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Modern Architecture and Ideology in German Children's Literature

On Famous Buildings by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Hermann Henselmann, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

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Architecture, in the real world as well as in the fictional world of children's literature, seems always to be connected with ideology, i.e. a system of beliefs held by a social group or society as a whole. This is shown with respect to German children's literature dealing with famous buildings of the 20th century, namely the semi-detached house by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret in the Stuttgart Weißenhofsiedlung that is portrayed in *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* by Clara Hohrath (1935 [1931]), the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese by Hermann Henselmann in the Berlin Stalinallee, figuring in *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* by Annegret Hofmann and Helga Leue (1988), and the 660–680 Lake Shore Drive Apartments by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in Chicago, described in *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* by Ingolf Kern, Werner Möller and Kitty Kahane (2019).

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Presenting architecture to children, be it in the form of picturebooks, (illustrated) children's novels, fiction, or non-fiction, always comes with an ideological underpinning. For instance, a picturebook on Paris or London showing the architecture of these cities will shape the images of these cities (Lynch 1960) in the minds of young readers and viewers in a specific way.

According to Robyn McCallum and John Stephens (2006: 6):

[...] all aspects of textual discourse, from story outcomes to the expressive forms of language, are informed and shaped by ideology, understanding ideology in its neutral meaning of a system of beliefs which a society shares and uses to make sense of the world and which are therefore immanent in the texts produced by that society.

To the extent that architecture is represented in children's literature, one may ask how ideologies associated with architecture are reflected in children's literature, which is a conveyor of ideology itself. This is the goal of the present article.

McCallum and Stephens (2006: 360) point out that ideologies fulfil two essential functions. First, "the social function of defining and sustaining group values (perceptible textually in an assumption that writer and implied reader share a common understanding of value)". For instance, with respect to children's non-fiction about architecture, e.g. the renowned works of David Macaulay, it is usually presupposed that great architecture, like the Egyptian pyramids or Roman cathedrals, should be appreciated and admired. Second, McCallum and Stephens (2006: 360) mention "the cognitive function of supplying a meaningful organization of the social attitudes and relationships which constitute narrative plots". Thus, ideological persuasions serve at organizing a narrative structure, as we will see in the course of this article.

While McCallum and Stephens (2006) stress that ideology can be understood as a neutral, merely descriptive term, the notion of (supporting) propaganda contains an evaluation. Thus, Jason Stanley (2015: 53) defines the notion of supporting propaganda as follows: "A contribution to public discourse that is presented as an embodiment of certain ideals, yet is of a kind that tends to increase the realization of those very ideals by either emotional or other nonrational means". This notion is related to the standard of rationality. The supported values may be good, bad or neutral, though propaganda is ethically dubious, since it is a way of manipulating or deceiving someone: "Insofar as a form of propaganda is a kind of manipulation of rational beings toward an end without engaging their rational will, it is a kind of deception" (Stanley 2015: 58).

In this article, I will ask how modern architecture is represented in German children's literature, and how this representation mirrors ideology or propaganda. By modern architecture, I understand architecture that utilises industrial production and materials such as glass, concrete, and steel to create minimalistic designs that favour function over decoration. The architectural movements of *Werkbund* (*Neues Bauen*) and *Bauhaus* were forerunners of architectural modernism, and were associated with a democratic and/or socialist ideology of building for the masses. Houses, streets, and the city are, of course, entities that can be found in many picturebooks, children's novels, and children's films. However, systematic analysis is still rare. Kimberley Reynolds (2016: 176–197) reports on "architecture for children" in the context of "radical" children's literature, highlighting a number of English informational picturebooks published before 1949. More recently, Marnie Campagnaro (2021) has drawn attention to the field of architectural non-fiction picturebooks for children that have appeared since the turn of the millennium. These books try to explain and teach children about modern architecture.

Put simply, we may distinguish between factual houses and fictional houses. The latter have been recently investigated by Emma Hayward and Torsten Schmiedeknecht (2019) who deplore the absence of modern architecture in post-war English picturebooks, although they mention, for instance, pictures of high-rise dwellings by Charles Keeping.

However, these are still fictional buildings that do not resemble any concrete building. Fictional houses are also dealt with at length by Giuseppe Zago, Carla Callegari and Marnie Campagnaro (2019). Jörg Meibauer (2023, forthcoming) deals with fictional architecture in the work of the picturebook artist Jörg Müller.

In contrast, this article focuses on factual houses and analyses how they are portrayed. These houses are Le Corbusier's and Pierre Jeanneret's semi-detached house, Stuttgart 1928, Hermann Henselmann's Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, Berlin 1952, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 860–880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments, Chicago 1951. All of these dwellings still exist and numerous photographs of them can be found on the internet. With respect to Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, I will analyse the illustrated novel *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* by Clara Hohrath (1935 [1931]). Concerning Hermann Henselmann, I will show that the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, as part of the Stalinallee [Stalin Avenue] project, is depicted in several GDR (German Democratic Republic) picturebooks, and is in the focus of *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* by Annegret Hofmann and Helga Leue (1988), a narrative of the founding myth of the GDR that appeared only one year before its collapse. Regarding Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, I will analyse *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* by Ingolf Kern, Werner Möller and Kitty Kahane (2019) that ties in with a number of non-fiction books about the Bauhaus in the context of its hundredth anniversary.

Le Corbusier's and Pierre Jeanneret's semi-detached house, Stuttgart 1927

Sceptical attitudes against the Werkbund and the Bauhaus, as two institutions propagating the International Style in architecture, occur even today. There are certainly voices in contemporary architecture that hold the Bauhaus responsible for today's "soulless" architecture and criticise the consistent renunciation of décor. A fascinating literary document dealing with the Werkbund exhibition and one of its most famous products, the semi-detached house by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret,¹ is the novel *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* [Hannelore Experiences the Big City] by Clara Hohrath (1935 [1931]).² This is a book for girls consisting of letters that Hannelore writes to her

¹ Le Corbusier (1887–1965) was a Swiss-French architect, architectural theorist, urban planner, painter, draughtsman, sculptor, and furniture designer. He was one of the most influential architects of the 20th century and published over 50 books. Corbusier initiated a modernist urban planning and architectural movement with the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne); his concrete buildings founded the architectural style of Brutalism. Pierre Jeanneret (1896–1967) was a Swiss architect and furniture designer. He was a partner of his famous cousin (second cousin) Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret) for many years. They founded a joint architectural practice in Paris in 1922. Jeanneret was involved in many of the projects designed in this office. For a long time, he was the chief architect of the Indian city of Chandigarh.

² Three versions of this book are verifiable: the first version titled ... *besonders in Stuttgart* [...especially in Stuttgart], cover illustration by Alfred Hugendubel, published in 1931, the second version titled *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* [Hannelore Experiences the Big City], cover illustration and illustrated by Alfred Hugendubel, published in 1932, and the third ►

relatives who live in the Swabian village Hinterbiedingen. In these letters, Hannelore reports her experiences in the “big city” Stuttgart. Furthermore, it is a roman à clef, since some protagonists are modelled after historical persons.



