Introduction

The subject of this discussion is Fritz Neumeyer’s *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art*, published in Germany in 1986 and issued by MIT in 91. This is an important text which traces the philosophical sources and underpinnings of Mies’s architectural thinking and work. In Stanley Allen’s Review of the Artless Word he claims that Neumeyer’s achievement is to overturn the general opinion of Mies as a man of few words specifically the misconception that Mies was dismissive of the written word and disengaged from philosophical thinking, and committed to the truth that emanated from ‘the things themselves’. The Artless Word he says portrays Mies as deeply engaged in philosophical matters and more importantly shows the development of Mies’s thinking as “the direct outgrowth of deeply felt philosophical reflections”. In spite of this, Allen criticises Neumeyer for taking Mies’s writing both unreflectively and too literally. The first thing one notices in the Artless Word, is a marked lack of skepticism in Neumeyer’s rendition.

My overall opinion of the book is that Neumeyer’s detailed account of all the people Mies was affiliated with, the people he worked with and was influenced by, the books Mies read - not to mention underlined and annotated - is so rigorous and involved that it avoids the kind of reflection and problem that is implied by such a speculative subject matter viz. Architecture's relationship to Philosophy. Neumeyer aligns himself with the metaphysical idealism that he finds in Mies and this becomes more and more evident as the account develops culminating in an extended elaboration of Guardini’s philosophy and influence on Mies. Here Neumeyer appears not to be speaking so much about Mies as to be praising Guardini’s religious convictions which he then uses to think about the spiritualism of the Farnsworth House. When I started reading the artless word I thought Neumeyer had no opinions at all and by the end I found his theological-philosophical agenda completely overwhelming. The second problem which is related to the first is Neumeyer’s nostalgia towards Mies that does not allow the author to go far enough in thinking about the problems of Mies’s metaphysics of Architecture (as I will call it) For example he says

[Mies’s] laconic sentence that accompanied the “Concrete Residential Building” is hard to excel in its renunciation of aesthetic design criteria: “I cut openings into the walls where I need them for view and illumination.” In contrast to this pragmatic realism, Le Corbusier’s lyrical interpretation of openings-[and he quotes] “The holes give much or little light, make gay or sad” – seems hopelessly sentimental. [italics mine] Apparently here too Berlage’s rigor had served as example: “The actual decoration of the walls is the windows,” declared Berlage, adding at once, “one must of course only install them where needed.”

It is this kind of narrating that makes me wonder whether Neumeyer misses the essential nostalgia in Mies or whether it is Neumeyer who frames Mies in a kind of nostalgia (in this instance through the contrast with LC). Whose nostalgia is being covered over? The accusation of sentimentality is always underlined by its own nostalgia for an idealised state of authenticity free of value. This is where we should be careful not to impose nostalgia on Mies. The flip side of the coin is there is a certain nostalgia in these statements which lies in the mere fact of stating something like ‘the decoration of the walls is the windows’. The ingenuousness is revealed in the hasty caveat which
follows, *one must of course only install them where needed.* Mies’s statement is more opaque, he gives less away but if the architecture is an instantiation of a perfected state of being then the need for speaking itself needs to be challenged. Neumeyer does acknowledge this problem of the relation of Mies’s architecture and writing when he says “that what is interesting is the idea that the truth had to unfold without mediation and yet words were required to mediate between architecture and the truth about world.” However, this is as far as he goes.

That being said I think it is less useful to criticise Neumeyer for having not gone far enough in his project than it does to use these blind spots in the *Artless Word* as a way to begin an analysis of what is seemingly deficient in Mies (himself). So the intention is to use Neumeyer as a ground for discussing those aspects of Mies's philosophy that are complicated and difficult to resolve. I will try and raise some of the difficulties in Mies’s statements that arise through reading Neumeyer (both what is difficult in Mies and Neumeyer. Rather than cover the whole book I adumbrate the first major shift in Mies’s thinking as given in the *Artless Word*, so the first section of this paper discusses roughly the years up to 1924 and the second the years that follow between 1924-27. Please refer to the rough sketch of these periods in the handout. The left hand items are the thinkers that were influencing Mies at the time according to Neumeyer. The second handout I try to draw out the salient lines from the appendix where Mies’s writings, lectures and publications appear in Neumeyer.
Neumeyer’s account: Mies’s Position

