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Erich Mendelsohn and discontinuity of expression

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Rice University, 1988

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abstract

ERICH MENDELSON AND DISCONTINUITY OF EXPRESSION

The problem of discontinuity in the work of the German architect Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953) is redefined through a closer look at the biographical context and a critique of the established historiography. Mendelsohn’s Jewish status, artistic background, and education are discussed as conditions in the transition to a more professional attitude. The role of the avant garde is considered for its spiritual and artistic influences, and Mendelsohn’s sketches are analysed as a uniquely artistic method of composition. The Einsteinturm, the climax of his Expressionist period, is the point of departure for his subsequent buildings. The influence of the Neue Sachlichkeit and the importance of Richard Neutra are shown to be instrumental in Mendelsohn’s metamorphosis. Historians have either embraced Mendelsohn and his early Expressionism, or rejected him completely, rather than trying to comprehend his transition to professionalism and his compromise with urban circumstances.
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INTRODUCTION

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect... I
-Kafka, The Metamorphosis

Erich Mendelsohn’s metamorphosis, like Samsa’s, was an unpredictable event. Mendelsohn (1887-1953) initially perceived himself as a visionary in an art world, and propagated his creations as artistic expressions within a period tolerant of such intentions. Increasingly, and like Samsa, the conditions to which he had become accustomed were forced to give way; the emerging order of post World War I Europe had eliminated the existing hierarchies of the pre-war era. However, the abruptness of change for Mendelsohn was progressively eased by the practicality of commercial demand. For Mendelsohn, the transformation from artistic sensibility to true ‘Architect’ occurred over the course of time, reflecting change and contemporary architectural influence. Never did the recognition of his own metamorphosis provoke an inability to contribute; whereas for Gregor Samsa, change led to paralysis, for Mendelsohn, it was a source of enablement.
Erich Mendelsohn is often regarded as the master of the early twentieth century Expressionist movement in architecture; he is certainly the most familiar character in a rather complex drama involving social, political, and artistic constraints. His character emerged from the Art Nouveau period as an accomplice to a time of radicalism that sought to eliminate a priori conceptions of building design and spatial configuration. Mendelsohn's masterpiece from this early passionate period was the Einsteinturm of Potsdam, Germany, of 1919-21. The Einsteinturm constituted the zenith of Mendelsohn's progress within this idiosyncratic, plastic idiom, for after the completion and inauguration of this work, Mendelsohn's manner begins to take on a different character. For the remainder of Mendelsohn's career, his work becomes much more responsive to the themes of prevailing architectural ideas, and indeed it can be argued that his work, through its apparent modification of passion, became unexpectedly more sympathetic to normative expectations of architectural 'expression.'

Erich Mendelsohn's 'high-Expressionist' period occurred
predated the Bauhaus and included such contemporaries as Hans Poelzig, Herman Finsterlin, Walter Gropius, the brothers Taut, and others. The design experiments of this generation remained largely on paper and in radical publications; seldom were these experiments allowed to be tested in built form. Indeed, the few examples of 'high Expressionist' architecture that were constructed remain isolated curiosities in the continuum of architectural history. The Einsteinturm, then, represents an apparent aberration within the scope of its time and certainly the broader file of its architect's work. Mendelsohn's subsequent projects, such as the notable Schocken stores and the Universum complex, represented an abandonment of apparent compositional principles as had been previously pursued, marking a movement toward sympathy with the emerging works of the 'Neue Sachlichkeit,' or 'new objectivity.' In a move toward sympathy with his design contemporaries, Mendelsohn seemed to have adapted a different set of architectural principles which left the Expressionist period as isolated and suspended in history as its few monuments themselves were.

Bruno Zevi stated that "The enigma of Erich Mendelsohn
has not yet been completely understood."² Whereas Zevi maintains that Mendelsohn retains a continuity of Expressionist approach throughout his career,³ it is rather the feeling of this writer that a great chasm, a 'discontinuity', is more apparent in Mendelsohn's oeuvre, and is of greater importance for analysis. The biographical context surrounding Mendelsohn's progression into a less ecstatic period are less well known than the circumstances of his Expressionist contemporaries, and are the source of surprisingly little conjecture. The break in Mendelsohn's continuity of expression is often accepted as the natural continuation of earlier architectural efforts; when attempts have been made to casually inspect this change, the conclusions have been wildly divergent, ranging from explanations of the architect's dissatisfaction with the compromises necessary to complete his aesthetic goals, to a theory of the non-communication of Mendelsohn's earlier idiom.⁴

The effort to resolve the discontinuity in Mendelsohn's approach has led inevitably to different theories on the origins of his forms. Bruno Zevi states, in reference to Expressionist architecture, that "...static space is
typical of authoritarian regimes; Fascism and Stalinism. Dynamic space is emblematic of community and democracy.\textsuperscript{5} However, Cornelius van de Ven states that Mendelsohn turned away from plastic expression "...because he believed that a concern for space was not enough to create architectural form."\textsuperscript{6} About Expressionism, the poet and architectural visionary Paul Scheerbart stated that "while architecture is a spatial art, figure representation is not spatial art and has no place in Architecture. The animal and human body is for movement. Architecture is not made for movement, and is concerned with formal composition..."\textsuperscript{7} Iain Boyd Whyte states that for Bruno Taut, who also displayed a similar break from Expressionism into a progressively more feasible Neue Sachlichkeit idiom, the break was attributable to a desire to unite architecture with a socio-political expression.\textsuperscript{8} Whyte, however, never mentions Mendelsohn, and one cannot automatically assume that his opinion holds true for the latter. The rationale concerning Mendelsohn remains unanswered.

For Mendelsohn, an understanding of his role as creator was determined very largely by his education and those with whom he chose to surround himself in the early
stages of his activity. Hans Morgenthaler’s 1987 dissertation on The Early Sketches of Erich Mendelsohn establishes quite strongly that the essential persona of Mendelsohn in this period was that of an artist. While his education was in architecture, the influences on Mendelsohn by the Expressionist movement in painting, and the general artistic environment in Munich (where he had completed his education) were considerable. Mendelsohn was inspired to adapt his architecture to a constant need for satisfying personal goals of formal expression as well as the needs dictated by the nature of the building type. After the Einsteinturm, though, Mendelsohn seemed able to sublimate his personal expression for the sake of a collective one. However, though arguably compromised, his work remained distinctly individualistic, and clung to a method based in abstract perception rather than institutional need. Artistic expression remained his highest priority, and certainly much of the interest in Mendelsohn is concerned with his struggle to distance himself from an increasingly alluring collective expression.