Fig. 1. Cover of ... *besonders in Stuttgart* (1931) by Clara Hohrath. The drawing by Alfred Hugendubel shows Stuttgart's main railway station. On the ridge, one can see the shapes of the Weißenhofsiedlung. This different weighting may be understood as implicit partisanship for more traditional architectural building (though the Stuttgart main railway station counts as modern, too). The Sütterlin script, possibly alluding to Hannelore's handwriting, contributes to this impression.

Sl. 1. Prednja strana korica knjige ... *besonders in Stuttgart* Clare Hohrath (1931). Crtež Alfreda Hugendubela prikazuje glavni kolodvor u Stuttgartu. Na hrptu brda vide se obrisi naselja Weißenhofsiedlung. Takvo različito isticanje može se razumjeti kao implicitno pristajanje uz arhitektonski tradicionalniju građevinu (iako se i stuttgartski željeznički kolodvor ubraja među moderne zgrade). Takvu dojmu pridonosi i izbor tiskarskoga fonta Sütterlinovo pismo, tj. oblika njemačkoga gotičkoga kurziva, koji možda aludira na Hannelorin rukopis.

- version, titled *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* [Hannelore Experiences the Big City], cover illustration by RUTH, illustrated by Alfred Hugendubel, published in 1935. Throughout this article, I use and cite the third version. Obviously, these variants have to do with the intention of attracting a larger, supra-regional readership. This follows from the change of title (from the first to the second and third edition) and the change of cover illustration (from the first and second to the third edition).

Hannelore leaves Hinterbiedingen for Stuttgart where she wants to study singing. Her uncle Christian picks her up at Stuttgart main railway station. Hannelore is deeply impressed by the metropolitan architecture. Descending the stairs of the station's entrance hall, a feeling of grandeur (“Großartigkeitsgefühl”) is triggered in her. Turning back, she looks at the architecture of the main railway station that was built by the architects Paul Bonatz and Friedrich Eugen between 1914 and 1928 (Hohrath 1935: 5):

In the meantime, I took a look at the station from the outside, because we were standing opposite it. It's very wide and cut off at the top and has a high, square tower on the side that you can climb up to see the city from above and get your bearings. That's very practical. I really like the station, it looks so honest and doesn't pretend to be a castle or a church or a Greek temple like the stations I saw in my father's travel album. [My translation.]³

Hannelore observes the elements of modern architecture through the use of flat roofs and the composition of the building structure by symmetric and nested cubes (Fig. 1).

Hannelore's uncle and aunt live in the *Weißenhofsiedlung* that has – as the uncle points out – the nickname “Marokko”⁴ (Morocco) (Hohrath 1935: 5):

There used to be an exhibition of modern houses here, and they have been left standing and rented out. And because they are all painted white and have flat roofs, this settlement on the mountain, seen from the valley, looks like an African city. [My translation.]⁵

Although expressions like Marokko could well be descriptive or mocking, there is a smooth transition to racist speech. When an infamous “joke postcard” from 1940 shows a photomontage of Arabs in the Weissenhof housing estate, the humour is quite obviously racist. It is implied that “un-German” (undeutsch) architecture, as in North Africa, is not at all acceptable in Stuttgart (von Osten 2013). As Jean-Louis Cohen (2006: 365) points out, comparable expressions also existed in France, where Le Corbusier's estate in Pessac was called a Moroccan village (*cit  du Maroc*) by its neighbours. It is also part of the colonialist context that modernist architects were inspired by architecture in the colonies (Cohen 2006: 365).

³ “So sah ich mir derweilst den Bahnhof von au en an, denn wir standen dem gerade gegen ber. Er ist sehr breit und oben abgeschnitten und hat an der Seite einen hohen, viereckigen Turm, auf den man sich hinaufziehen lassen kann, um gleich die Stadt von oben zu besichtigen und so sich orientieren zu k nnen. Das ist sehr praktisch.  berhaupt gef llt mir der Bahnhof sehr, er sieht so ehrlich aus, und tut nicht so, als ob er ein Schlo , oder eine Kirche, oder ein griechischer Tempel w r, wie die Bahnh fe, die ich in Vaters Reisealbum sah” (Hohrath 1935: 5).

⁴ The psychiatrist to whom Hannelore is sent by her aunt, calls “the white entity on top there” (“*das wei e Gebilde da oben*”) “Cairo” (“*Kairo*”) (Hohrath 1935: 47).

⁵ “Es war hier mal eine Ausstellung von modernen H usern, und die sind stehen geblieben und vermietet worden. Und weil sie alle wei  gestrichen sind und flache D cher haben, sieht diese Siedlung auf dem Berg, vom Tal aus gesehen, so aus wie eine afrikanische Stadt” (Hohrath 1935: 5).

The exhibition alluded to was organised by the *Deutscher Werkbund* in 1927 and led to the construction of 21 buildings with 63 apartments. All architects were devoted to the school of *Neues Bauen* (New Building). The leader of the project was Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.⁶

The house where Hannelore lives with her uncle and her aunt is the semi-detached house by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. In the drawing by Alfred Hugendubel (Fig. 2), humorous elements are added: the far too big gymnasts on the roof, the cactuses on the staircase, and the laundry on the clothesline.

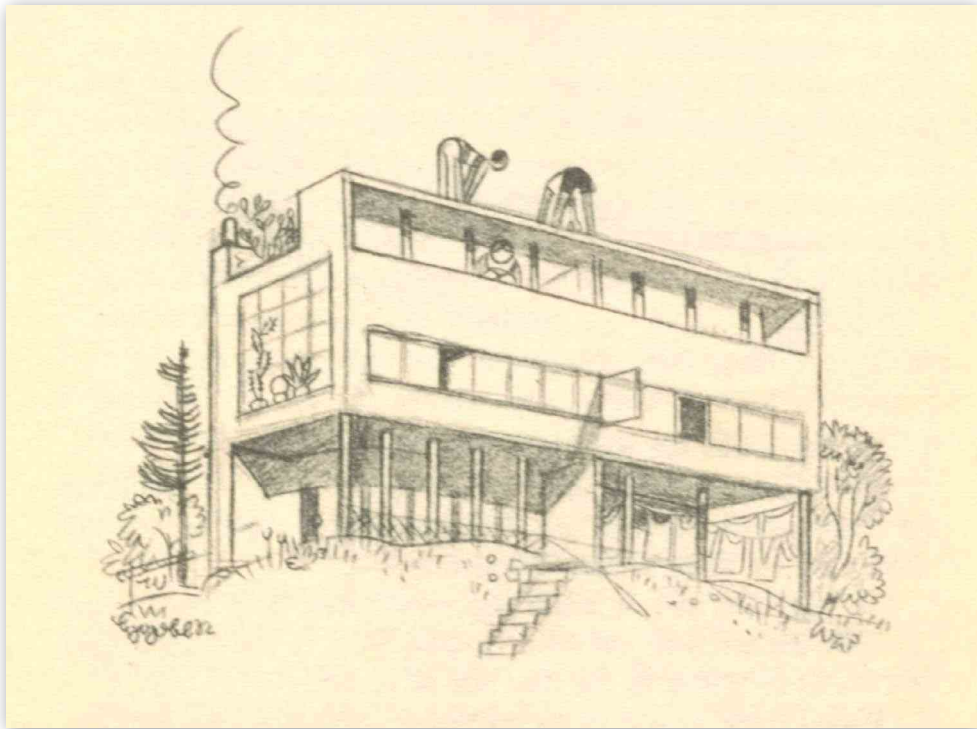


Fig. 2. Alfred Hugendubel's drawing of the semi-detached house by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, 1927, Weißenhofsiedlung Stuttgart (Hohrath 1932: 7)

