “nowhere’ understood if read backwards. Since Wright intended the houses to be American, he then called them U.S.A. but because of a possible confusion with the Union of South Africa, he settled on the name ‘U-S-O-N-A’ (Secrest 1992:448). Seemingly, just as the very concept of regionalism is difficult to define [12] so too is naming it. Nevertheless, in order to be low-cost, the design had to limit materials and Wright laid out, as the social modernist did, a grid. Furthermore, the roofs were ironically flat and glazed walls opened up to patios (Mallgrave 2005:321). Although, Wright could label these houses as ‘organic regionalism’, one could argue that in appearance they were very similar to European modernism, which belonged ‘nowhere’ specific, but could be naturalised to any region (Fig. 3.14. Left).

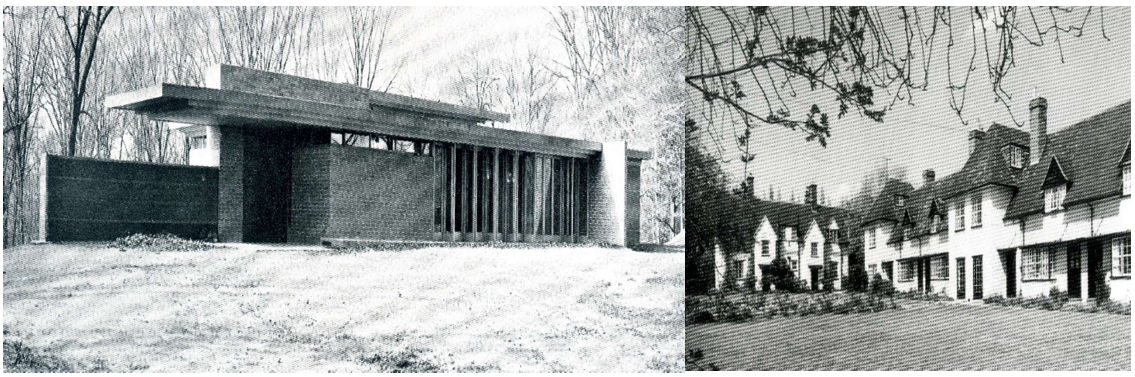

Figure 3.14. Left: Model flat roofed Usonian House. Frank Lloyd Wright, Katherine Winkler and Alma Goetsch House, Orkemos, Michigan, 1939 (Hitchcock 1942: 378). **Right:** Morris’ utopian community revived. Raymond Unwin’s Garden City for Ebenezer Howard, Letchworth, England, 1902 (Parker 2004: 55).

[12] Judin (1998: 28) informs that “the ‘regional’ is usually defined in opposition to the “universal’, but the relationship between the two is not that simple”.

Despite Wright's intentions, Mumford criticized the houses as a freestanding suburban objects, which the majority of Americans could anyway not afford and that housing was more about a sense of community than an architectural style (Fig. 3.14.Left). This criticism resulted in the distancing of Wright from Mumford. The American public housing advocate Catherine Bauer (1905-1964), criticized the design as "romantic, utopian, politically naïve, and socially inept" compared to, as she relayed to Mumford, the "swell houses" of Weissenhof (Mallgrave 2005:320, 318).

Figure 3.15. Left: Stone hearth anchor. Frank Lloyd Wright, Edgar J. Kaufmann House, Bear Run, Pennsylvania, 1935-1939 (Gössel 1991:123). **Right:** Settler anchoring. Frank Lloyd Wright, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1937-1938 (Gössel 1991:131).

The son of a German émigré, the wealthy Pittsburgh businessperson Edgar Kaufmann (1885-1955) commissioned Wright to design a weekend house in the Ulster-Scots settled rural area, Pennsylvania. Due to site-specifics, the famous 'Fallingwater' house (1934-1937) hovers by virtue of cantilevered trays over the 'Bear Run' waterfall. The rough stone chimney 'hearth' anchors the house to its rocky site (Fig. 3.15. Left). Wright's design was the antithesis of the MoMA International Style exhibition principles. Moreover, as an extension of earlier ideas (Prairie house and Taliesin terraces), the 'organic' design "celebrated the specifically American obsession with the free life lived in nature". However, one could argue that this hovering house and Wright's later circular spaceship-like disc designs ironically suggests a universal freeing from the very earth it anchors itself to (Fig 3.15. Right).

Again, we see the necessity to naturalize by exploring "primitivistic" notions (Curtis 1996:311-313). This search for "natural origins" becomes more evident when Wright re-locates from the region of Wisconsin (East) to the very different region of Arizona (West). Wright and his wife Olivine were "drawn to the sand, stones and desert growth of the Arizona Landscape" which they described as "another planet" away from the cold Wisconsin winters. As trekking nomads would do, Wright first surveyed the land "overlooking the rim of the world" from his mobile kitchen vehicle parked at various 'camp-sites" (Goessel 1991:129).

Once the Wright's had identified a site, their team constructed a site with an "earth closet for provisions". Wright never drafted working drawings for what was to be their permanent camp (Secrest 1992:453).

Wright improvised a “desert concrete” for stereotomic walls with the organisation based on Native American geometries and “mythopoetics” (Curtis 1996:318).

> The low, earth hugging forms of Taliesin West combined two desert archetypes in a single idea: the half-buried ‘pit-house’ and the nomadic tent. Wright was fascinated by the archaeological remaims and indigenous cultures of the southwest, and by the idea of building as a mimetic version of the landscape…Wright was both chief and shaman of his own tribe (Curtis 1996:317-318).