One of the hypotheses that will be demonstrated in this thesis is the idea that change occurs for Mendelsohn
concurrent with change in popular expectations of form. Mendelsohn had a continuing need to remain true to his own perception of the avant garde. In actuality, as can be shown, Mendelsohn was rather distant from the prevailing intellectual sensibilities of the 1920's. He was able to attract a successful practice perhaps because of this fact, and thus was quite distinct from many other avant garde German architects of the period who relied on Government programs for their professional survival. Certainly much of his success is related to an approach that Manfredo Tafuri refers to as the service of Reklamearchitektur, or architecture as advertising.\textsuperscript{11} It is undeniable that much of Mendelsohn's success resulted from this attitude which helped to advance his development as an architect capable of participation in an urban dialogue; his earlier efforts in Expressionist abstraction remained unable to take part in any such dialogue.

It is arguable whether Mendelsohn's ability to establish himself as a sensible 'architect' rather than artist was due more to economic pressures than to what has been described as a phenomenon based on technical struggle.\textsuperscript{12} While the improbability of an environment
extensively filled with Expressionist architecture may be contained within its technical difficulty, this alone cannot represent a reasonable excuse for the elimination of an entire artistic sensibility.

It is the posture of recent criticism that the level of consistency in the work of Mendelsohn does not alter throughout his oeuvre. This is the critical stance of Bruno Zevi, whose optimistic perception of Mendelsohn has monopolized comprehensive exploration his works. The consistency may be instead thought of as a continuum, not exhibiting a retention of formal properties from project to project, but certainly retaining a sense of personal conviction throughout. To attempt to establish, as Zevi does, an 'Expressionist' continuum through Mendelsohn's forty-year period of activity may be an error of judgement, as Zevi may be choosing not to accept constraints of the architectural profession which he might have seen as an encumbrance to Mendelsohn's free spirit.

This thesis will inspect the work of Mendelsohn from several perspectives in an attempt to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple levels of 'shift' which occur in the work and practice of
Mendelsohn. Selected works from his German period, 1917-1933, will be considered. This period was chosen as it was the longest single period in Mendelsohn's life in which he remained in one location (Berlin), and thus may be most effectively analyzed. Many questions concerning Mendelsohn's shift on various levels of urban, economic, technical, artistic, and personal perception will be entertained. It is the intention of this work to conclude many of these and other questions, which might then be understood as a rationale for the break in continuity perceptible in the architect's work. It is further the purpose of this work to instill an attitude of critical analysis of an architect in a revolutionary period, in order to gain an understanding of the intentions of other contemporary architects working within this (and more recent) critical periods.
PART I: Background and Establishment of Basis for Change

Mendelssohn and Cultural Identity as Motivation

Erich Mendelssohn was raised as a Jew in the East Prussian town of Allenstein, an area now within the borders of Poland. At the time of Mendelssohn’s birth in 1887, Allenstein was firmly under the influence of German culture, and, indeed, Mendelssohn grew up with this dominant culture, speaking German, and receiving all his professional education in Germany.\(^{14}\) Mendelssohn’s German nationality must be understood as consonant with his Jewishness; German Jewish identity was to carry specific implications intensifying as the architect’s professional life grew.

The question, specifically, of whether or not Mendelssohn’s architectural conceits were affected by his Jewishness is debatable, and germane to this discussion. As it can be shown, a significant part of Mendelssohn’s clientele included many Jewish patrons,\(^{15}\) and certainly his reason for ultimately leaving Germany was the peril of Jewish identity in Hitler’s Germany. This latter fact, however, represents a specifically political situation occurring after Mendelssohn’s formative years.
Nonetheless, his Jewish identity influenced personal choices, and tended to set him apart from the dominant society. This was as evident during Mendelsohn's youth in Germany as it is in other countries today. The concentration of his professional efforts within the Jewish community before and after his flight from Germany would indicate a strong sense of Jewish commitment, perhaps derived from an increasing cultural awareness. As Peter Gay surmises,

The desperate years between 1914 and 1918 converted German Jews from an easy confidence as German citizens of the Jewish faith to a defiant Zionism, to a self-imposed social isolation, and more often, to sheer confusion and disheartened aimlessness.¹⁶

However, to imply the existence of a spatial quality unique to Jewishness flirts with racism. Architectural historian Bruno Zevi firmly believes that Mendelsohn's Jewishness had a direct impact on his ability to sever himself from the confines of 'static' Classical expression. Zevi attempts to establish his fundamental belief in uniquely Jewish efforts in his essay, "Hebraism and the Concept of Space-Time in Art". He asserts that for the Jew, to envision static space (in his mind, anything classically inspired), is to violate Jewish 'law'.
Awareness of space breeds idolatry, that of time underlies heresy. Jews are Jews in that they refuse the static nature of things and ideas, and believe in change and redemption.\footnote{17}

To imply that Mendelsohn worked in an anti-classical manner because he was a 'rootless Jew' and could therefore work in no other way, responds to this need to draw Jews further away from status-quo, 'normal' thought. Thorleif Boman, in his work, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*, states,

\ldots Motionless and fixed being is for the Hebrew a non-entity; it does not exist for them. Only 'being' which stands in inner relation with something active and moving is a reality to them\ldots only movement (motion) has reality. To the extent that it concerned Hebrew thinking at all, static being as a predicate is a motion that has passed over into repose.\footnote{18}

To assert that a 'true' Jew can think, and therefore create, in no other terms than because of his Jewishness, is abhorrent and unfair. Erich Mendelsohn was a Jew, and as such was forced to deal with his given state in a manner most advantageous to himself and his livelihood. It is a crass assumption to label Mendelsohn's work as dynamic for reasons of birth and one could disprove such an assumption by looking at examples of Expressionism by non-Jews. It is therefore
still more unfortunate that Zevi has chosen this approach for an architectural analysis. Zevi's work on Mendelsohn is to date the most comprehensive available, but to rely on it for a historical analysis of this architect seems dangerous.