Sl. 2. Crtež Alfreda Hugendubela koji prikazuje dvojnu kuću Le Corbusiera i Pierrea Jennereta iz 1927., naselje Weißenhofsiedlung u Stuttgartu (Hohrath 1932: 7)

⁶ Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) was a German-American architect. He was director of the Werkbund exhibition “Die Wohnung” in Stuttgart in 1927 and director of the Bauhaus Dessau 1930–1933. He emigrated to the USA in 1938. Mies van der Rohe is considered one of the most important architects of modernism in the 20th century and regarded as the founder of the so-called “International Style” and Minimalism.

This house, today an architectural landmark, is described as follows (Hohrath 1935: 6):

From the front it looks like a long, white-painted railway carriage, just like our Martin paints them, except that instead of wheels it rests on high, thin iron bars. From the windows of this floating part of the house you have a wonderful view over the valley. The back wall of the house, on the other hand, reaches down to the ground and looks like a prison wall, since it has neither a door nor a window, but only two narrow, long slits. If you want to get into the house, you have to turn up an iron spiral staircase in the garden, which Auntie finds difficult to climb, as it is very narrow, but Auntie is very wide. [My translation.]⁷

Whilst the stairs appear to be inconvenient because they do not allow for the transport of furniture (instead, the furniture is directly installed), the aunt finds her small kitchen with its integrated electrical machines comfortable, because this means a saving of time and power (“eine Zeit- und Kraftersparnis”, Hohrath 1935: 7). And this is necessary because there are no maids (“Mädchen”) anymore to spare the housewife from kitchen work (Hohrath 1935: 6).⁸ In the small pantry behind the kitchen, the supplies are stored in wall cupboards, and a daybed can be pulled out at the touch of a button. Because passers-by could stare through the windows of the all-glass living room, a hygienic wax cloth is used with the uncomfortable effect of darkening the room.

In accordance with contemporary criticism, modern architecture appears as a regression.⁹ The aunt mocks the architect as an “artist” and adds sarcastically that they had ideas that needed to be realised at any cost, without taking into account the consequences (“die hätten Ideen, die ausgeführt werden müßten, ganz einerlei, was daraus entstünde”, Hohrath 1935: 6). That Hannelore deplors that her mother is forced to run back and forth in her big, old-fashioned parsonage kitchen (7) has an obvious ironical undertone.

⁷ “Von vorne sieht es aus wie ein langer, weißgestrichener Eisenbahnwagen, genau wie unser Martin sie malt, nur daß dieser statt auf Rädern auf hohen, dünnen Eisenstangen ruht. Von den Fenstern dieses schwebenden Hausteils hat man einen herrlichen Blick übers Tal. Die Rückwand des Hauses dagegen reicht bis auf den Boden hinunter und sieht aus wie eine Gefängnismauer, da sie weder eine Türe, noch ein Fenster, sondern nur zwei schmale lange Schlitze aufweist. Will man ins Haus hineingelangen, muß man sich im Garten eine eiserne Wendeltreppe hinaufdrehen, die Tante nur schwer hinaufkommt, da sie sehr schmal, Tante aber sehr breit ist” (Hohrath 1935: 6).

⁸ Note that the architecture of the small kitchen is directly traced back to a socioeconomic change since civil servants suffer from considerable reductions in their pensions (Hohrath 1935: 6). Therefore, it is no longer possible for them to employ servants.

⁹ In 1928–1930, several drawings by Olaf Gulbransson and Thomas Theodor Heine appeared in the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* that made fun of the Bauhaus. Even Bertolt Brecht made a mocking contribution to the critique of Bauhaus architecture in his 1927 magazine article for the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* entitled “Nordseekrabben oder die moderne Bauhaus-Wohnung” [North Sea Crabs or the Modern Bauhaus Apartment]. See Laura Wilfinger (2009).

An elementary part of the programme of New Building was a new interior design that was by and large directed against the ideals of the Wilhelmine style.¹⁰ Because the modern rooms had a smaller footprint, a preference for permanent installations and movable furniture emerged. Besides this, smooth, easily cleanable surfaces were preferred while superfluous decoration was rejected. Dispensing with curtains and using white walls had the effect of lightening up the rooms. A combination of different window types (e.g., horizontal and vertical window bands, windows across corners) structured the interiors and façades alike.¹¹

Some aspects of this spatial agenda are depicted in the drawing shown in Fig. 3 (Hohrath 1935: 8).

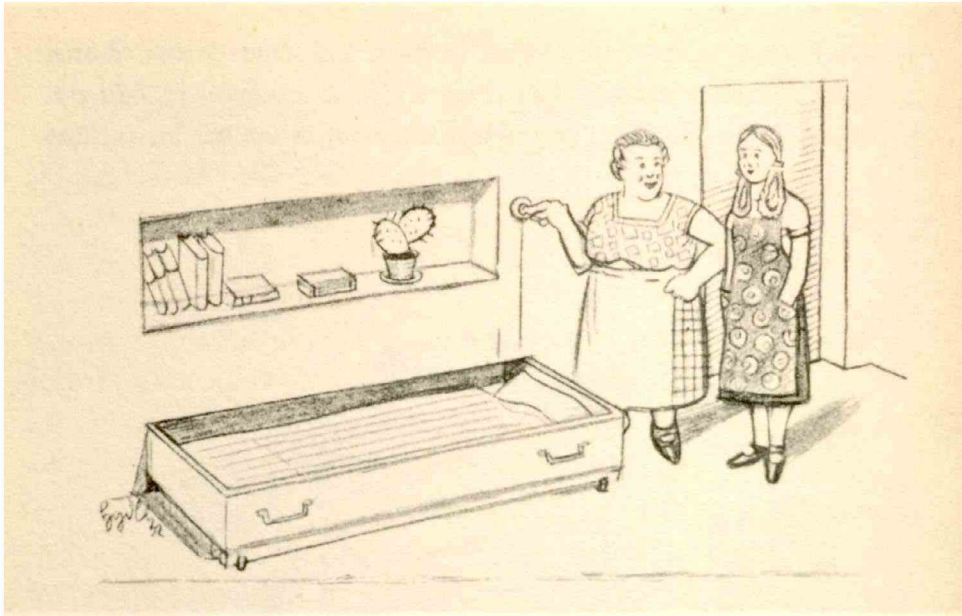


Fig. 3. The aunt shows Hannelore the bed that can be automatically moved out of the wall at the touch of a button.