By 1938, Wright’s organic regionalism posed a threat to MoMA’s internationalism resulting in the museum displaying mostly American architecture (Eggener 2017:?). Even Hitchcock, who had excluded Wright from the International Style exhibition, shifted to “homegrown American architects” who might have “evolved something worth calling a native style”. Therefore, after complimenting Wright as the “world’s greatest living architect”, Hitchcock invited him to exhibit a retrospective of his work at MoMA which opened in 1940. Wright agreed on the condition that an accompanying book titled *In the Nature of Materials,* Wright would decide on entirely from content to square format (Secrest 1992:463-466 and Hitchcock 1942: xxix-xxxi).

According to Mallgrave (2005:327) American architectural theoreticians were identifying many diverse regionalisms by the 1940s. For instance, James Ford and Katherine Marrow Ford distinguished regional styles between several regions in their book *The Modern House in America* (1940) and the article *Modern is Regional* (1941). Eggeder’s (2017:?) article in the *National Identities* journal, tells how Americans in the decade between 1930 and 1940 were convinced that their “*indigenous* modern architecture” related to their new “*national* architecture”. He goes on to highlight that after Morrow Ford’s book “American regionalism had gone mainstream”, but that it was restricted to the free-standing private house in peripheral areas more so than in cities. Eggeder (2017:?) concludes:

> Regionalism is most effectively understood not as a style…Most of what we have long called modern regionalism never really cohered as a distinct, discrete, shared formal languages…In other words, regionalist modernism was bounded more by time than by geography: It was an architecture of an era first, and of a place only second…Unfortunately, “regionalism” is one of those words used to describe so many situations…in so many places as to be essentially meaningless…Not only is naturalization temporally specific; it also evokes those processes of practical and conceptual adaptation – the cultural made natural, the foreign made local.

3.6 FOURTH STYLISTIC SITUATION: 1940s to 1960s

3.6.1 Contemporary ‘style’

> The post-war years in Europe were characterized by a diversity of beliefs, forms and pedigrees, even by conflicting historical claims about what really counted in earlier modernism. Schisms and

> oppositions were abundant between 'rationalism' and 'organicism'; between those who advocated Mies van der Rohe, and those who advocated Le Corbusier (or Wright, or Aalto, or somebody else); between those who looked beyond national frontiers, and those who looked within, between those that looked forward and those that looked back ….(Curtis 1982;471-472).

One cannot underestimate the impact of the Second World War on the public opinion regarding the problem of appropriate housing. These opinions differed depending on the historical, political and architectural heritage of various countries. The direct impact of war damage influenced positioning vis-à-vis the endurance or incoherence of previous traditions. For instance, the French questioned any ideas of vernacular regionalism, which they equated to the ultra-conservative Pétainist national ideologies that they disliked after the war. Also in Germany, any regionalist probes were associated with the tribulations of 1930s Nazism (Curtis 1982: 471-472, Mallgrave 2005: 308-309). Instead, in their vast duty of reconstructing German homes the priority was "to create an efficient new industrial system based on a democratic base" (Curtis 1982: 472).

As a "liberalizing catalyst" for war damaged Italy, Ignazio Gardella *et al* continued pre-war modernism, albeit with modified Mediterranean roof imagery to appeal to the populist poor (Curtis 1982: 477). Whereas in Finland, which was only slightly damaged, "National Realism" led by Aalto was sustained as universal (Mallgrave 2005: 396, Curtis 1982: 472-474). Neutral and unscathed in the war, Portugal through an "equilibrium between the local and general" followed Siza's attempts to transcend provincialism towards universality (Curtis 1982:483). As a solution for the rebuilding of devastated Holland, similar to Siza, Van Eyck sought a 'universal dimension' in the Dogon villages of North Africa, albeit rigorously abstracted (Mallgrave 2005: 361, Curtis 1982:476).

Whether an atavism of the vernacular or pre-war utopian visions, architectural constructs were not helpful in their divisiveness. Yet, the common denominator was twofold: the need to produce housing and to find a democratic architectural style. Due to "rapid economic expansion combined with the post-war baby boom", it was in the USA and Britain that the housing programmes were most determined (Jackson 1994:31, 176). These two countries provided the "safe middle way" (Curtis 1982:472). If pre-war modernist architects were striving towards a 'style without a style', what would architects and the public call this new stylistic situation? Jackson (1994:9) writes:

> During the 1950s the term "Contemporary' was widely used in Great Britain and the USA to describe the new fashion for modern design. The choice of the word "Contemporary' to characterize buildings and domestic products that were consciously forward-looking rather than traditional, reflected a desire on the part of society to avoid dwelling on the past, and to re-affirm instead its faith in the future. Buildings and products designed in the 'Contemporary" style were thus confident, life-affirming and optimistic. This was a remarkable period for young architects and designers embarking upon their careers; the opportunities for original creative expression were unparalleled, and the attitude of the public towards modern design was more positive and receptive than at any time since the Art Nouveau movement at the turn of the century.

The broader public considered “Contemporary’ as the predominant style. For architects this meant the occasion to cultivate affordable houses that would rewrite societies (Jackson 1994: 176). In 1945, it was George Nelson and Henry Wright’s *Tomorrows House: A Complete Guide for the Home Builder* that would “suggest an alternative to the generally accepted notions of what a house could offer its inhabitants”. That alternative, they suggested, was “not to copy the styles of the past” but instead a “modern idiom” which by the mid-1940s they considered traditional (Jackson 1994: 31-32). Unlike the 1930s approach of Yorke in Britain or that of the European cerebral modernists, Nelson and Wright were not interested in directing their post-war “common sense” persuasions to the rehabilitated. Rather they targeted the wider American public who, due to a post-war housing crisis, were interested in architecture (Jackson 1994: 43).