What, then, can be determined as the effect of Jewishness on the work of Erich Mendelsohn, if any? In 1945, some years after his flight from Germany, he expressed a note of accepting cynicism relating to his experience as a Jew. In reference to receiving further commissions, the architect stated,

> Work is everywhere, and a good worker works always as his own magnet. My migratory years will come to an end, and a new world will become my own. Where chances are plentiful, hazards don't come. We Jews are used to it.¹⁹

Morgenthaler asserts that any Jewish influence upon Mendelsohn arises from his acceptance of the theses of Martin Buber.²⁰ In 1914, Mendelsohn had apparently read Buber's *Drei Reden über das Judentum* ("Three Speeches Regarding Jewishness"), and responded with a letter to his wife,²¹ stating that Buber’s work

> ...Contains...the strict confession of my Jewishness. And indeed exactly as the mixture
Ruber attempts to realize.\textsuperscript{22}

From this work Mendelsohn apparently absorbed Buber’s belief that creation comes not from development but occurs as an heroic act. [for related material see section on Kandinsky and Der Blaue Reiter.] Morgenthaler states:

\ldots Buber characterized expressive, gestural art as the most adequate form of art of Jewish people\ldots \textsuperscript{23}

He later states that

In consequence, Mendelsohn began to deal with architectural form as a mixture of functional requirements and artistic design. He saw the artist as the person capable of uniting these two parts as a giant act, in the creation of a design, somewhat similar to giving birth. In this act were subsumed all practical requirements of building.\textsuperscript{24}

Importantly, Morgenthaler attempts to establish that Mendelsohn’s tendencies toward art were established as a cultural characteristic, a direct result of Jewishness. At no point does Morgenthaler attempt to associate specific formal preferences to Mendelsohn.

To go from what Peter Gay determined a ‘defiant Zionism’ inherent in his age to an acquiescing realization, implies a self-conscious understanding of one’s being.
For one to feel as an outcast and to attempt expressions outside of mainstream thought represents a quality that is perhaps attributable to a Jewish identity; his Jewishness was a catalyst for originality. Mendelsohn's Judaism could not have otherwise proved responsible as a source for form. The sources for Mendelsohn's manner must be sought within the artistic and educational atmosphere contemporary to his early life, as well as his Jewish background.
Education and Development of Method as Impact on Mendelssohn's Work

Mendelssohn's need to 'be different' was surely nurtured by his schooling. He completed his education in Munich in 1910-12, where he had the good fortune to enter into the studio of Theodor Fischer. Like Peter Behrens, Theodor Fischer remains somewhat of an architectural 'middle-man' in the realm of architectural history; his importance is greater for what and whom he taught, than for his works themselves. Fischer began teaching at the Technische Hochschule in Berlin in 1909, after working for some time in the office of Paul Wallot, where he acquired an attitude of freedom in the use of historical motifs and adapted the relaxed unacademic drawing style typical of Jugendstil. Whereas Mendelssohn might have been viewed as a more rebellious student, it seems likely that he found in Fischer a kindred spirit, able to bring to fruition the 'free' seedlings of individualism.

Fischer's architecture reflected a dissatisfaction with status-quo design methods as response to architectural needs. Like other thoughtful architects of his generation, Fischer intended to reinstate the benefits
of craft and personal expression in his work, seeking to counteract the destructive and inhuman side of recent architecture, which had been dominated by industry and disregard for tradition, through an emphasis on individual and regional elements. Indeed, much of Fischer's work appears to have derived primarily from a Bavarian vernacular, re-worked and re-considered so as to become a truly individualistic statement, concurrently expressive of the local spirit.

The Garrison Church at Ulm [fig.1] of 1908-1911, perhaps Fischer's best known and most important building, reaches for a personal expression through a swipe at eccentricity in form and construction. The church possesses a peculiar inflated quality, which gives it a tautness and turgidity. The twin towers culminate in a form half way between pinnacle and dome, bridged by a masonry membrane which reaches almost to the spring-point of the tower caps. The elongated verticality of the building is emphasized by the unusually high entrance portal, itself sailing nearly two thirds the height of the building. All of these features give it a peculiar, graphic quality, like some fantasy cartoon or stage set. The interior of the
church [fig. 2] plays some of the same faux-naïve games; thick where one might expect to see thin, skimp where generosity is expected, surface decoration reduced to applied pattern, and an unusually long-span covering. Intermittent supports that would form side aisles are merely mocked by threats of capitals where columns might meet beams but from which only stylized swags hang. The ceiling hangs low relative to the breadth of the room, and this horizontality is surprising in juxtaposition to the deliberate verticality of the exterior. The building inhales and exhales, with an emphasis on the fatness of the interior breadth versus the pulled thinness of the exterior height. Interpreted in such a fashion, the church interior acquires a 'stretch and pull' tension that implies sinew and viscosity. The interior, while not as molded as the exterior, is where the latent dynamic forces begin to assert themselves. This church sowed the seeds of an 'organic' expression; Fischer "taught his students to respect the 'lines and wrinkles' that history has carved in the ground..."44 Fischer's multi-directionality inherent in the church expresses his intention to allow "inner directional forces to radiate outwards, while the surroundings must also project inwards, just as iron filings attempt to
align themselves with a magnetic field."^{28}

Perhaps more important than this idiosyncratic approach to design was Fischer's early efforts to make use of concrete not only as a constructive material, but as an expressive aid as well. The Garrison Church marked the first important use of concrete frame construction for an interior, creating new spatial effects which signified a turning point in modern architecture.^{29}

Roughly contemporary with the pioneering efforts of August Perret, Fischer helped develop a respectable expression for concrete. As Fischer's idiom tended toward the plastic, this material was particularly suitable to his expressive needs. The interior of the Garrison Church was constructed of concrete "in situ",^{30} and surely here was the opportunity for Fischer to explore form via nature of materials. The sinewy interior is attributable not only to the irrationality of Fischer's personal idiom, but also rational structuralism; the slender columns need not have been formed any thicker to perform their assigned task. Hence an eccentricity of form became possible.

Similarly, the verticality of the room becomes lessened by the absence of side aisles or columns. The large windows within the space themselves de-emphasize the
vertical, and their wobbly arching form reinforces the fluidity of the theme. In Fischer's Garrison Church, the pursuit of rational technology allowed freedom of an emotional expression.

It is not difficult to understand the possibility of influence of Fischer on a student such as Erich Mendelsohn. Part of the key to Mendelsohn's idiosyncratic approach may lie in the fact that after his tutelage with Fischer, he did not expand his ideas or subject them to conflict by becoming involved with another, perhaps more technologically progressive, office. Such a lack of challenge may have affirmed in him a great sense of self-assuredness and righteousness in his architectural and artistic intentions. It is therefore not surprising that immediately after finishing his schooling, Mendelsohn opened his own practice.31