Sl. 3. Teta Hannelori pokazuje krevet koji se automatski odmiče od zida pritiskom na tipku.

¹⁰ The Wilhelmine style refers to the historicist architecture and fine arts of the German Empire, especially during the reign of Wilhelm II, from 1890 to 1918. In addition to numerous styles of historicism, the neo-Baroque or neo-Renaissance dominated architecture until 1905. After that, Wilhelmine architecture gradually changed through neoclassical influences and the emerging Art Nouveau (*Jugendstil*) and Reform styles. What these styles had in common was a tendency towards a representative formal language, ornament and decoration included.

¹¹ The collection *Innenräume* (Gräff 1928) which is related to the Stuttgart Werkbund exhibition *Die Wohnung* describes and explains modern ideas on interior design and provides articles by Le Corbusier, Josef Frank, Mart Stam, Adolf Schneck, Marcel Breuer, Willy Baumeister, Richard Lisker, Erna Meyer and W.H. Gispen.

The bookshelf is just a niche in the wall and is sparingly decorated with some books and a cactus. The box-shaped bed looks spartan and uncomfortable, as does the whole room (Hohrath 1935: 9):

[...] and there is not a single picture on the walls, not even wallpaper covering them, but they are painted, and a water tap with a basin underneath presents the washstand, and no proper bedside table stands by the bed, only such a screwed-on wooden container represents it, and the bed is only an iron frame, and for tucking in there are no feather beds up to the chin as with us, but only woollen carpets. [My translation.]¹²

For Hannelore, the purely practical aspect of this design, including the hard but hygienic pillow, contrasts with the cosiness of her parents' parsonage.

The sceptical, though genuinely curious gaze of Hannelore peters out in the course of the narration. The applied arts student Ina, who likes smoking and wearing pyjamas, and is troubled by her love for the Russian big bug ("Oberbonze") and Soviet ("Sowjet") Michael Petrowitsch, is sent to the parental parsonage of Hannelore in order to come to her senses again. Michael, in turn, joins the hiking group of Hug who is the leader of a male youth group engaged against girls and alcohol (Hohrath 1935: 81). Hug is one of the sons of the aunt and had been travelling in Lapland for some time. In his blue uniform, with a red-brown skin colour, head thrown back, keen eyes (78), being a proven expert of nature and an antithesis to sloppy hikers ("schlampige Wandervögel", 81), he finally becomes the fiancé of Hannelore who is happy to become the helper for his great mission in life ("seine Helferin bei seiner großen Lebensaufgabe", 112).¹³

With this turn towards nature (vs. the big city), towards a good physical condition and robustness (vs. gymnastics and a raw vegetable diet), as well as the appreciation of the church chant (vs. *The Threepenny Opera*), the narrator – albeit looking at many incarnations of the zeitgeist in a curious and amused manner – finally takes sides for an anti-modern, traditionalist attitude like the one that was upheld by a group of architects known as the Stuttgarter Schule. A member of the Stuttgarter Schule was also Paul Bonatz, the architect of Stuttgart's main railway station who opted for a compromise between tradition (represented by the shell limestone façade and architectural decoration) and modernism. Parts of the Stuttgart school designed the Kochenhofsiedlung, showing

¹² "[...] und es hängt kein einziges Bild an den Wänden, nicht mal eine Tapete bekleidet sie, sondern sie sind gestrichen, und ein Wasserhahn mit einem Becken darunter stellt den Waschtisch vor und kein ordentlicher Nachttisch steht am Bett, nur so ein angeschraubter Holzbehälter vertritt ihn, und das Bett ist nur ein Eisengestell, und zum Zudecken gibt es keine Federbetten bis ans Kinn wie bei uns, sondern nur Wollteppiche" (Hohrath 1935: 9).

¹³ Hug is modelled after Eberhard Koebel (aka "tusk") (1907–1955), the leader of the Stuttgart *Autonome Jungenschaft dj. 1.11.*, a part of the *Bündische Jugend*. This group was founded on 1 November 1929. Koebel was a temporary member of the German Communist Party (KPD) and then tried to get a leading position in the Hitlerjugend. He was briefly arrested by the Gestapo and emigrated in 1934 to England. See the page "Eberhard Koebel". In: *Wikipedia – Die freie Enzyklopädie* (2022). Another real-life person is the doctor, author, and communist Friedrich Wolf who appears as Dr. Grimm in the novel (Hohrath 1935: 96–98).

wood constructions and hip roofs, as an ideological counterpart of the Weißenhofsiedlung. The Nazis wanted to destroy the Weißenhofsiedlung when they came to power in 1933 but this intention was impeded by the outbreak of the war six years later.

Hermann Henselmann's Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, Berlin 1952

Pictures of war ruins and destroyed cities can be found in post-war children's literature of East and West Germany, whether in picturebooks, illustrations of children's novels, or on book covers. Yet, while in the Soviet zone and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) the new construction went hand in hand with the promotion of the socialist state and socialist architecture, there is no comparable development in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The construction of the Hansa Quarter in West Berlin on the occasion of the *interbau* 1957 was an ideological demonstration of the international style vis-à-vis the Stalinallee building programme. For the young GDR, the Stalinallee in East Berlin was the most important prestige project, and depictions of the famous Hochhaus an der Weberwiese can be found in different GDR picturebooks.

Hermann Henselmann (1905–1995) was a hugely influential architect of the GDR who shaped urban development in the 1950s and 1960s (Kossel 2013). Above all, his name is closely connected to the project of the Stalinallee (today: Karl-Marx-Allee).¹⁴ One of its most famous projects is the ensemble consisting of the Haus des Lehrers (House of the Teacher) and the domed hall of the congress centre at Alexanderplatz (1961–1964). From 1964 to 1967, Hermann Henselmann was the leader of the Institut für Typenprojektierung dedicated to the industrial mass production of residential buildings, vulgo “Plattenbauten”. Further works include the Leninplatz (today: Platz der Vereinten Nationen) in Berlin-Friedrichshain (1968–1970), the high-rise building of Leipzig University (today: City-Hochhaus Leipzig) (1968), and the high-rise building of Jena University (today: Jentower) (1969). While Henselmann, at the beginning of his career in the 1930s, designed a single-family house in a modernist style,¹⁵ he became a proponent of socialist realism in the field of architecture in the post-war era. To what extent this was his true persuasion or merely the pragmatic adoption of the party's ideology is still a matter of controversy, though we do know of attested conflicts with the party.