Besides the film and print media[13], developers endorsed the American ‘dream house’ as “modern’ but in the traditional Cape Cod style complete with pitched roof and shutters (Jackson 1994: 42). In Britain, Lionel Brett in his book *The Things We See- Houses* (1947), attempted at clarifying between authentic and fake styles and then asking the English to ‘look’ before ‘choosing’ styles (Brett 1947:4). Interestingly, the new curator[14] of Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, Elizabeth Mock, published a book entitled *If You Want to Build a House* (1946). She thereby attempted to sway probable clients into trusting that their “psychological well-being” depended more on “space, shape, light, materials and colour” than on imitating styles (Fig. 3.16. Left). Mock (1946:7) expands:

> False faces. No one is really fooled by the bad theatre of the “Colonial”, “the “French Provincial” and the “Regency”, but too many people believe that a flat roof, corner-windows and a chill suggestion of Superman make a house modern.

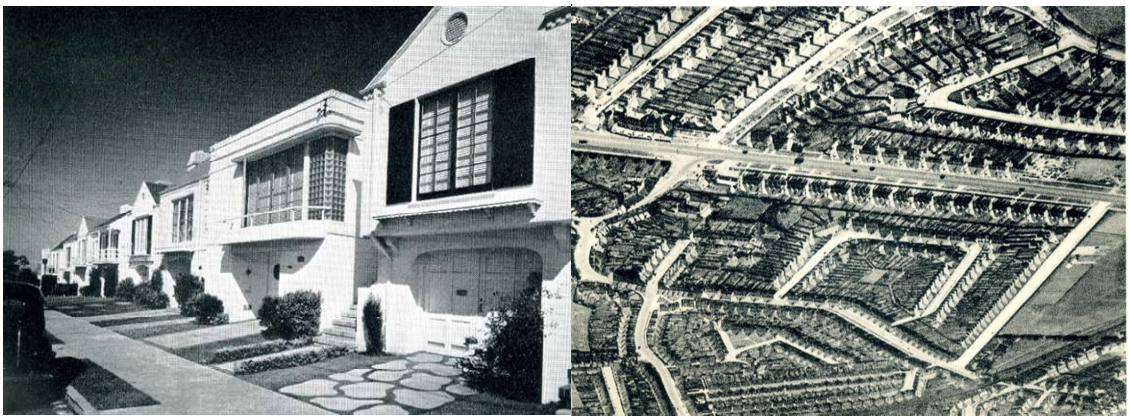

Figure 3.16. Left: “Imitative styles” (Mock 1946: 7). **Right:** “That chicken-farm feeling” (Brett 1947: 14).

[13] For example, the film *Mr Blandings Builds His Dreamhouse* (1948). *Small Homes Guide* for war veterans (Jackson 1994:42).
[14] Publicly exposed during the war, Johnson resigned from MOMA in 1934 to follow Hitler-ism (Mallgrave 2005:329).

By the 1950s, authors replaced the inaccessible word 'Modern' with the time significant word 'Contemporary'. For instance, the British author Oliver Hill describes the 'Evolution of the Contemporary Style' as "new techniques, new aesthetic values and new and unfamiliar forms unrelated to the styles of the past" (Hill 1950: 6). Ironically, the turning point was the anticipated 'Contemporary' kitchen, which the international public equated with the 'Contemporary' house style. Nevertheless, triggered by an economic and baby boom, the real-estate developer William Levitt (1907-1994) represented new quick suburban growth (Levittowns) (Fig. 3.16. Left) with thousands of low-cost standardized "pseudo-Cape Cod cottages", but complete with modern kitchens (Fig. 3.16. Right). Jackson (1994:42-43) writes:

> It was, in fact, the desirability of the "Contemporary' kitchen that partly accounted for the growing popularity in the 1950s of the "Contemporary' house, both in the USA and elsewhere. Furthermore, it was undoubtedly the attraction of the American dream kitchen, with its Formica-topped built-in fitted units, its generously proportioned fridge, and its wealth of labour-saving electrical gadgets, that made many Europeans so keen to emulate the American lifestyle.

Especially after been deprived of possessing a home due to the Great Depression and then Second World War economic frustrations, the new focus for middle-class families was on consumerism and suburbia. Furthermore, the new affluence allowed the purchasing of the new available household mod con appliances and flashy cars (Farber 1994:9). However:

> The great urbanist Lewis Mumford wrote in 1961: "The archetypal suburban refuge; a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold." (Farber 1994:10).