It is notable that Theodor Fischer has also been cited as influencing the architectural themes of Le Corbusier, and that he was the teacher of other notable architects of the period such as J.J.P. Oud, Bruno Taut, and Hugo Haring.32 But whereas it may be asserted that Fischer's
importance to modern architectural development is similar to the effect Peter Behrens had on such as Mies and Gropius, it should be noted that Mendelsohn’s studies with Fischer were conducted entirely, as far as is known, in the classroom. The importance of this may be that Mendelsohn was able to exercise great artistic freedom only possible under academic surroundings; rigid, to be sure, but allowing the sort of experimentation that would have been unlikely under terms of employment. It has been said that "...representatives of the next generation not of [Mendelsohn’s] school...abandoned themselves blindly to a belief in universal happiness through technical and industrial progress." The educational goals of Fischer and Behrens were completely divergent. Behrens was said to have taken his colleagues on weekly excursions to the many remaining buildings by Schinkel in and around Berlin, and this emphasis on the stringent neo-classicism of Schinkel was to inform Behrens' own work, as well as the work of his apprentices. However, the personal idiosyncratic dogma of Fischer, as outlined by Winfried Nerdinger, describes many philosophical tendencies which might as easily describe Mendelsohn. Fischer's tendency to instill in
his students a reverence for the 'found situation',\textsuperscript{35} and thus inspiring them to emphasize and develop it, should not be considered a direct program for the sort of abstraction that Mendelsohn preferred. However, the influence that an attitude can have is arguably the greatest force Fischer was to offer. To make a student aware of a force not rationally contained within the architecture but existing within its potential being, presents opportunity for exploration in building form that can allow intuitive sensibilities an expression, first in drawn form to express passion, and then in built form to realize their potential. Also, exposure to the tenets of Fischer probably instilled in Mendelsohn an affirmation of the usefulness of mystical vision in architecture, the seeds for which had certainly already been laid down in the latter's Kabbalist background.
Munich: Artistic Alliances as Datum

Prior to his exclusively architectural practice, Mendelsohn became involved with certain creative movements that complemented his aesthetic goals, emblematic of his susceptibility to prevailing artistic trends. During this period, most of Mendelsohn’s work was concentrated in Munich, where he was finishing his architectural education. Munich, a center of Bavarian calm, as opposed to the cutting-edge self-consciousness of Berlin, was, nonetheless, a historical center of painting and the arts, and it was therefore quite natural that Mendelsohn became involved with these early Munich artistic organizations. The first organization which Mendelsohn belonged to, the group called Der Blaue Reiter, was founded by the Russian emigre’ artist Wassily Kandinsky, and others, in 1909. This participation marked Mendelsohn’s first identification with an avant garde. He also became involved with the Munich Artist’s Theatre, which had been founded by the artist Georg Fuchs in May 1908. The theatre was intended to explore abstract composition through set design and lighting, employing specific innovations such as a shallow, multi-leveled stage and broad prosceniums. It was the first theatre to "be constructed as an
organic whole..."38 The theatre, by means of stage and lighting manipulation, gave the effect of "...‘infinite space,’ or a space symbolic of psychic distance...Thus, the playing area could be effectively expanded or diminished in accordance with the physical or psychological demands of the drama."39 The stated goal of the theatre group was "not ‘merely a reform,’ but a complete ‘break with tradition.’"40 Primarily, Mendelsohn’s involvement with the theatre group consisted of set designs in collaboration with the artists Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc, and Oskar Kokoschka.41

It is clear that Mendelsohn’s personal method of abstraction was affected by this artistic movement, and indeed provided a pre-political conditioning for the young architect by introducing him to erudite issues. However, whereas political involvements represented an extension of the self into civic and social issues, the Blaue Reiter was more concerned with an artist’s emotions and graphic expression. [The issue of emotion and spirituality in creativity as effected by Theosophy and Rudolf Steiner is covered extensively in the 1986 LACMA catalogue, The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting]
1890-1985. A brief description of Theosophical
connections to Mendelsohn is given in Appendix 2, "The
Influence of Theosophy.") Common to these artists was a
conscious departure from European 'fine' art, and a
philosophy derived from Nietzsche that stated that
whosoever "...wishes to be creative...must first blast
and destroy accepted values."42 The broad planes of
color which characterize the works of Der Blaue Reiter
recall the earlier paintings of the Fauves, asserting
flat forms, often heavily delimited by outline or void.
Kandinsky's works in this period employed an extreme
method of abstraction that led to formal distortion
often beyond recognition.43 Kandinsky's 'Improvisation
6' of 1909 (fig. 3) shows a modeling of form and a wild
use of color, recalling distinct Fauvist tendencies.
The forms are heavily limited by black outlining, and it
would appear that the actual subject of the painting is
less important than the composition and experimentation
of form, a fact that is made obvious by the artist's
choice of title. In comparison with this work, the
renderings that Mendelsohn completed for the interior of
his Becker House (fig. 4) of 1915 reflect Kandinsky's
technique. While this manner allows a richness and
seriousness of form, what links Mendelsohn to
Kandinsky and Der Blaue Reiter is his rendering technique in which the planes of color remain autonomous. The architect is apparently very careful to maintain the tiny slivers of space between the surfaces to preserve their autonomy, and in fact eliminates the need for heavy outline by maintaining linear void. Like the Blaue Reiter exemplars, very strong colors are employed to establish the emotion and mood intended for the space. The interior parlor adjoining the stair, with its blood-red floor and furniture, stands in rather direct opposition to the brilliant yellow chosen to represent the exterior. The colors were chosen for their implied content rather than any relation to reality. It is unlikely that Mendelsohn actually intended a yellow house; like the tendency for experimentation inherent in the painting movement, the architect has expressed a moody intention for the house. Forms and volumes within the house as well as without have begun to take on the idiosyncratic tendencies of the architect, and would be re-used extensively in his other early projects.

In the exterior view, the heavy outline once again makes its appearance (fig. 5), and this fluid, plastic method
of painting corresponds to the already developed
tendency for the architect to avoid right angles. [What
is also quite noticeable about the exterior view is its
similarity to the 'trench sketches' and other later
architectural sketches [see next section]. The framing
of the view is strongly oblique and cut off at one end
so that the building appears to emerge like an object
rolling into the frame from some indefinite source.
While this building, in its bulky form, does not begin
to express the dynamic or emotional qualities in
Mendelsohn's later work, the framing technique is
indicative of a compositional preference sympathetic to
personal idiom.

Mendelsohn's alliance with the Blaue Reiter represented
the architect's first identification with an avant
garde. The lack of a specific social program or even a
social consciousness in the antebellum period made
alignment with the Blaue Reiter convenient for a
self-promotionally inclined person such as Mendelsohn.
More importantly, this alliance helped affirm
Mendelsohn's personal identification with a specifically
artistic state of mind. This identification of personal
ethos would become the basis upon which change was to
occur; any shift in Mendelsohn's architectural method must be seen in conjunction with a shift in his self identification from one of an artist to one of a professional architect.
PART II: Change Represented in Mendelsohn's Work

Mendelsohn's Sketches: Response to Imitation and Analogy; Impact on Work

The poetry of Architecture is acquired by giving monuments their proper character.