The Stalinallee was an ambitious urban project aiming at representing socialism in the capital of the GDR. Although there were similar projects in other GDR cities (e.g., the Prager Straße in Dresden), the Stalinallee surpassed them by its extension and construction volume. The first plans showed a modernist, Bauhaus-orientated

¹⁴ Important buildings are the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, Berlin-Friedrichshain (1951), the settlement Strausberger Platz, Berlin-Friedrichshain (1952–1954), and the settlement Frankfurter Tor, Berlin-Friedrichshain (1953–1956).

¹⁵ In 1930, Hermann Henselmann and Alexander Ferenczy built the Villa Ken-Win in Montreux. The villa was built for the English couple Kenneth McPherson und Anni Winnifred Ellerman and was significantly influenced by Le Corbusier.

architecture but the Soviet advisors insisted on a neoclassicist style similar to Stalinist role models.¹⁶ Furthermore, they urged Henselmann to take local and regional architectural traditions into account. Henselmann, in turn, proposed to integrate elements of the classicism of the famous Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Thus, the first building of the Stinallee project, the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese (1951), showed an eclectic style that was widely praised by party officials.¹⁷



Fig. 4. Cover of *Wir gehen durch die große Stadt* (1953): Map of East-Berlin with a picture of the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese in the centre

Sl. 4. Prednja strana korica slikovnice *Wir gehen durch die große Stadt* iz 1953.: karta Istočnoga Berlina sa slikom zgrade Hochhaus an der Weberwiese u središtu

In *Wir gehen durch die große Stadt* (Reinicke and Wagner 1953), a picturebook with rhymes addressed to preschoolers, the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese is prominently located in the middle of a pictorial map of East Berlin decorating the book's cover (Fig. 4). (Note that books from the GDR regularly ignored West Berlin for propagandist

¹⁶ See Brumfield (2020) on the struggle between Russian constructivism and the avant-garde on the one hand, and Stalinist neoclassicism on the other. The Bauhaus was rejected by GDR officials in the so-called formalism debate in 1951. Shortly after the end of World War II, in August 1945, Hermann Henselmann developed a concept for a university similar to the Bauhaus (Weber 1998: 55).

¹⁷ The article “Der reaktionäre Charakter des Konstruktivismus” [The Reactionary Character of Constructivism], which Hermann Henselmann published in the newspaper *Neues Deutschland* on 4 December 1951, can probably be understood as a concession to those in power.

reasons.) A second picture of this building is shown in the context of a double-page spread depicting the clearing of the ruins in tandem with the reconstruction of the city.¹⁸

Das große Buch vom Bauen by Irene and Hermann Henselmann (1976) is a remarkable, quite comprehensive non-fiction book addressed to children from 12 years of age onwards (see Meibauer 2021). Its propagandistic agenda is to suggest that modern, industrial building techniques are the dialectal outcome of global architectural history, so that socialist urban planning is on a level with international architectural developments. Most tellingly, the Henselmann couple keeps silent about the iconic Hochhaus an der Weberwiese; only some lines are devoted to the Haus des Lehrers (1961–1964) (Henselmann and Henselmann 1976: 115), dryly pointing out that this ensemble adequately mirrors the constructional possibilities of the GDR. The Bauhaus is only mentioned in passing, although it is acknowledged that the contemporary aesthetic standards go back to the Bauhaus: “Dieser modernen Architekturbewegung verdanken wir unsere heutigen geschmacklichen Normen [...]” (We owe our current standards of taste to this architectural movement [...], Henselmann and Henselmann 1976: 110).

Only three years later, *Bärchens Bummelbus: Ein Berlin-Bilderbuch für Kinder* by John Stave and Dietrich Pansch (1979) presents a picture of Berlin that is heavily influenced by the contemporary nostalgic wave and Pop Art inspired graphic design. The character “Bärchen” (little bear) (alluding to the folk etymology of the name *Berlin*) shows a group of children who come from all over the GDR the modern city of Berlin while driving them in his old-fashioned “Bummelbus” (strolling bus). The Hochhaus an der Weberwiese is mentioned in the context of the post-war reconstruction of the destroyed city, with the standard picture of *Trümmerfrauen* (women who cleared away the debris) and the rubble train in front of a panorama including ruins and the emerging rubble mountain. Child readers are explicitly invited to compare the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese (with its eight stories) to the modern high-rise residential complex at the Leninplatz. (Progression, so it seems, has to do with the height of buildings.) Another picture shows the Strausberger Platz, as part of the Stalinallee, with the Haus des Kindes.

The high-rise dwelling mentioned in the title *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* [The Message in a Bottle in the Skyscraper] (Hofmann and Leue 1988) is the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese. It is depicted on the cover of the picturebook that shows four figures in a balloon floating over the Karl-Marx-Allee (the former Stalinallee) (Fig. 5). One of these figures is Ina who spends her holidays with her uncle Ewald who lives in the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese. In the cellar of this building, she and her new friend Christian find an old message in a bottle. Uncle Ewald gives them the task to discover who had written it. The children meet and interview contemporary witnesses: Miss Klawitter, who once worked as a “rubble woman”; comrade Zander, the police officer (Abschnittsbevollmächtigter, or ABV for short); Miss Brietzel, who was studying at

¹⁸ A picture of the *Haus des Kindes* [House of the Child] can be seen on the cover of *Spielzeug und Wirklichkeit* (Anonymous 1959), and a picture of the *Haus des Lehrers* (House of the Teacher) is shown in *Rakete... Start!* (1965) by Karl Heinz Hardt and Paul Schubert but these pictures do not directly contribute to the main topics of these books.

the Workers-and-Peasants Faculty (Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät, or ABF for short); comrade Kolbe, who was a convinced member of the young pioneers; a professor who designed the house; and the foreman-artist Wunderlich who was drawing colourful architectural pictures. Finally, the children find out that the writer of the message in the bottle was Uncle Ewald himself, and all the people living together in the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese throw a big party.

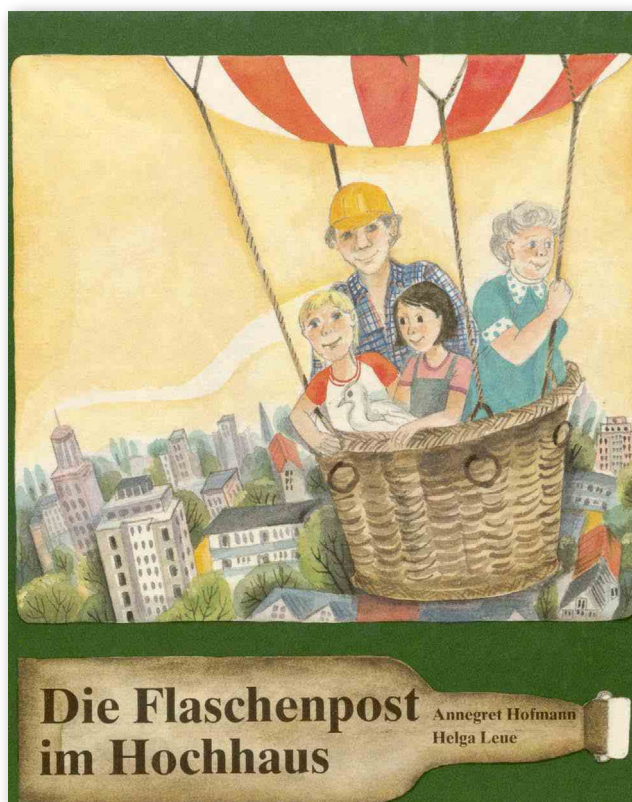


Fig. 5. Cover of *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* (Hofmann and Leue 1988) with a bird's-eye view of the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese