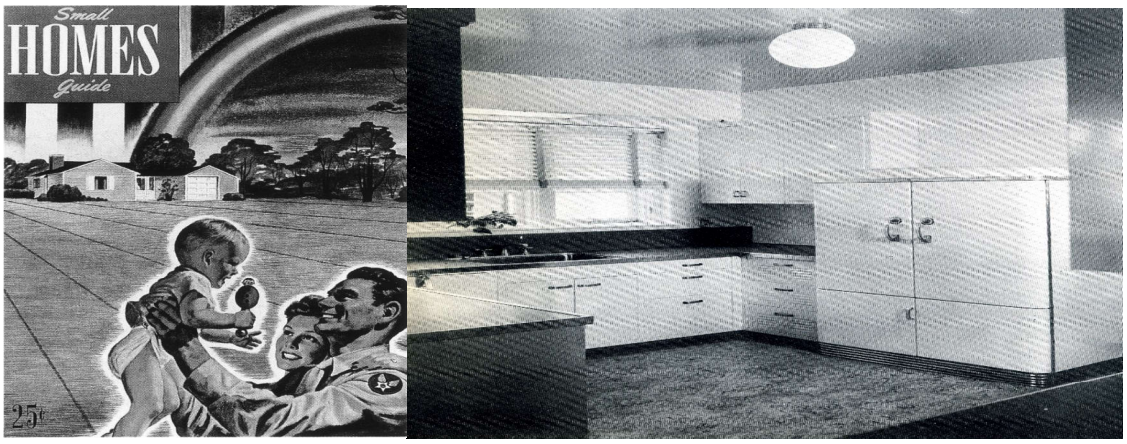

Figure 3.17. Left: Housing for War Veterans. Cover of Small Homes Guide, 1944 (Jackson 1994:42). **Right:** Kitchen by White and Weber, 1940s (Teague 1940: 52).

In 1961, the president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Phillip Will wrote in *Mid-Century Architecture in America* that the "new architecture is an architecture of democracy" and that it was the "ordinary citizen" that was to be taken into account "in the complex urban design of the twentieth-century

life" (Jackson 1994: 175, 176). On the other hand, Richard Neutra suggested an American introspection with regards their increasingly isolated Americanism. Jackson (1994:177) cites Neutra:

> Our architects and planners ought to keep an eye on the rest of the world, on its economic, social, psychological aspects, or else we become foreigners on the planet, while we busily pay off that miracle kitchen of tomorrow, The tomorrow will less probably be ploughed under hydrogen bombs if we cautiously learn to see ourselves, our cities, our houses, our modes of living, our aspirations and also our shortcoming as somehow related to the rest of the world.

3.6.1.1 Liberating isms

> The new style has liberated many of the elements of building. We have seen how modern construction has freed the plan and facilitated the free disposition of the windows; how the use of concrete slab construction has led to the development of the roof terrace in place of the old high-pitched roofs which restricted the elasticity of the internal arrangement of the rooms. Buildings are now redeemed from the crabbing influence imposed by a rigid insistence upon symmetry, and the stressing of the axial plan; from the hindrance, in fact, of a style determined by external appearance. The new style has brought emancipation, imagination and health into the whole organism of building (Hill 1950: 116).

More than a half a century since our *first stylistic situation*, deliberations in favour of the 'modern' were eventually reaching fruition for post-war architects. Although naïve[15] and divided by war, that which was incubated as 'modern' in the 1930s was seen as a pioneering basis for the abler domestic architecture of the 1950s (Brett 1947: 6). Although the pre-war modernist houses were limited in a "visual vocabulary", the breakthroughs of new materials and engineering gave post-war architects new expressive freedom. Initially attempts were "overtly plastic or consciously expressive shapes" combined with rectilinear forms (Jackson 1994:33).

Figure 3.18. Left: Mies van der Rohe and friends relaxing on the Farnsworth House, 1945-50 (source?). **Right:** Case study House Programme. Charles and Ray Eames, Entenza house (No.9) in foreground and Eames house (No.8) in background, 1949 (Jackson 1994: 56).

[15] Brett (1947:6) tells how "Before the War, this modern architecture was a minority movement, suffering its share of abuse, jokes, misunderstanding and phoney reproduction", but instead, "yesterday's minority is tomorrow's majority".

For some the new freedom posed a quandary of whether to "extract a minimalist aesthetic from the norms of technology" or rather pursuit "personal expression" (Curtis 1982: 473). For Mies van der Rohe, the former approach was already clear before the war. Shortly after arriving in the United States, he designed the unbuilt Resor House, Jackson Hiole, Wyoming (1938) which he based on a sketch done in 1934. The free open space principles of this bridge house, which is detached from the ground, predicted the glass and steel Farnsworth House, Illinois (1945-51) (Carter 1999: 31).

Phillip Johnson held the *Mies van der Rohe* exhibition at MoMA in 1947 (Mallgrave 2005: 329, 336). Thereby, being familiar with Mies' plans for the Farnsworth House[16], he built a "Glass House" for himself in New Canaan (1948-1949). Concerned with more than mere stylistics, analysts read "vividly sexual meanings" in these houses. Due to the controversy between Mies Van der Rohe and Edith Farnsworth[17], historians sought "Contemporary feminist readings", while Johnson's homosexuality they termed 'transgressive', 'exhibitionist' and 'camp' (Sudjic 1999:55). Yet, the important message from these houses was the unprecedented affects that modernist architecture could have on the freedom or restrictions of a 'democratic' society (Fig. 3.18. Left). The editor of *House Beautiful*, Elizabeth Gordon described these houses as "unlivability, stripped-down emptiness and therefore a lack of possessions" (Mallgrave 2005:336). Having lost her court case with Mies due to the foregone knowledge that she was to be living in a glasshouse[18], Edith Farnsworth described to *House Beautiful* the "psychological pressure" as follows:

> The truth is that in this house with its four walls of glass, I feel, like I am a prowling animal, always on the alert. I am always restless. I don't keep a garbage can under my sink. Do you know why? Because you can see the whole "kitchen" from the road on the way in here, and the can would spoil the appearance of the whole house. So I hide it in a closet farther down from the sink. Mies talks about "free space" but his space is very fixed…Any arrangement of furniture becomes a major problem because the house is transparent like an X-ray" (Sudjic 1999:56).