-Boullee, "Treatise"\textsuperscript{45}

One short moment of intense concentration, gazing into space beyond, the 6B touched in a point, lingered for a second, then the line started flowing in quick, determined, dynamic motion, not to be interrupted - the pencil never leaving the paper - until it ended in the characteristic flourish of his initials.

-Peter Blake, description of Mendelsohn at work\textsuperscript{46}

For Mendelsohn, sketching in an abstract, painterly manner aided in his development of an appropriate language for his new architecture. Characteristically, Mendelsohn’s architectural projects metamorphosed little from sketch to realization. The structures were considered in totality, generally represented from a severe oblique point which took advantage of the building’s height and plasticity. The sketches generally remained incomplete on at least one edge, eliminating a full conception of the form of the building. This focus allowed a concentration of attention on the essential portion of the concept,
further removing the building from realistic depiction. In a sampling of the architect's sketches (figs. 6-6a), the perspective view is generally wildly exaggerated, the corner view aiding comprehension of the building as three dimensional mass. The rounded corners of most of the sketches, and the severity of view, encourage a cartoonish perception of an inflated skin, bloated and engorged, ready to pop or shoot forward. The irresolution of some of the sketches gives the sensation that the building originates out of the frame, to the side of the sketch, and it would appear that the buildings are moving outward toward the viewer at a rapid velocity.

The development of Mendelsohn's sketches are generally consistent with his thematic progress as an architect. A depiction of speed is increasingly evident in the sketches, and as a design tool, the tendency for the architect to concentrate on the crucial portion of the masses implies a dynamism that had perhaps not been intentional. The executed buildings became built sketches, rather than the more normative situation of the sketch aiding architectural development. Mendelsohn said, "Look at my sketch, there is everything in it".47
Mendelsohn worked on a series of drawings known collectively as the 'Trench Sketches', completed during his tenure as a soldier in the German army during World War I, and exhibited in the Berlin Gallery of Paul Cassirer in 1919. However, the method of sketching was, as will be shown, a critical tool in the process of architectural imagery, and was utilized before and certainly after the war period as a personal device.

Morgenthaler elaborately describes the sketches as important to the architect's development, but does not inspect them from an architecturally critical standpoint. Rather, Morgenthaler's intent seems to be the development of understanding of the architect's primarily artistic sensibility, which, indeed, needs to be established in order to fully comprehend Mendelsohn as an architect. The development of the sketches was consistent with Mendelsohn's emergence as an architect primarily concerned with objective form to one concerned with form as a response to urban and practical considerations, and thus into what is parallel with what Manfredo Tafuri cites as a "colloquy, however dialectical, with the traditional city". 
Mendelsohn regarded Henry Van de Velde to be a source of architectural influence. At his Werkbund Theatre of 1914 (fig. 9a), Van de Velde established what Mendelsohn termed a "dynamic quality rather than intellectual functionalism." It is this quality that Mendelsohn imparted to his conceptions of architecture which were explored primarily in sketchbook fantasies of his earliest period. Mendelsohn quoted van de Velde when he stated that "the line is force!" and proved this aphorism with sketches drawn in a fluid deliberacy that insured a dynamic of forces either transferred by means of mass or expressed in line. What is exceptional about Mendelsohn’s earliest fantasy sketches is that they are usually given a title denoting a specific building type. Generally, the buildings illustrated are commercial types which matured in this period; consequently there is a romantic overtone to many of the sketches. Since they were not conceived for any particular project, Mendelsohn had the luxury of not having to impart any specific programmatic constraints of form on them. In his sketch of 1917 for a Film Studio (fig. 7), he has clearly depicted a place for the fledgling industry, providing an enlarged area of fenestration denoting
studio space. The sketch is composed in Mendelsohn’s signature three-quarter view, at ground level, and contains much of the inflated, inflected qualities found in Theodor Fischer’s work. In this instance, as in most cases in Mendelsohn’s early sketches, the building is composed in strict symmetry, reflected about the longitudinal axis. In the sketch and model for an Optical Factory (figs. 8 & 8a), the building is again stretched along the longitudinal axis, here displaying the wrap-around windows which serve to reinforce the three-dimensionality of the building. The fact that, like the Film Studio, this is also a house of production, housing a process requiring a diversely collaged functional layout, makes the insistent symmetry suspect. Common to both of these sketches, though, by way of their titles, is an attempt on the architect’s part to consider the typological nature of the institution and respond to it.

For the architect, the habit of entitling the sketches may have only been an exercise in which to impart a quality of legitimacy to what is otherwise an unlikely structure, despite his consideration of institutional nature. Morgenthaler establishes that for Mendelsohn it
may have been of greater import to establish a compositional, rather than functional, typology from which to derive form; he describes Mendelsohn’s favoring a flattened elliptical curve disposed variously throughout the series of sketches.\textsuperscript{53} Morgenthaler cites as reason for this habit the fact that "...this elliptical curve may have epitomized steel construction for Mendelsohn."\textsuperscript{54} Morgenthaler had previously cited that such an attitude was parallel to Julien Guadet’s establishment of ‘a normative approach to the composition of structures,’ which defined composition as putting together or uniting the parts of a whole.\textsuperscript{55}

What is actually happening here is that the architect is responding to the institution from a passionate standpoint; the fact that the buildings could not in any way support the programs of which they are entitled is of no import. What is intended to be derived from the sketches, from Morgenthaler’s point of view, is an understanding of their elemental aspect. Mendelsohn hints at ‘typology’ only as a matter of disposition of graphic elements portraying intended character, rather than the actual needs of the institution depicted. This tendency will prove important in the analysis of
Mendelsohn's later sketches and actual buildings.

Morgenthaler states,

...Mendelsohn's early sketches were as unrealistic in purpose as they were utopian in form. Hence, when put in charge of actual building commissions, for the most part, he faced a new building type and could not revert to prior projects.56

The sketches are furthermore important for their implications as a responsible architecture participating with an urban discourse. The buildings depicted are characteristically isolated; they represent the 'autonomous object', a touchstone of Expressionist works, notably similar in their need to exist as free standing objects to Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion of 1914 (fig. 9), as well as van de Velde's Theater (fig. 9a). Consequently, the buildings as depicted could establish no dialogue with an emerging conception of 'urban condition'; in their objective stance Mendelsohn formulated a critical posture consistent, intentional or not, with prevailing progressive thought.