Sl. 5. Prednja strana korica slikovnice *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* (Hofmann i Leue 1988) s pogledom na Hochhaus an der Weberwiese iz ptičje perspektive

This non-fiction picturebook, addressed to children from 9 years of age onwards, informs the reader about the historic Hochhaus an der Weberwiese by using a narrative strategy. The children act as detectives looking for the author of the mysterious message in a bottle. The contemporary witnesses tell them what they did in 1952 – all of them were proud socialists that were rewarded for their achievements by the paternalistic party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED). After each chapter, a historical summary is given in italics.

The propagandistic aim of this book is to inform readers about the young GDR, and make the generation of the 1980s proud of their socialist state. It is obvious that problematic aspects of the GDR, e.g. the Berlin Wall or travel restrictions, not to mention widespread surveillance by the state security service (Stasi), are left out. This all too euphemistic portrayal of GDR history is congenially illustrated in watercolour using a softened/moderate Pop Art style. Remarkably, the book ends with a series of historical black-and-white photos inserted by Ina and Christian into their self-made book about the history of the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese which they proudly present to the building's inhabitants on the occasion of their party.

The professor who Ina and Christian meet is none other than Hermann Henselmann, though his name is never explicitly mentioned. Yet, this follows from the pictures showing Henselmann (Fig. 6), and also from the fact that he is identified as the chief designer.

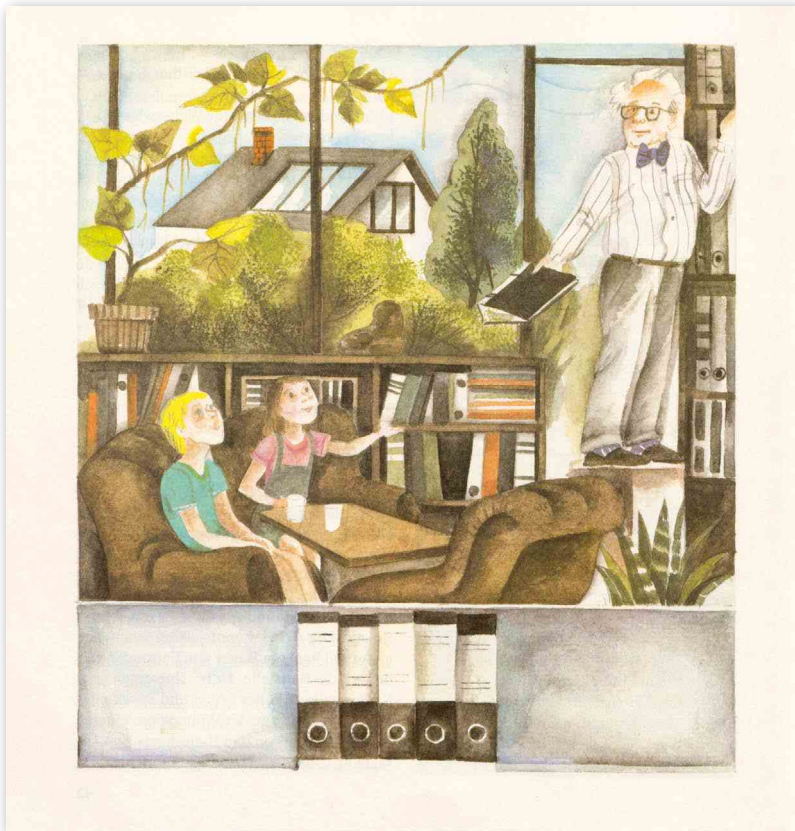


Fig. 6. The professor talks to the children in his modern detached house (Hofmann and Leue 1988: 46).

Sl. 6. Profesor razgovara s djecom u svojoj modernoj samostojećoj kući (Hofmann and Leue 1988: 46).

Asked by the children about the possible author of the message, the professor talks about the huge wave of solidarity with the people erecting the high-rise within a short period of time. Architects, builders and workers were motivated by the wish to prove that Berlin, the devastated city, could be beautiful again.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 860–880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments, Chicago 1951

Remarkably, the Bauhaus is a topic of informational children's literature only after the turn of the 21st century. Different reasons may explain this fact: the segmentation of the book market with its tendency to publish for dual audiences; an expansion of the spectrum of informational books addressed to different age groups and dealing with diverse topics; financial and ideological support by diverse institutions and funding agencies; enlarged public interest in architecture and design; and, last but not least, a nostalgic attitude towards the bygone era of the 20th century. Several informational books on the Bauhaus appeared in the context of the hundredth anniversary of its foundation in 1919.

Below, I will consider the book *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* [Everything Bauhaus? Fantastic Time Travel with Mia and Lucas] by Ingolf Kern, Werner Möller and Kitty Kahane (2019).¹⁹ The book talks about the siblings Mia und Lucas who together visit their grandparents in Chicago with their father Georg Rosenstein.²⁰

The Rosensteins are a Jewish family that has traded in cement for generations. Mia's great-great-grandfather founded the company. That the grandparents live in Chicago is a result of their emigration. However, the connection to Frankfurt where they previously lived has never been broken. The Rosenstein family worked together with several famous Bauhaus architects whose seminal houses are presented in the course of the narration, for instance buildings in Berlin, Krefeld, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Ulm, Dessau, Bernau, Weimar and Löbau. Regarding Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, buildings in Brno (Villa Tugendhat), Barcelona (Barcelona Pavilion), Plano (Farnsworth House) and Chicago (Lake Shore Drive Apartments) are mentioned.²¹

In fact, the grandparents live in the famous 660–680 Lake Shore Drive Apartments (Fig. 7), designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, with a splendid view over Michigan

¹⁹ The book is supported by the touristic marketing instrument "Grand Tour der Moderne" [Grand Tour of Modernism], sponsored by the federal government and the states Sachsen-Anhalt and Thüringen (<https://www.grandtourdermoderne.de/>), see the masthead.

²⁰ Thus, Chicago appears as a nostalgic place similar to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Berlin (Boym 2006).

²¹ No mention is made of the monument to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (aka Revolution Monument) in Berlin-Friedrichsfelde, which Ludwig Mies van der Rohe designed for the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) in 1926 and which was demolished by the National Socialists in 1935.