Inspired by Mies' 1934 bridge house sketch, Charles Eames (1907-1978) and his wife the artist Ray née Kaiser (1912 – 1988), designed their first "Case Study House" in 1947 (Mallgrave 2005: 335, Winter 1969: 116). However, the design they actually built in Santa Monica (1949) was the obverse of the Farnsworth House (Fig.3.18. right). What was to be a glass suspended bridge perpendicular to the hillside, became earth hugging by rotating it behind eucalyptus trees parallel with the ridge (Winter 1969:116). Known as '#8', the modular[19] seventeen-foot high off –the–shelf steel components with playful infill panels of glass and coloured panels was more "democratic in intent" than the Farnsworth house (Sudjic 1999:57). Reminiscent of Mies' courtyard houses, a patio divides the Eames House in two parts and the covered terrace at end of the continuous free space reminds of Farnsworth, albeit double volume. Less serious than Mies, "freedom of expression and experimentation were recognized as being fundamental to the project" (Jackson 1994:53).

[16] In a 1950s *Architectural Review* article, Johnson only glibly acknowledges the Farnsworth House as inspiration for his New Canaan Glass House. However, Johnson admitted Mies' influence to British critic Janet Abrams after Mies called his house a "rather bad copy" (Mallgrave 2005:329).
[17] There was an analogic relationship between Le Corbusier and Eileen Grey rumoured to be lovers (Sudjic 1999:55).
[18] Edith Farnsworth lived in her glasshouse for twenty years (Sudjic 1999:56).
[19] Charles Eames considered "rigidity of the system" as "responsible for the free use of space" (Jackson 1994:53).

> The Eames house shows that out of an array of mass-produced, machine-made components we can select those we need and build an individual building. Thus we reap the benefits of mass-production and of technologically sophisticated components yet are free to assemble them in our own way. It is like a giant Meccano set (Winter 1969:117).

Although the Eames's had no children[20], their accomplice John Entenza (1905-1984), owner of the *Arts and Architecture*[21] magazine, invited them to design an emblematic suburban family home for his 'Case Study Program'. The idea of inviting architects to design affordable industrial prototypes following the *Designs for Postwar Living* competition grew from Entenza's interest in wartime-prefabricated mass production. Except for Richard Neutra, who Entenza regularly featured in the magazine, the other younger architects invited were a Californian group of which many had worked for Neutra in the 1930s (Mallgrave 2005:334-335). Unknown architects such as Craig Ellwood (1922-1992), Harwell Harris (1903-1990) and Pierre Koenig (1925-2004) were the same generation as our Silent Subversives; They "set new standards of sophistication and modernity for the decade" (Jackson 1994:48).

> Whereas for the Modernist house of the 1930s a flat roof and white stucco walls were virtually *de rigueur*, there was no such restrictions on what the 'Contemporary' house should look like. Many did have flat roofs, but it was by no means prohibited to install a pitch roof, some of which were mono-pitched, others asymmetrical: it really did not matter, and it depended very much on the situation of the house. External finishes were similarly varied, and might be composed of brick, stone, wood panelling, or more likely a combination of two or three different materials. Monotony and clinical regularity were seen as passé; variety, creative irregularity and spontaneity were the new characteristics of post-war domestic architecture…freedom and creative opportunities [was] offered [to] young architects setting up their practices after the war (Jackson 1994:77).

Besides Entenza's technical brief, the important task was to design "both the interior and exterior appearance of the house, as well as its workability from the inhabitant's point of view" (Jackson 1994:47). Different to Edith Farnsworth, clients set up briefs that itemized user requirements beforehand. In some Case Study Houses (for example #6 and #13), clients and their families were fictional, but before construction, the designs were altered to suit actual client summaries (Jackson 1994:48). Although, the intention of the Case Study Houses was for smaller lower income houses, the clients ironically were rich Californians (Welsh 1995:10, 76-77). Nevertheless, the Eames House was exemplary of 'additive architecture' which meant it was not 'fixed' inside and outside but allowed a freedom of being altered and eclectic furnishings rearranged without spoiling, as was the case of Farnsworth, "an unalterable harmonious whole" (Winter 1969:121).

Le Corbusier too had changed his approach to painting, sculptor and architecture from "frigid" to "free" (Bosson 1995:10, 15). The wartime ideas of symbolism gave him an opportunity to reconsider "machine-

[20] Winter (1969:121) comments: "…an elegant spiral staircase without a handrail – this is an adult's only house!"
[21] Entenza purchased the *California Arts and Architecture* in 1939 and dropped the word California to extend the limitation to only one region which transformed the journal into an international magazine (Jackson 1994:47, Mallgrave 2005:334).

age idioms in favour of more organic themes and primary colours" (Mallgrave 2005:343). Bosson (1995:12) describes this shift observed in Le Corbusier's apartment:

> One were not met with a frigid and cold functionalism! On the contrary, his small residence radiated a warm and stylish atmosphere: a cosy living room with a clear balance between the walls' polychrome areas of green, brown, blue, black and white. By the window was a fixed white marble table, a clear red carpet was on the white marble floor, and there were small, comfortable corner sofas in clear colours. They were surrounded by book shelves, sculptures and his own paintings.