Bruno Zevi noted that Mendelsohn's sketches stimulate a dialogue between buildings and scenery...the organic unity of shapes...and in fast or slow, tense or flaccid cadences of angular passages..."57
The transformation of language reflected in the sketches from Mendelsohn’s earlier period to later works stresses the shift from a focus on natural connections as mandated by Buber’s Kabbalist thought and Rudolf Steiner’s Theosophic thought [see Appendix 2], to a period in which an urban connection was crucial to the ultimate form of the building. The sketches for the Einsteinturm (fig. 10) portray the building as an object of natural or organic origin by means of architectural language and treatment of ‘line’; later sketches, while admittedly reflecting a maturing artistic conception held by the architect, nonetheless display a revised sense of linearity and ‘collage’ response to the ‘polyphonous’ urban environment. The later works finally bring out an urban sensibility expressed through a sense of layering evident in sketches such as those completed for the WOGA Complex (Universum Cinema) (fig. 11), and the Schocken Store in Stuttgart (fig. 12), both of 1926-28. These sketches reflect what Mendelsohn referred to as ‘counterpoint;’ the explicit opposition of dominant compositional elements with contradictory elements. In the Schocken store, it is the stair towers terminating or deflecting the
illustration of movement; in the WOGA complex, the proscenium behind the auditorium provides the distraction. Lust for verticality is not provided for by some soaringly vertical composition that aspires to the sky; rather, the composition reflects a greater understanding of earth and ground. Even Mendelsohn’s ‘skyscraper’ sketches (fig. 13) reluctantly climb, as Zevi says, not worshipful of height;58 "Instead, they conquer it slowly, stratifying it with embedded shapes and planes."59 In these cases, line is utilized as layer upon layer, providing a different sense of verticality than expressed in the ‘plastic’ Einsteinturm. The Einsteinturm might thus be imagined as a tree trunk; while a tree trunk cannot move or illustrate kinesis, its form as an additive organic mass differentiates itself from the removed ‘machinery’ of Mendelsohn’s later works.

Furthermore, the sketching technique characterizes a developing relationship with materials as the projects progress and increase in size. Whereas the Einsteinturm was intended to be constructed entirely of concrete [though in fact it wasn’t -- see section "Problems with the Aesthetic"], many of the apparently massive early
conceptual sketch projects were intended to be constructed out of curved and riveted steel, forming hollow piers. This conceptual change may then also be attributed to an understanding of the nature of materials; consistent with a Ruskinian sense of truth to a material's potential. Mendelsohn shifted to a linear formation not only more 'truthful' to steel, but more easily constructed and practical to the needs of specific programs.

The progress exhibited in the sketches reflected a representational shift in terms of analogical approach. J.N.L. Durand, in his commentaries on typology of 1801, stated that "For architecture to please by means of imitation, it should imitate nature..." In this case, Durand was referring specifically to an anthropomorphic sympathy, rather than a biomorphic analogy; that architecture was representative of the human form in its primitive structures and by the forms of its structures themselves. However, Mendelsohn's particular brand of biomorphic analogy, as displayed at the Einsteinturm (as well as by others of the Expressionist movement) (fig. 14), are perhaps an extension of anthropomorphic analogy. That is, rather than a depiction of
anthropomorphism such as the caryatids at the Erechtheum, for example, Mendelsohn expressed the human form in an architecturally abstract manner, concentrating on a depiction of the soul or another otherwise high order.

The late sketches of the architect reflect what Peter Collins might have referred to as a shift from biological imitation to mechanical analogy; natural form is sublimated to that which represents the rational use of materials. Collins stated that it is traditional for biological imitation to concentrate on morphology rather than functionalism,64 a concept clearly manifest in Mendelsohn's work despite the architect's stated intentions; a mechanical analogy eliminates the need to derive forms from any sources other than constructed objects.

To represent movement and cosmological aspirations, the Einsteinturm anticipated upward movement, but like his Expressionist contemporaries, the biomorphic analogy to a phallus, having nothing to do with functional typology, is clearly represented. Anthony Vidler states that when the eighteenth-century visionary architect
Lequeu took an imitation to the point of satire, such as a cow shed turned literally into the shape of a cow, the futility of overt functional depiction was revealed.\textsuperscript{66} This attitude pertaining to the ultimate self-parody of biomorphism, or 'mechano-morphism', when taken to cartoonish extremes such as in Mendelsohn's early sketches, recalls the afore-exhibited biomorphic examples of human genitalia.

This simplistic method of providing for an architecture parlante is naive, in the manner of Robert Venturi's Long Island Duckling (fig. 15) though critical in a similar manner to Adolf Loos' deadpan submission to the Chicago Tribune Competition in 1922. (fig. 16) An 'enlarged part', as a diagram of a typological purity, could not serve as a curative for an emerging epoch. Vidler comments,

Taken to its extreme, as the overriding quality of expression and effect, character could serve to isolate every building from every other, distinguish so firmly, even between buildings of the same kind, that any general typology was destroyed.\textsuperscript{67} [my emphasis]

The later sketches, such as for the Schocken stores (fig. 17), representing the projects with a curved wall facade, serve as reaction to this case against a
hyper-objective architecture of biomorphism; instead, these projects serve to 'mend' urban fabric as connective tissue. In his article, "Architecture and the Critique of Ideology", Fredric Jameson characterizes the problem of biomorphism thus:

...if the body ceases to be the fundamental unit of a spatial analysis, at once the very concept of space itself becomes problematic: what space? The space of rooms or individual buildings? Or the space of the very city fabric itself in which those buildings are inserted, and against whose perceptual background any experience of this or that local segment is organized? 68

It may be asserted that Mendelsohn sought to eliminate biological imitation for mechanical analogue, returning (by economic necessity and personal preference) to an idiom of urban language. The attempt at biomorphic imitation was never a malicious attempt to subvert architectural 'meaning'; it was, as can be shown, a non-communicative method of representation, eventually superseded by urban conciliatory measures (as will be outlined further in this text). The conceptual sketches completed by Mendelsohn as institutional studies in the early portion of his career reflect an intention of character illustration derived from a functional correlation and a sense of artistic license left over
from Munich-Theosophic days. Later sketches for actual building projects reflect a shift in concern for urban needs appropriate to an urban commission, and an analogy to form as determined by material propriety.

Thus, Mendelsohn's sketches contributed to a shift from overtly objective form to more fabric-responsive form admissible of an urban language. The movement into a mechanical analogy facilitated the employment of form and articulation found in within the bounds of normative urban dialogue; as Expressionism's sources were located outside of this boundary, its ease of transition into more common use was jeopardized. Further, the sketches chronicle a shift from biological 'imitation', as in the case of the Einsteinturm, to mechanical analogy, as depicted by the Schocken stores. The sketches themselves, and the technique by which they were drawn, represent an effective depiction of Mendelsohn's response to changing design requirements.
Berlin and The Avant Garde

Erich Mendelssohn was not a political activist in the sense that activism has come to be understood in the second half of the twentieth century. While he belonged to, and, in fact, helped found, individual avant garde movements in attempts to ally political and artistic themes in the fragmented atmosphere of pre- and post-World War I Germany, it appears that none of these involvements profoundly affected the architect's social sentiments to the extent that it involved many of his contemporaries.