Lake. Note that this landmark building was erected in 1951, one year before the still brick-built Hochhaus an der Weberwiese (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 7):

Two skyscrapers made of glass, steel and aluminium. Mia finds these towers elegant. Especially this black and grey rake-box façade. Lucas is more fascinated by the T-shaped steel beams on the façade. They remind him somehow of railway tracks. Except that here they shoot straight up into the sky. [My translation.]²²

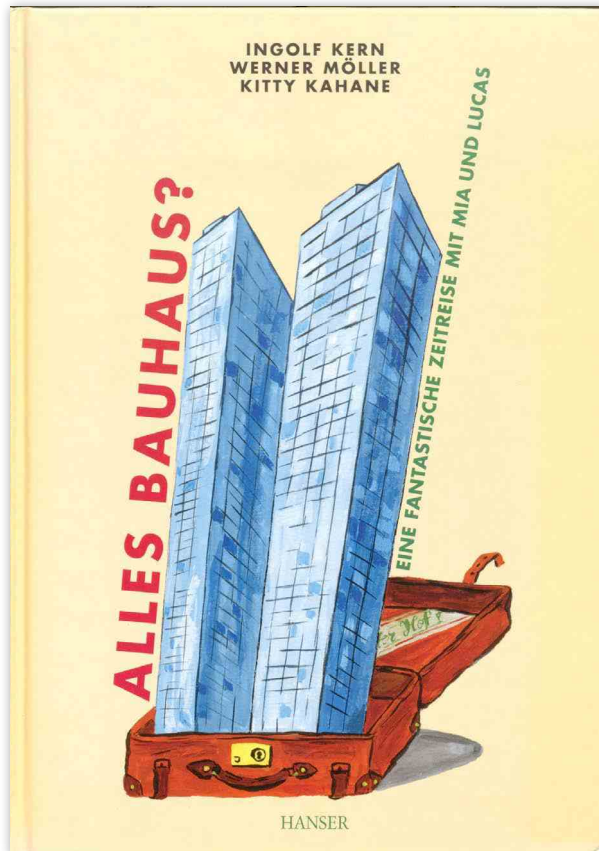


Fig. 7. Cover of *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019). The two residential towers of the 660–680 Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1951) in Chicago, in which the grandparents of Mia and Lucas live, emerge from a suitcase containing Bauhaus memorabilia.

Sl. 7. Prednja strana korica knjige *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019). Dva stambena tornja na adresi 660–680 Lake Shore Drive Appartments (1951.) u Chicagu, u kojima stanuju Mijin i Lucasov baka i djed, pojavljuju se iz kovčega punoga memorabilija iz vremena Bauhauusa.

²² “Zwei Hochhäuser aus Glas, Stahl und Aluminium. Elegant findet Mia diese Türme. Vor allem diese schwarz-graue Rechenkästchenfassade. Lucas faszinieren vielmehr die T-förmigen Stahlträger auf der Fassade. Sie erinnern ihn irgendwie an Eisenbahnschienen. Nur, dass sie hier schnurgerade in den Himmel schießen” (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 7).

This view from the outside is complemented by a description of the living room with its cool interior design (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 7):

The children immediately notice the large windows with their super-cool aluminium frames that reach all the way to the floor and through which you have a wonderful view of the lake. Everything else here is just black or white except for the mustard-coloured carpet: black linoleum, white walls, white armchairs, black cupboards, grey tables, white porcelain vases. [My translation.]²³

The endpapers show drawings of the aforementioned Bauhaus buildings in blue tint (with the picture of the Bremen ship as an outlier). A survey of the fictional Rosenstein family with brief portraits of its members is provided at the end of the book (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 73–79). The illustrations are by Kitty Kahane who uses a dedicated anti-realistic, expressive style with distorted perspectives and an expressive colour palette. Thus, the story is emotionally supported, all the more so, since common prejudices associate Bauhaus architecture with a clinical and cool aura.

The authors chose the narrative strategy to trigger the child reader's interest by showing them Bauhaus-related objects. The suitcase that the children find in their grandparent's apartment is full of mysterious things. Aluminium boxes contain rolls of the film "Wo wohnen alte Leute?" [Where Do Old People Live?] that reports on the Frankfurt Henry-and-Emma-Budge-Home (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 15–20).

A gas pipe fitting refers to the first steel tube chairs that were so typical of modernist interiors (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 26–28).²⁴ In this connection, the Stuttgart semi-detached house by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret is also mentioned (and depicted, 31), as is the Frankfurt kitchen by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, and the work of the Bauhaus artist and teacher Lyonel Feininger. The suitcase also contains a piece of cloth, made of cellophane, cotton, and chenille, that had been designed by the Bauhaus weaver Anni Albers for the school of the German trade union federation (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 56). Moreover, a cigar of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and a muff of Grete Tugendhat, the customer and owner of the Villa Tugendhat in Brno, evoke the historical background.

In order to attract the attention of a child audience, the authors let the protagonists talk in an enthusiastic way. Emotional expression, interjections, evaluative adjectives and idioms taken from (what the authors think is) youth language indicate the excitement of 12-year-old Mia and 10-year-old Lucas. Mia and Lucas are characterised as very clever and bright children, being interested in the sciences. Though they are

²³ "Den Kindern fallen gleich die großen Fenster mit ihren super-coolen Aluminiumrahmen auf, die bis zum Boden reichen und durch die man einen herrlichen Blick auf den See hat. Alles andere ist hier nur schwarz oder weiß bis auf den senffarbenen Teppich: schwarzes Linoleum, weiße Wände, weiße Sessel, schwarze Schränke, graue Tische, weiße Porzellanvasen" (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 7).

²⁴ Astonishingly, a cantilever chair in Bauhaus style (e.g., by Mart Stam or Marcel Breuer) is shown prominently in Hans Baltzer's illustration concerning the letter "A" (for *Arzt*, 'doctor') in the GDR primer *Lesen und Schreiben* from 1950 (Feuer, Alt and Baltzer 1955). See Herbert Schuldt (1980).

modern children, reading *Kinder Kids* by Lyonel Feininger on their iPad (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 37) and communicating via FaceTime, they are children from a privileged parental home and show all the characteristics of the educated middle class. Thus, they are protagonists that can be imagined as future bearers of Bauhaus ideology. What is lacking in this informational book is the connection with the present situation in architecture and interior design. There is a single exception, namely the comparison of Bauhaus furniture by Hannes Meyer with contemporary design by IKEA.

Though there is no doubt that the Jewish family had to leave Germany because of the Nazi terror, the explanation given by the grandfather is curtailed, if not misleading. Lost in thought, the grandfather explains, while referring to Black Friday and the collapse of the world economy in the 1920s:

Millions and millions of people worldwide became jobless and homeless. That was really devastating. And maybe without that crisis there wouldn't have been the Second World War and we wouldn't be here now. [My translation.]²⁵

However, the Jews did not emigrate because of World War II. They left Germany because of their imminent destruction in concentration camps. That the crisis of the world economy (like the huge reparations Germany had to pay) was propagandistically exploited by the Nazis in order to incite antisemitic hatred is another story.