Although the 1950s were the most prolific for Le Corbusier's architectural career, his painting, sculptor and tactility made him the famous and influential "figurehead of the 1950s and 1960s" (Fig. 3.19. Left). The architectural manifestations were firstly in two French religious buildings: Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp (1950-5) (Fig. 3.19. Middle) and Monastery of Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, Eveux-sur-l'Arbesle (1953-9). A student at the time, Gawie Fagan, in an interview with Steenkamp (2003:6) reacted to the shift as seen in Ronchamp: "Ons dog die ou is die klutz kwyt" or "[We thought the man lost grip on reality]"

After the war the earlier modernist 'rules' of Sigfried Gideon's *Space, Time and Architecture* were questioned (Fig 3.19. Middle). It was the Italian historian Bruno Zevi (1918-2000) in his book *Verso un'architttura organica* (Towards and Organic Architecture) (Fig. 3.19. Right) who in 1945 challenges Gideon. His premises were related to a weariness of rationalism; disparities between rationality and poetics; and dogmatic abstraction of functionalism. Mallgrave (2005:346) cites Zevi's:

> Architecture is organic when the spatial arrangement of a room, house and city is planned for human happiness, material, psychological and spiritual. The organic is based therefore on a social idea and not on a figurative idea. We can only call architecture organic when it aims at being human before it is humanist.

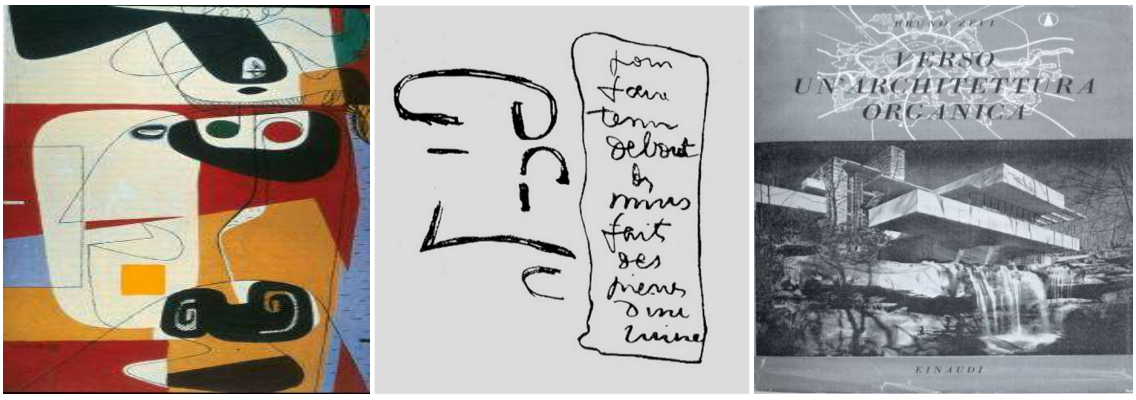

Figure 3.19. Left: Le Corbusier's Taureau V, 1954 (Bosson 1995:55)**. Middle:** *Parti:* From rigid to free. Le Corbusier, Chapel of Notre-Dame-du-haut, Ronchamp, 1950-4 (Le Corbusier 1957: 90). **Right:** Cover of Bruno Zevi showing Wright's Falling Waters as organic architecture, Turin, 1945 (Mallgrave 2005:347).

To exemplify, Zevi refers to Frank Lloyd Wright as representative of organic expressions of local traditions for the 1950s. Soon thereafter, Gideon responds in written editions by too shifting his views

towards to, amongst others, Mumford, non-Western traditions, the Scandinavian architect Hugo Alvar Henrik Aalto (1898-1976) in what he terms “New Regionalism” (Mallgrave 2005:346 -349).

> Toward the middle of the twentieth century we are witnessing the decentralization of Western culture. New energy radiates from its former fringes: Finland, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Canada, to name only some areas of the centers of a new vitality. Countries which have long been slumbering begin to awake and to become active participants on an evolution which is encompassing the entire world (Gideon 1967:549).

Gideon accordingly speaks of the continuity of three generations of architecture and that in “the fifties the third generation of architects came into action”. Gideon (1996:668) goes on to define how the ‘Third Generation” [22] differs from the modernism of the twenties:

> The social orientation is pushed further: a more conscious regard for the anonymous client.
>
> Open-ended planning: the incorporation of changing conditions as a positive element of the plan.
>
> Incorporation of traffic as a positive element of urban planning.
>
> Greater carefulness in handling the existing situation, so that interplay can arise between architecture and environment, each intensifying the other.
>
> An emphasis on the architectural use of horizontal planes and different levels. Most forceful use of artificial platforms as urbanistic elements.
>
> A stronger relation to the past; not expressed in forms but in the sense of an inner relationship between inner and outer space and between volumes in space.
>
> The right of expression above pure function.

3.6.1.2 beyond style-isms

> After 1969 the bubbles seem to have burst, the fizz to have subsided. The environment and its ecology[23] became major public issues with such sub-headings as pollution control, recycling, organic food, nature communes and simple handcrafts. The sobriety was reflective in a religious revival (Ray Smith cited by Fox 1998:28).

Our previous chapter has shown that the allies fought a war for “freedom, democracy and human rights”. Architects were to reflect these qualities in the new Contemporary Style. Considering the fact, that McCarthyism and the repression of political subversion marginalised large numbers of people due to their race, any claims for a true democratic architecture for all was therefore questionable. In America the pro white Jim Crow laws spoke the same language of ‘separate but equal’ of South Africa’s apartheid’s crystallised Group Areas Act (Hall 2016:10-11).