Mendelsohn's architectural career is disparagingly susceptible to critical responses to political, aesthetic, and economic, situations. That the beginning of his career coincided with one of the most dynamic periods in world history certainly ensured at least fractional involvement. But Mendelsohn was almost infinitely adaptable to themes that were in his perception 'avant garde.' The changing political-social scene of the era serves, handily, as a justification for a career that is more inconsistent in its development than continuous, reflecting thematic changes in jumps and stutters rather than in blends and flows.
Mendelsohn moved from Munich to Berlin shortly before the beginning of World War I. His reasoning was a personal dissatisfaction with what he perceived to be a disfavorable condition for progressive practice in Munich:

...I cannot live among people who only understand what they can touch with their hands and who reject everything new as a disturbance of their comfortable bourgeois existence...69

This is, perhaps, not an atypical stance for an anxious person recently severed from education. From Munich, in September, 1914, Mendelsohn stated:

I have the calm confidence that my time must come...70

Idealism and naivete regarding the nobility of war in this period was high enough for Mendelsohn to enlist in the German army in 1915. This act in itself must be read as an attempt at an avant garde stance much more than a patriotic one. The apocalyptic Italian Futurists had established the act of participation in war as the earth’s only hygiene;71 this was the only means of achieving a ‘new start,’ and it was hoped that this act
of artistic 'war-mongering' would instill clout into artists for achieving their radical goals.

Following the Armistice of 1918, sociopolitical conditions in Berlin reached a crisis point largely resulting from disillusionment with the aftermath of the war and Germany's defeat. This profound sense of failure and the ensuing cultural self-hatred paradoxically resulted in a productive period of artistic activity promoting a dualistic explosion that welcomed the future and technological innovation, while denigrating the present. In December, 1918, a group of artists joined together for the purpose of working within the confines of the emerging social order and promoting collaborations in their work. The Novembergruppe, as it was called, was founded with the intention of joining the efforts of radical artists and architects for their mutual advancement. While these intentions did not specifically include a social program, it soon became the intention, perhaps for reasons of gaining legitimacy (or mere 'bandwagoning'), to include a civic program by which it was intended to manipulate the shaping of public policy in the arts. Erich Mendelsohn became the founding architect of the
Novembergruppe. 75

While not a full member, Mendelsohn was also a supporter of the Arbeitsrat fur Kunst, or 'Worker’s Art Council,' which emerged by the end of 1918. The 'AFK' attempted to take up a more internationalist approach by issuing a broadside entitled 'To All Artists of All Countries.' 76 From that work comes the following description of intentions:

Impelled by the conviction that it is necessary to take advantage of the political revolution and liberate art from decades of regimentation, a group of artists of artists and lovers of art sharing that opinion has been formed in Berlin... Art and people must form a unity. Art should no longer be a luxury for the few but must reach and gladden the masses. 77

The productivity of these groups as artistic/architectural societies was rather small, and their actual impact was similarly thin. Political conditions in Germany proceeded upon a reactionary route despite the artistic attempts to manipulate a higher consciousness from repression. Socially, xenophobic self-isolation began to envelop German consciousness, allowing militaristic nationalism to rise and fill an abscess hollowed out by World War I. To the
architectural consciousness, this meant sure difficulty, but adversity just as surely provoked hardened intentions of disobedience, for German society demanded a 'German' architecture which would help to retain vernacular values of an older, more rural type of society. However, the Expressionist architect Bruno Taut stated that

It was not possible for anyone to make use of any pre-war traditions, for that period was perforce regarded as the cause of the misfortunes of the past, and because every achievement of those days seemed more or less to hang together with the origins of the war...

Taut's comments mark the conflicting nature in art movements of this period. Despite this scene, already emerging by 1919, governmental authorities were still sporadically amenable to avant garde proposals in the belief of a 'greater society.' However, by the end of 1919, the German government began to suspect certain avant garde art and architecture societies of promoting 'Spartacist-Jewish tendencies' and favoring Jews and foreigners over "true Germans." Morgenthaler notes the importance of Mendelsohn's Jewishness as a member of the elite artist's societies, specifically the Arbeitsrat, from a letter located in the Bauhaus archive which states that "the joining of Mendelsohn [to the
Arbeitsrat] is opposed because it would strengthen the 'Jewish element' in the organization."81 Whereas Jewish contribution was societally suspect, it was consequently a consideration where membership in avant garde societies was at stake. Mendelsohn was not accepted as a full member in the Arbeitsrat, affirming his 'outsider' status, a condition for any member of an avant garde in the first place, and a greatly increasing condition for any Jewish person of this period. Such a condition might also serve to harden any free-spirit's conviction when it comes to personal matters; it may also have the effect of causing the victim to attempt to conform to a chosen system which might yield acceptance. It is in this latter aspect that Mendelsohn's shift to a less revolutionary aesthetic can be viewed.

One avant garde group, the Bauhaus, was particularly politically confrontational. Whereas it may have been possible at this point to associate Expressionism with a romantic past, the Bauhaus seemed to represent a flagrant disregard for popular values. Modern architecture, it was said, appeared to develop out of pre-war styles and thus had firm roots in the past, while products of the Bauhaus could not be traced to any
such secure past.\textsuperscript{82}

Walter Gropius stated in 1919 that

Since we have no culture whatever, merely a civilization, I am convinced that for all its evil concomitants Bolshevism is probably the only way of creating the preconditions for a new culture in the foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{83}

As a Jew, this was a social situation that Mendelsohn could not afford to be associated with. Not only was his Jewishness increasingly suspect, but affiliation with a group advocating Bolshevism might have assured professional ostracism. Mendelsohn would have by this point come to accept religious adversity as a daily threat; but the best counter attack was still to ignore. He had a professional life to develop, and with the advent of the Einsteinturm and later professional practice, Mendelsohn seems to retreat from organized social-art. To remain within an artistically based identity such as Expressionism, with its ties to a more popularly accepted Art Nouveau past, and to have participated with many artistic / political groups may be seen as an attempt for Mendelsohn to remain ‘safe.’ Public and economic policy did not yet demand the censure of such works as the Einsteinturm, which would
later be seen, by modernists as well as political radicals, as an immoral display of extravagance.\textsuperscript{84}

It may not be inappropriate to consider the possibility that Mendelsohn and those of the avant-garde art and architecture societies associated themselves with an ulterior motive of commercial success. Cynical as it may seem, an opportunistic nature within those who relied on their art to also provide a livelihood may be possible, for it has been noted that the clout and public influence possessed by architects of this period was due to the commercial importance of architecture in post-war reconstruction.\textsuperscript{85} Surely for those who could provide promise of economy, that is to say, not Mendelsohn, opportunities for large scale public works in the early 1920’s were plentiful. Official opinion regarding complex construction issues became disfavorable in a economy experiencing wild inflation; less-costly building materials and prefabricated parts attracted huge publicity and government attention.\textsuperscript{86} Thus, Mendelsohn, in addition to all other reasons, may have been economically lured into abandoning an idiom too representative of misappropriation and extravagance, in hopes of receiving some of the architectural
opportunities from civic sources. The overt Expressionist idiom simply could not be continued.