Up to 1924

Architectural

Form-giving → anti-formalism → form as goal is formalism
form is result of construction → Construction vs Meaning
Intrinsic form → anti-aesthetics → Simplicity vs Complexity
Berlage → not Behrens → form-finding vs form creating

Philosophical

Essentialism
Berlage → not Behrens
Hegel → not Nietzsche → will-to-form is also formalism
Raoul Francé not will to power → but will to discipline the will
not zeitgeist → but zeitwille

1924-1927

Architectural

Shift away from form as structure → to form as plant

Philosophical

Shift away from materialistic- → to idealistic-
Positivistic → aesthetic
Technology → to Nature
Rudolf Schwarz + Nietzsche → Spirit not abstraction
Francé
Siegfried Ebeling Der Raum als Membran (space as membrane, 1926)
Theories of biological architecture
Background

I
Up to 1924

Mies’s concept of form-giving

In the beginning of the twenties, Mies was obsessed by the idea of form-giving. Art no longer has an imitative role in society but a formative one. Form is not the representation of reality but the production of. Mies’s key statement for this time is “Form as goal is formalism; and that we reject.” Mies positioned himself alongside Berlage who argued against creating form, instead advocating form-finding. Mies identified with Berlage’s search for truth, based on the Hegelian model of art grounded in truth. Berlage’s influence led to an anti-aesthetics, the pursuit of the fundamental, the essential.

At the same time, Behrens was advocating the aesthetic position, an aesthetics based on a hybrid of classical forms and modern industrialisation. He said, just as there are physical laws, there are also artistic laws. Behrens was interested in the image, in art as poetic metaphor “or in Nietzsche’s words it creates “reality once more, only selected, strengthened, and corrected.” So from Nietzsche’s ‘Reason in Philosophy’ in Twilight of the Idols Behrens philosophy was that the world is not grounded in an ultimate truth that needs to be discovered but is something that we interpret. Neumeyer characterises Berlage’s philosophy as metaphysical Idealism (Wesenphilosophie) “traditional belief in a metaphysically guaranteed wholeness” based on Hegel and Schopenhauer versus Behrens’ Nietzschean “autonomous, rational individual that insists on imparting meaning to its own existence”. Mies aligned himself with Berlage and Hegelianism. Behrens spoke about the new art by introducing the ideas of various Art Historians such as Wölflin and Alois Riegl e.g. Riegl’s Kunstwollen or “will to art” which was also rejected by Mies. “What is essential about form is only “arrived at through the correct means”, however Will to Form is formalism, form must show itself through itself in itself and of itself and not be determined in advance. Mies argues “even will to style is formalism”.

After going through this basic conflict within the new art theory as represented by Behrens and Berlage, Neumeyer proceeds to locate Mies’s philosophical position in two aspects (1) Mies is a Platonist both in his commitment to only that which is essential, coupled with his belief that “only questions into the essence of things are meaningful”. Thus, “The inquiry into the building art” is itself an “inquiry into the intrinsic”. Form is secondary to construction. In spite of this Neumeyer reads in Mies’s philosophy a conflict between materialistic-metaphysical philosophy (the things themselves, a kind of phenomenology) and idealistic rationalism (the ideal form). Neumeyer concludes by saying that Mies was not just conflicted about his philosophical position but that this carried through into his aesthetic position.

even if Mies in the early 20’s rejected all will to form “as academic and speculative, his thought and statements remained ambivalent. In spite of the rhetorical impetus of denial, the executing impulses insisted on perfect form-giving and appearance – and thence on the rights of art. The unequivocal commitment to construction may have put the question of meaning into the background but it did not answer it. Thus the imaginary dialogue between two worlds, encountered by Mies at the beginning of his career, continued. They challenged him to press for the simplest common denominator on the one hand, while on the other to strive for richness
I would like to use this background to start to speak about some of the problems that arise in the text. (1) Mies and Form (2) Mies and Philosophy and (3) Mies and Abstraction which will be the subject of my paper. The intention is to use what is problematic in Neumeyer as a way of raising what is problematic in Mies’s thinking itself and so I’m going to swing between talking about Neumeyer and Mies which may confuse.

(1) Mies conception of Form

Mies and Form – striving for a negative idea of form, content over form as form itself.