[22] See Chapter 4 for Fisher’s term ‘The Third Vernacular’ coinciding with ‘The Third Generation’.
[23] For instance, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) planted the seeds for new ecology movement (Jamison 1995:26)

The architect that was verbal against exclusions of sectors of the Californian society was Richard Neutra (Jackson 1994: 176-177). From the many publications, architects knew Neutra's luxurious Kaufmann House (1947) with its expansive glass doors that lead "out across a rectangular pool to the surrounding desert landscape" of Palm Springs (Curtis 1996:399, Mallgrave 2005:333). However, Neutra's main concerns were social issues and affordable low-cost building solutions. His pre-fabricated experimentations and built-works for low-cost homes, migrant housing, open-air schools, and health clinics were less about style-isms and more about social resolutions. In 1948, Neutra compiled these investigations in his book *The Architecture of Social Concern in Regions of Mild Climate* (Mallgrave 2005:334). Neutra (1946:6-7) wrote:

> …the present historical moment of after-war-wreckage…is profoundly in need of methodology, of a rational, of a systematic approach for wholesale planning and reconstruction…Contemporary housing or education – or health care of the masses of a nation, or in fact of a global population, has really no historical precedent. It has never been attempted systematically before, and it could not have been. It is now a requirement, historically emerged to a point that it cannot be ignored, and it is a requirement, however staggering in appearance, that can well be matched by the methodology of a war-trained industry, whom designers well skilled in the new systematics may gain the privilege to lead (Neutra 1946:6-7).

Stylistic debates were mostly about technology versus art, but for the sake of architectural styles. We have seen how social historians attempted to include humane aspects, but often these seemed to justify stylistics. For example Joseph Hudnut's essay *The Post-Modern House* (1949), debaters used for a "more balanced melding of emotional values with technology". Mumford versus MoMA continued debates surrounding 'Modern' and Region' into the 1950s. The irony is that both positions, they and their supporters intended for "internationalism, not a sample of localism" (Mallgrave 2005:337). Nevertheless, critics were questioning Mumford's romanticized ideals and "restrictive regionalism" as precedent for the crisis at hand – massive scale urban housing (Mallgrave 2005:337, 340).

Although, Neutra was correct in saying that there was "no historical precedent" for post-war challenges, theoretical approaches from Scandinavia provided indicators. Labelled 'New Empericism'[24], a group of Scandinavian architects aimed at reconciling pre-war rationalism with human homely comforts. For instance, the Danish architect and urban planner, Steen Eileer Rasmussen's (1898-1990) *Town and Buildings* (1951) provided an antithesis to sprawling American suburbia. This contributed to the concepts for Scandinavian satellite towns, such as Vällingby (1952-1956) designed, in conjunction with the Stockholm city council, by Sven Markelius (1889-1972) Vallingby's social interrelationship between urbanism and people, architectural writers[25] hailed as the ideal 'Welfare-state' model (Jackson1994: 180-184).

[24] Coined by J.M. Richards in *Architectural Review* 1947, the Scandinavians associated with 'New Empericism' were, amongst others, Sven Markelius, Sven Backström, Eiler Rasmussen, Arne Jacobsen and Alvar Alto. (Mallgrave 2005:349, Chipkin 1993:268).
[25] For example, Kidder Smith (1913-1997). He also wrote and photographed *Brazil Builds* (1943).

The stylistically "bland" Scandinavian solution, English socialist debates, regarded as "populist kitsch" (Mallgrave 2005:353). The Swedish term *nybrutalism* (New Brutalism)[26], English socialists used as alternative theory to the Nordic model that British Labour reformists emulated in the Roehampton Estate, London (1952-1955). (Curtis 1996:529-530, Jackson 1994:177180). Known as the Independent Group (IG) led by Alison (1928-1993) and Peter Smithson (1923-2003), a 'silent generation' of English architects related their ideas of "urban reidentification', not with styles, but with the "stuff" of urban street life (Curtis 1996:530, Mallgrave 2005: 353, Chipkin 2008:185). Along with their contemporary the critic Reyner Banham (1922-1988), their theories merged the "rough grain of modern urban life" with the Art Brut of the artist Dubuffet and Le Corbusier's *béton brut* "a second heroic age" (Mallgrave 2005:353) and thereby ironically proclaiming yet another new "heroic" style. (Chipkin 2008:185).

Figure 3.20. Left: Experiencing "Daylight in Architecture", Gunnar Asplund, Gothenburg City Hall, Sweden, (Rasmussen 1959:196). **Right:** Experiencing "Dirty style blues", Art Brut, Jean Dubuffet, 1946 (Butler *et al* 1997:137).

To deal with 'social realism', British 'silent generation' architects reconciled Rudolf Wiitkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949) (Curtis 1996:530) with Banham's anti-Morris *Theory & Design in the First Machine Age* (1960) (Mallgrave 2005:353). Furthermore, the European existentialist writings of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and countercultural essays of Albert Camus (1913-1960) served as subversive texts inspiring a world beyond style-isms (Curtis 1996:530). Probably in defence of 'New Imperialism', Rasmussen wrote *Experiencing Architecture* (1959).

> The architect is a sort of theatrical producer, the [wo]man who plans the setting for our lives. Innumerable circumstances are dependant on the way he arranges this setting for us. When [her]his intentions succeed, [s]he is like the perfect host who provides every comfort for [her]his guests so that living with [her]him is a happy experience. But [her]his producer job is difficult for several reasons. First of all, the actors are quite ordinary people. [S]He must be aware of their natural way of acting; otherwise the whole thing will be a fiasco. That which may be quite right and natural in one cultural environment can easily go wrong in another; what is fitting and proper in one genaration becomes ridiculous in the next when people have acquired new tastes and habits (Rasmussen 1959:10-11).