Conclusions

What we have found is that the particular relation between narrated and/or depicted architecture and children's literature is dependent on a number of factors. These factors include the public discourse about architecture in a certain historical period, the author's or illustrator's stance towards the respective architecture (as reflected in the narration or illustration), the protagonist's attitudes toward the architecture, the manipulation of the aforementioned factors by state authorities via censorship, the publisher's expectations, and the self-censorship of authors and illustrators. All of these factors have to do with ideology in the sense explained in the introduction, and the analysed books display different ideological approaches regarding the combination and weighting of these factors.

In *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt* (Hohrath 1935[1931]), a number of contemporary social and cultural phenomena are mentioned, among which is the programme of the New Building movement. The subjective stance of the main protagonist, Hannelore, leads to her insight that the old parsonage in Hinterbiedingen is superior to the modernist semi-detached house in the Weißenhof settlement. To what extent this attitude is shared by the author-narrator and the cover illustrator (Hugendubel in 1931 and 1932, RUTH in 1935, see Fig. 1 and fn. 2) is not clear.²⁶ A mocking perspective on the New Building

²⁵ "Abermillionen von Menschen weltweit wurden arbeits- und wohnungslos. Das war wirklich verheerend. Und vielleicht hätte es ohne diese Krise auch nicht den Zweiten Weltkrieg gegeben und wir wären jetzt nicht hier" (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019: 25).

²⁶ The Stuttgart main railway station is no longer shown on the 1935 cover by RUTH. The cover shows instead a street scene with a huge convertible and the commercial ►

movement invites the audience to form their own ideas about modernist architecture; yet there seems to be an ideologically motivated expectation that the readers will side with Hannelore. The development of the narrative and the book cover of the 1931 and 1932 editions seem to point to the more traditional, anti-modernist position regarding the Bauhaus and its progressive ideology. Sadly, one must state that such conservative tendencies paved the way for the prohibition of the Bauhaus by the Nazis in 1933.²⁷

With respect to the GDR, it is safe to say that the state controlled the contents of children's literature. In general, children's literature was meant to serve the overall goal to educate socialist children. Thus, it was a kind of propaganda, although many authors and publishers found ways to circumvent or undermine the party's demands (Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer 2017). In a way, the contrast between the old (classicism) and the new (the high-rise dwelling as part of large-scale urban development) is reflected in the architecture of the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese. However, in books like *Wir gehen durch die große Stadt* (Reinicke and Wagner 1953), *Bärchens Bummelbus* (Stave and Pansch 1979), and *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* (Hofmann and Leue 1988), we do not learn much about the particular architecture of this building, although it is implicitly addressed in *Bärchens Bummelbus* when the child reader is asked to compare the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese to the skyscrapers at the Leninplatz that show the international, functionalist style in architecture. What is highlighted instead is the value of this landmark building as a symbol of Berlin's reconstruction and the erection of a new socialist state. The nostalgic atmosphere of post-war solidarity and joint efforts for socialism is invoked once again in *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus*, ignoring the many problems of the GDR that contributed to its collapse. The latter book and *Bärchens Bummelbus* use Pop Art inspired illustrations contributing to the overall propagandist messages. To what extent these are endorsed by the authors or accepted by the readers is unclear. However, with respect to the invoked meaningfulness of the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, it cannot be excluded that the propagandistic messages missed the mark. Moreover, Plattenbau settlements were much more important than the Stalinallee project, both from the perspective of the audience's own experiences and from the perspective of the socialist state's promise to provide modern housing for the masses (see also Meibauer 2021, Zarecor 2020).

► *Trinkt Kaffee Hag* [Drink Kaffee Hag] on the awning of *Feinkosthaus Müller*. The idea to hide the Weißenhofsiedlung in the cover illustration, however, has been preserved by RUTH who otherwise contributes a cover that recalls Walter Trier's illustrations.

²⁷ The relationship between the Bauhaus and National Socialism is complex. Although the Nazis persecuted Bauhaus members for political or racist reasons, they also appreciated the design by the Bauhaus members and let them work for them. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe tried to come to terms with the Nazis on several occasions, for example by participating in the propaganda exhibition *Deutsches Volk – Deutsche Arbeit* [German People – German Work] (Berlin 1934) or by signing Joseph Goebbels' "Aufruf der Kulturschaffenden", which was published in the National Socialist journal *Völkischer Beobachter* in August 1934. See the overview by Franz (2019).

Like the apartments in the Hochhaus an der Weberwiese, the Lake Shore Drive Apartments were rented. In contrast to the former, the high-rise building designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had an international aura and was hugely influential as a worldwide role model, an icon of the so-called New Bauhaus. The ideological message behind *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* (Kern, Möller and Kahane 2019) is that children should be aware of the Bauhaus heritage and be intrigued by its achievements. The framing of this message in a narration about history, i.e. factual architectural history and fictional family history, allows it to be conveyed that many Bauhaus protagonists were forced to leave Germany because they were persecuted by the Nazi regime for racist and/or political reasons. The “time travel” narrative, however, may lead to the sense that modernist architecture is a completed historical project. This is certainly not the case, because the programme and ideology of the Bauhaus, despite its inconsistency and diversity, is still effective today.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Hanser Verlag (München) for giving Jörg Meibauer permission to include in his paper the cover image of *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* by Ingolf Kern, Ingolf, Werner Möller and Kitty Kahane (2019) in both printed and electronic versions of this issue of *Libri & Liberi*. The right holders of the books by the former publishers K. Thienemanns Verlag and Der Kinderbuchverlag are unknown.

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Moderna arhitektura i ideologija u njemačkoj dječjoj književnosti

O poznatim zgradama arhitekata Le Corbusiera i Pierrea Jeannereta, Hermanna Henselmanna i Ludwiga Miesa van der Rohea

Čini se da je arhitektura, kako u stvarnosti tako i u fikcionalnom svijetu dječje književnosti, uvijek povezana s ideologijom, odnosno sustavom vjerovanja određene društvene skupine ili društva u cjelini. To se u radu prikazuje u kontekstu njemačke dječje književnosti koja se bavi znamenitim zgradama 20. stoljeća, točnije poluodvojenom kućom Le Corbusiera i Pierrea Jeannereta Weißenhofsiedlung u Stuttgartu koju je Clara Hohrath (1935 [1931]) prikazala u *Hannelore erlebt die Großstadt*, Hochhaus an der Weberwiese Hermanna Henselmanna u berlinskoj Stalinallee koja se pojavljuje u *Die Flaschenpost im Hochhaus* Annegret Hofmann i Helge Leue (1988) i 660–680 Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1951.) Ludwiga Miesa van der Rohea u Chicagu koji se opisuju u *Alles Bauhaus? Eine fantastische Zeitreise mit Mia und Lucas* Ingolfa Kerna, Wernera Möllera i Kitty Kahane (2019).

Ključne riječi: arhitektura, Bauhaus, ideologija, propaganda, Stalinallee