What comes out of this discussion about Mies’s conception of Form is the question about what Mies is in pursuit of. If he claims that form is not the object, but construction or what he calls means then why are we left wondering what is in deficit. It isn’t as if Mies has answered his own question with the solution provided. Another way of looking at it is Mies claims that form is not what he is looking for and yet his polemic amounts to a theory of form, a negative not-form. It is a strange disavowal of form. Form unfolds as the truth of construction or building process. But it isn’t the process that is in question but form itself. The process does not require formulation, it is self-given. He claims that the means are what count and yet it is the conception of form that is denied. So Form as the covert object of pursuit, lurks behind Mies’s polemic. What Mies is constructing is in fact a negative idea of form, a form that withdraws from itself. This idea of absence and the negative is pursued in Del Co which I’m sure you’ve all read for today. I would like to pursue this idea of negative form in my paper in an attempt to locate Mies in a contemporary discourse on abstraction.

But Mies’s negative concept of form, form as absence is not an empty set. The reason form does not need to be invented aside from it being the result of construction, is that the essential form [and I quote Mies] “is already present” residing as a perpetual energy at the “core of things,” it need only be expressed by a contemporary consciousness…something that ‘always has been and always should be’”. So the absence of form, Mies fills with the idea of spirit. [Hegel] Neumeyer adds “The redemption of the absolute and the timeless was furnished by the philosophical method of abstraction” [do not read this: What does abstraction mean but the removal from materiality, a kind of translation into an idea, into spirit?]

How can Neumeyer speak of redemption and the absolute in a single utterance? The absolute and timeless by definition cannot be buried or perverted as the phrase redemption implies. The absolute is safe from such contingency. But this merely gives us a glimpse into the strangeness of Mies’s project: an attempt to recover an absolute which has lost its ground. (and this was typical in Germany at the time – do not read this, but relate to Heidegger’s Way into the Ground of Metaphysics and the groundless grounding) Yet this project has a certain philosophical sophistication: the searching for the groundless ground, [formless form] one which is in a state of self withdrawalness, could be compared to Derrida’s differance. And yet we need to question, was this the project? [do not read - To find the groundless ground in the same way that Heidegger speaks of the silent refusal of Being in his later work].

So the claim is that the absolute is an ephemeral leveling out concept, an abstraction that Mies wished to embody in form and yet by definition the absolute is beyond contingency or ephemerality.
The third thing to mention is Mies’s idea of the absolute is complicated by being linked to a definite historical moment. For Mies, the absolute was only properly expressed in early Greek architecture. Neumeyer says: “Thus Mies in an archaising act of abstraction, bent the bow backward toward fictive origins where the forms, as it were, took their beginning: “building” gropes to regain a lost condition of primordial innocence.” [do not read - A strange statement but we can compare to Heidegger’s idealising of early Greek Philosophy and striving to return to this truer and more correct moment in philosophy after which it degenerated.] So the absolute is contained in the true origin of architecture but the conception of beginning is absolute truth which is “innocent and corruptible”.

_So Mies’s conception of form can be problematised in the formulation: form as absence which takes form with a timeless and absolute spirit. [Need to reference Hegel’s lectures on Aesthetics]_

Which brings us to the second problem,

(2) Mies and Philosophy

Neumeyer describes Mies’s aim as metaphysical.

That the conflation of architecture with Philosophy in the Artless Word remains unproblematised is so obvious as to not inspire criticism but it can be used as a starting point for thinking about how Mies operates conceptually, inside two discourses. Architecture within its discoursing about itself develops its own metaphysics of itself of its own Being if we can call it that. In Neumeyer there is a seemingly unintentional conflation between what I call a metaphysics of architecture and Metaphysics proper. For instance he says “the representatives of the new art called for an art in tune with universal laws.” The other problem is that these philosophers all write about Art, Heidegger, Hegel, Nietzsche as well as producing their own Metaphysics. The relationship between the metaphysics and the theories on Art is not clear cut and I can only speak about this matter in the most general of ways here. And architectural discourse has produced its own confused metaphysics, instead of Being there is form, space or sometimes surface. When we speak of architecture’s identity or autonomy it gains a being on another level. Mies’s search for the true Being of Architecture if we can say that is what he was doing is his own architecture philosophy which ultimately needs to be understood as a system separate belonging to Mies and not to philosophy. Neumeyer continually refers to Mies as Hegelian or Neo-Platonic and yet his conception of form as absence is more Heideggerian in its mode of thinking. And Mies professing that you can’t say anything about this, his disavowal of the text is also Heideggerian, the disavowal that language is not capable of expressing... Doesn’t the modern stance privilege logos, [thinking] over Being?, a platonic stance that Mies is certainly skeptical of. If we read in between Hegel and Guardini in Mies’s statements something different emerges.