[26] Originally coined by Swedish architect Hans Asplund. *Nybrutalism*, but more widely used after Reyner Banham's book *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic* (1966).

The 1956 London Institute of Contemporay Art (ICA) exhibition *This is Tomorrow* sparked off populist art (pop art). The highlight was Richard Hamilton's collage *Just What Is It That Makes Today's House So Different, So Appealing?* The poster depicted "a 1950s living room with a television, an American body builder in peacock pose, an unclad woman on the sofa with oversized breasts, and a canned ham on the coffee table" (Mallgrave 2005:354) (Fig. 3.21.Left). Banham followed up with a dissertation, which captivated "American pop culture". Mallgrave (2005:354) suggested Banham's study, "posed a far more serious threat to the status quo" since it silently subversively "raised the question of just what social forces were really in control of design: high art (architects) or popular culture?"

Although, a silent generation had planted a stylistic situation for the social activism of the 1960s, it was only in the late 1990s that moral defiance would surface (Jamison 1995:xii). By the end of the 1960s a new generational consumerist populist style was spurred on by the 'complexity and contradiction' of the American architect Robert Venturi (b1925) and English cultural theorist Charles Jencks (b1939) (Fig. 3.21. Right). The interruption would be what Charles Jencks called *Postmodernism* and a stylistic situation this study prefers to exclude as irrelevant to the time focus of our Silent subversive's dwellings.

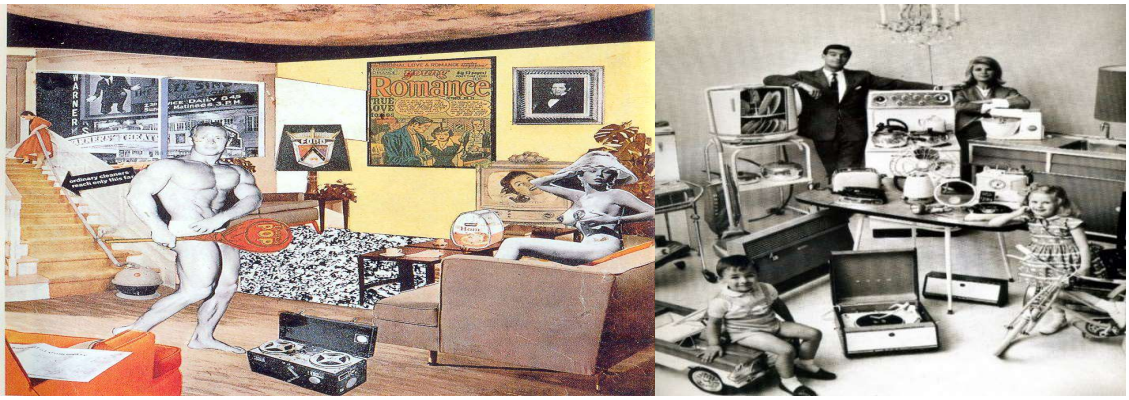

Figure 3.21. Left: Richard Hamilton's collaged interior, 1950s (Butler *et al* 1994: 205)**. Right:** "Consumer Society", 1960s. (Jackson 1994: 218).

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3.7 SUBCONCLUSIONS

This chapter has dialectically weighed up style dichotomies across four stylistic situations or affinities. The investigation has established paradoxical dichotomies regarding perceptions and authenticity of International versus Regional stylistic imagery in relation to socio-economic and aesthetic ideologies. These sentiments we tested in relation to issues of historic aesthetic values and utilitarian post-war urgencies. Particularly in America, we highlighted the constructs of regionalisms, legitimized by romanticized principles of settler to rural nature, socially inept and freestanding houses with pitched roofs albeit hypocritical international borrowings. On the other hand, we demonstrated how historians

exported European modernism intended for larger mass-produced housing to an American audience, albeit visualised as a new international style with flat roofs. We noticed that the synthesised outcome of schizophrenic styles resulted in a theatrical architecture, not for social representation, but for capitalist progress. Thereafter, this chapter established that the more textured work or 'new aesthetic' of the European émigré architects posed a challenge to regionalist and nationalist clichés with regards urban sprawl and economic reality for smaller labour saving houses. We observed that lifestyle shifts brought about the relevance of everyday living beyond mere stylistic concerns that we saw modern architects manifested in unencumbered freer open spaces that related to outdoor courts suited to urban living.

Within the problem of appropriate post-war housing, we discerned the schism between those wishing to transcend provincialism towards universality and those attempting to revive a traditional past. Within the need to produce housing, we detected how the developer targeted previously deprived middle-class families with faux suburban styles combined with the consumption of labour saving facilities such as modern kitchens. To find a democratic style, we reflected on how mid-century architects replaced the inaccessible 'Modern' style with an emancipated 'Contemporary' approach that corresponded with the freedom of a democratic post-war society. Less serious than their pre-war predecessors, we acknowledged the shift from 1930s modernism towards 1950s social concerns, although often justified by stylistics. These humane attempts at affordable low-cost building solutions, we indicated as in Scandinavia, were the antithesis of American suburban sprawl. Besides countering Nordic models as another heroic style, we saw the rise of counter-culture as an alternative existentialist way of dealing with social realism. We concluded the chapter and time focus of the thesis with the termination of social forces beyond the control of architects and design in the hands of popular culture and a post-modern stylistic situation.

Taking the previous Chapter and this Chapter into consideration, the next chapter re-evaluates South African stylistic ideologies that historians have constructed as the lens through which we read the domestic architecture of the generation in question.