[Maybe don’t do this bit on truth]

Neumeyer gives an account of Mies’s conception of truth, [a good exercise if you think Mies is a metaphysician] “The Miesian order of thinking followed this maxim, wanting to reconcile the essential and the existential, the eternal being and the present in a “truth relationship”. And Mies subscribes to Thomas Aquinas: truth as adequetio intellectus et rei” which means the adequation or correspondence of idea and thing and is known as the correspondence theory of truth. So we say something is true when we discover that a statement corresponds to or is in agreement with the matter or state of affairs it is about.
Notwithstanding, Aquinas’s formulation adequatio intellectus et rei, doesn’t really seem to be what Mies is after at all. In fact this seems to be a fairly contingent notion of truth. Mies actually subscribes to the idea of truth as that which shows itself in itself and of itself, which is closer to Heidegger’s idea of truth as showing or disclosedness. The material disclosing itself in how and what it should be, the form in turn disclosing itself as derived from some higher process. For Heidegger, the correspondence theory of truth is not incorrect but a derivative form of truth grounded in truth as disclosedness. Isn’t this closer to how Mies sees the relation between form and its revealing itself through construction? Form is derivative. Mies is more a radical phenomenologist than he is a neo-Platonist but these categories are of no interest, we need to discover what is Mies’s philosophy. Mies’s search for the truth of form entails looking for the kind of abstraction that lends itself to the ultimate form-showing, or revealing of form’s revealing itself. In order to make this point, Mies needs to be engaged in a high level of abstraction in order to maximally show this showing. Of course Mies also privileges essence over form (essence is to do with being and metaphysics, form with architecture) So a new opposition based half in metaphysics with something architectural added is the result we could work with. (essence and presence.)

[Don’t read out, ask class. Wesensforschung is translated as immanent but wesen is nature or essence and forschung is research and I am wondering if immanent is the right translation. Immanent means indwelling, and also refers to a certain ubiquity.]

(3) Mies and Abstraction, Mies’s practice as abstraction

What emerges from the discussion of Mies’s thinking of form is the idea of abstraction as the central issue in discussing Mies which I will develop later in my paper.

Perhaps instead of speaking about Mies’s philosophy by tracing his influences and reading it is more useful to think of a Miesian philosophy and speak about Mies’s practice which would attempt to think at once his statements about the work and the work itself. As practice Mies is involved in a high order level of abstraction – both making abstract and forming abstraction. His stripping back of his buildings alongside the consistent stripping back of his own arguments, the disavowal of his thinking are what I call producing abstraction. Again we can refer to Del Co to support this kind of argument.

So what are some of Mies’s abstractions?

(1) Mies’s statements about the unfinished building seem almost childish. It is something we might think but wouldn’t publish or use as ground for a manifesto. What was Mies thinking? Mies was not positing an unfinished building but an abstraction, an unfinished conception of form. This is what he was really after.

(2) Mies’s aestheticising both the primitive form and modern engineering, the leaf hut and ocean liner. These are abstractions for the kind of thinking about form that Mies aspired to.

(3) Laugier’s, Vitruvian primal hut. Abstraction and type, abstraction and archetype.
(4) Abstraction in what I will designate roughly as Mies’s presentations of ideas and images. Neumeyer’s description of Mies’s promotion of his Friedrichstr. skyscraper and Concrete Office Building:

To the large format drawings corresponded a polemical expressiveness that, by means of a deliberate rejection of the traditional rhetoric, created the impression of aloofness…the omission of detail in word and image augmented their suggestiveness. The generalizing character of Mies’s texts elevated the statements into an ideal sphere that sidestepped social problems and fused the realistic and the fantastic very effectively. [italics mine]

The aloofness, the omission, the generalising and idealising character that Neumeyer claims all point to a certain mode of abstraction that was Mies’ practice. Abstraction is not to reduce or eliminate and here Neumeyer helps draw for us this distinction. It is easy to condemn Mies’s nothingness, and yet Mies was in search of a positive term but it took the form of a negation through a series of disavowals which we have discussed already.

(5) Louis Sullivan presented the following argument in 1901 “You cannot think in the past, you can only think of the past. You cannot think in the future, you can only think of the future. But reality is of, in, by and for the present and the present only”. This distinction between of and in is important for the idea of abstraction. The abstract is that which mediates. It isn’t the thing in itself, an abstraction is by definition not the empirical but that which has a kind of distance. The abstraction is always of something and here is the contradiction. Mies wanted the presence of something not present, not presence but presence of.

(6) Neumeyer claims that in spite of that “much proclaimed engineering style, there existed an extraordinary artistic effort.” He ascribes certain classical allusions in Mies’s work as Mies’s shift toward the aesthetic. E.g. The grading of the floors in the concrete office building. Neumeyer’s conclusion is that “Mies did not reject historicism as seemed indicated by his statements which emphasised construction and materials.” But we could argue that classicism is for Mies a means of still achieving the formless unaesthetised object. The classical lines and inflections are all tools, and relations which do not think render the building form for the sake of form. But more importantly if we think of Mies as the abstractor, then classical details show that the abstraction is not about formal reduction per se as might be thought.

II
1924-1927

Shift in Mies’s conception of form

(1) Mechanization ➔ Spirit

The shift in Mies’s conception of Form is encapsulated in two statements one he made at the opening lecture on the Weisenhoffsiedlung where he completely retracts his idea of industrialisation being the solution; the second about Henry Ford: “what Ford wants is simple and illuminating. His factories show mechanisation in dizzying perfection. We agree with the direction Ford has taken, but we reject the plane on which he moves. Mechanisation can never be goal, it must remain means. Means toward a spiritual purpose.”
So if we think back to Mies’s first formulation of form: Mies’s disavowal of form, which he retracts, his hatred of what he calls expressionist formalism. Now we see the retraction of mechanisation which Mies had formerly deferred to. This withdrawal of mechanisation can be interpreted as a withdrawal of means itself. Mies denies means as the final arbiter Mies peels away at his own schema term after term.. What Mies is striving for is always given as a kind of derridean absence, or negative.

[do not read out - What makes Mies a philosopher is not what he takes from philosophers but his own disavowal of what he has thought, the stock move, to posit and retract. Plato’s disavowal of knowledge, Wittgenstein’s reversal of the tractatus, Heidegger’s changing permutations of Being which sought always to escape the metaphysical thinking that he felt even his early work in Being and Time was still subject to, Derrida’s formulation every text can be deconstructed, etc this is the modern philosopher’s work.

So what did Mies replace the 1924 conception of function with? In 1927 in “Baukunst und Zeitwille!” Mies expressed that the residential building was derived quite simply “to suit its purpose, namely organizing the activity of living.” But for Mies this organising was about ordering existence and order he said determined the function. Finally order imparts meaning.

This change in Mies’s position a shift from the materialistic-positivistic to the idealistic and aesthetic began in 1925 1926. “Statements change from the problem of materials to one of spirituality.”

(2) “No longer spatially apprehended will of the epoch but the spatial execution of spiritual decisions. So architecture as will projected into space. Nietzschean theory of art projected as will” Afrikanischestr. Berlin-Wedding 1926

Mies was greatly influenced by Rudolf Schwarz who said that the technical world had great potential but was afraid of “the tendency of the times to “become abstract””…Schwarz saw the true redemption of man “exclusively in spiritual terms”

(3) Shift in metaphor
Mies was influenced by Raoul Francé + Siegfried Ebeling Der Raum als Membran 1926 (space as membrane) theories of biological architecture

Ebeling speaks about “the architectonic condition under the elementary circumstances of biophysical existence” and “the space of the house as equivalent to a “skin” or a “membrane between men and exterior space””

Neumeyer states that “Compared to Mies’s skin and bone theory that stressed the primacy of structure, Ebeling’s theory, viewing the building as a breathing organism, possessed a higher degree of abstraction”

So the shift is from one metaphor or abstraction to another. From the machine or engineering structure (silos) to the organic or biological structure (plant) “This expressed in a nutshell the idea of a neutral space and architecture as a protective covering that Ebeling had observed in nature and plant life and dubbed the “bark principle” (Prinzip Rinde). Architecture as container, ein Raum ohne Eigen schaften (a room without characteristics). What appealed to Mies about Ebeling’s book
was his idea of “negative space,”...the neutral, 3-dimensional membrane that exists “free of all alien suggestions,” which aligned itself with Mies’s rejection of “all aesthetic speculation,” when he had formerly privileged construction. Neumeyer affirms that Mies’s skin and bone buildings could be thought of as “negative architecture” insofar as they had cast off...all traditional symbolism and historical style.” Ebeling provided a way of making concrete Mies’s idea of anti-aesthetic space. Neumeyer adds that Mies’s criteria of Form-giving remained unclarified. What we might add is that this deficiency of clarity perhaps is what persists in Mies’s conception of form-giving and perhaps should not be viewed as a deficit.

The shift from the industrial to the “natural” is a romantic shift away from the modern to the natural, the urban to rural which is the conflict described by Jeffrey Herf in Reactionary Modernism. The requirement for technology and industrialisation coupled with the yearning for an unindustrialised past. Modern Architects realised that industrialisation was necessary to keep up with the new conditions of living and yet there lurked a secret longing for the past and a respect for the arts and crafts heritage they emerged from. Perhaps this mistrust of industrialisation (expressed in his statement that if we put 1% more effort into improving the quality of bookbinding then we would be ...better) This mistrust in the absolute trustworthiness of technology, perhaps leads to a recourse to nature, which cannot fail us.

In this shift, Mies combines both his interest in origins and the new leitmotif life which is an offshoot of the idea of Nature. “We do not value the result but the starting point of the form-giving process. It in particular reveals whether form was arrived at from the direction of life or for its own sake.” So now “life” (not spirit) is supposed to be the ground for form-giving but life as a starting point. The new building “represents as Mies described it in his Stuttgart explanations an “element of the larger struggle for new forms of living” - so the arrangement of space around “life”. Neumeyer represents Mies’s conception of life as in organic nature and then cuts to Mies’s idea of life as in life style, living style. There is no accounting for this double move in Mies, from the biological to the social. This kind of cut is something I find particularly distracting in Neumeyer.
From appendix, Fritz Neumeyer, *The Artless Word: Mies van der Rohe on the Building Art*

Mies’s statements

1923 Office Building
Development of modern building art away from the aesthetic to the organic
Away from the formal to the constructive.
Skin and bones structures.

1923 Building
We know form only building problems
Anti-formalism
1923 lecture at the Bund Deutscher architekten (on the housing shortage)
Absolute truthfulness, no formal cheating
Organisation of living arrangements give absolute priority
Illustrations of an Indian tent, a leaf hunt, and Eskimo house, a snow hut, summer tent of an
Eskimo, castle of the counts of flanders and ghent, farm complex, and others.
(nothing worth showing of the day)

1924 Baukunst und Zeitwille (Building Art and the Will of the Epoch)
He give examples like ancient Rome and how the builders were anonymous but the city was the
will of the epoch not of individuals.
The building is always the spatially apprehended will of the epoch
1924 “Industrial Building”
The industrialisation of building constitutes the core problem of our time. If we are successful in
carrying out this industrialisation then the social economic technical and even artistic questions will
solve themselves.
1924 lecture
Mechanization can never be a goal, it must remain means. Means towards a spiritual purpose.

What happened in 1925?

1926 Lecture
Building art is always the spatial execution of spiritual decisions, that it is tied to its times and can
only manifest itself in addressing vital tasks with the means of its own time.
Structure of our period is fundamentally different from that of earlier epochs. This applies to both
its spiritual and its material conditions
Building is not the realisation of specific formal problems. But it is always, the spatial execution
of spiritual decisions.

1927 Letter to Die Form (very amusing)
“Regarding the New volume”
A request that Mr. Riesler change the name of the journal
form is not the aim but the result of the form-giving process
Do we not guides the attention away from the essential?
“On Form in Architecture”
Only life intensity has form intensity
We value not the result but the starting point of the form giving process. This in particular reveals whether form was derived from life or for its own sake.
1927 Foreword to the Official Catalog of the Stuttgart Werkbund Exhibition “Die Wohnung” (the dwelling)
Rationalisation and typification are only the means they must never be the goal. The problem of the new housing is basically a spiritual problem, and the struggle for new housing is only an element of the larger struggle for new forms of living.
1927 Foreword to bau and Wohnung (Building and housing)
freedom (no brief as such)
1927 “Concerning My Block”
The increasing differentiation of our housing needs, however, demands on the other side an ever greater freedom of usage. In the future it will become necessary to do justice to both claims. For this purpose the skeleton structure is the most suitable system of construction. It makes a rational production possible and yet permits total freedom of disposition in the interior.