As a cipher to the shift in Mendelsohn's personal ethic, it is valuable to observe that with the curtailment of any avant garde artistic affiliation, his involvement with a normative commercial environment increases. This is in no way to imply that Mendelsohn 'sold out', or any other qualitative judgement; rather, that at some point, he did make such a shift which was then consonant with his architectural expressions. This conjunction must be noted.
The Einsteinturm

A. The Hypertrophic Daydream; Form, Construction and Compromise.

My shadow forms a resonant shell
And the poet listens to his past
In the shell of his body's shadow.\textsuperscript{87}

-Bachelard

I believe that all original artists betray
their individual significance in their first
works -- pregnant with ideas, offering the
best clue for everything that follows... For
when the first idea is deep enough, life
is too short to expound it fully.\textsuperscript{89}

-Mendelsohn, 1950

To most architects and architectural aficionados, Erich
Mendelsohn is known for one specific building -- the
Einsteinturm, or Einstein Tower, in Potsdam, (now East)
Germany. (fig. 18) Most anthologies of
architectural history include the Einsteinturm; the more
complete ones might also include other Mendelsohn works,
such as a Schoken store or two. But Mendelsohn's
historical reputation is based heavily on this early
project, his first work completed as an independent
professional. Within architectural history, and within
the architect's own oeuvre, it remains an idiosyncratic
blip, a visual oddity in an individualistic life.

The Einsteinturm represents the flowering of
architectural conceptions conceived and nurtured years before in the architect's 'Trench Sketches' as an image without a function or client. Surely the mechanical nature of war all around the young architect had effected a peculiar brand of optimism, heralding a technologically saved future to be ushered in by architects. In these sketches (figs. 19, 19a, 19b) there is a clear concern for juxtaposition of mass and void. The void is generally webbed-over by a membrane of glass, pulled taut between the piers of concrete. These works recall the inflated quality of Fischer's Garrison Church, and contain much of the same roundness as the former. Also especially notable of the sketches is the lack of any interior studies. Space was being perceived in the round, from without, in a very non-Modern manner.

Similarly, Mendelsohn made many sketches for a tower which subsequently became the basis for the completed Einsteinturm (figs. 20, 20a) The project, completed in 1921 and inaugurated in 1924,90 came to Mendelsohn after Erwin Findlay Freundlich, Einstein's assistant, was shown some of the architect's sketches.91 The tower was to be built on a hilltop site near several other
observatory structures, with the functional intention of analyzing and subsequently proving Einstein's Theory of Relativity [see appendix no. 1, "Mendelsohn and the Illustration of Relativity" for a discussion of the connection between the tower's design and the Theory of Relativity itself]. Here was Mendelsohn's opportunity to design a building that would establish his reputation. The individualist nature of the building, and the willingness of the clients to allow artistic exploration, assured the success and notoriety of the building. Yet, the building's triumph also represents its tragedy; it is the climax of the entire phase of twentieth-century Expressionist architecture. Never again was Mendelsohn to propose such a solution.

Like Mendelsohn's sketches, the program for the tower was ideal. It was provided with an unencumbered site, surrounded only by other laboratories. (fig. 21) The object-like quality of the building and its posture as a built form of graphic representation were thus assured. It is a white monument to an energetic period, expressive more of architectural ideals than anything to do with astrophysical research. Formally, it is symmetrical about the longitudinal axis, similar to the
architect's sketches, and in plan presents a grand procession of spaces more evocative of Baroque than radical sensibilities. (fig. 22) Zevi states that the building's "passionate force of its form echoes with an iron rationality."94 This 'passion' is realized by manipulations such as the appearance of 'suction' of the tower, apparently pulled so hard from its fixed base that the base itself begins to deflect and twist into a concave form. At the same time the base of the building is trying to spread further and further, illustrated by the cant of the stair-landing parapet. On the 'face' of the tower, four 'ribs' hold fast as the web of material in the center is pulled into concavity, the tautness of such a move revealing the bone-like nature of the ribs. The exterior is thus illustrative of a condition external to the functions of the building; it has a need to express, as Zevi states, the 'passion' inherent in its conception.95

Moving into the building, the 'arbeitsraum', or 'workroom' of the Einsteinturm (fig. 23), located on what shall be called the 'piano nobile' of the structure, expresses through contemporary photographs a sense of a 'gesamtkunstwerk'. The curvilinear room clearly continues on the inside the expressive
intentions of the exterior through molding and chamfering that defies the rationality of the work being conducted within. The thickness of the window divisions recalls an Art Nouveau past by its bowed tension that recalls the sinuosity of the works of J.M. Olbrich. (fig. 24) The furnishings within the space, designed by Mendelsohn, express a similar passion, though through an idiom not quite in harmony with the enclosing space. The desks, chairs, and casework are finished with a spare angularity not found in the rest of this building. The angularity of the hind legs of the chairs recall a zoomorphism consistent with the fantastic nature of the exterior. The chairs anticipate the excitement of the occupant; the sitter is visually forced to the edge of the chair and to the table by this guiding creature in order to undertake the research at hand. However, the aforementioned spareness of the craftsmanship of these objects opposes the sensuality of the space and the building in which they reside. Aside from their 'techno-romantic' appearance, they are strangely flat, not at all built into the overstated mass that the building really is. They are work chairs, though the architect, ever-conscious of his role as form-giver, could not resist this further manipulation in the goal
of 'total art-work'. The table continues the flat-board theme of the chairs and retains the tapering legs, although the inflected directionality of the chair legs is here eliminated. The chamfered corners echo those of the windows. It appears that the table edges and built-in book shelf edges are all rounded, answering the erratic sensuality of the surfaces. However, the table designed for the Übernachtungsraum (fig. 25) [overnight room] appears to contain a different intention altogether. The legs of this table are tapered, but in this case are inflected toward the center. Surprisingly, the center of the table is creased, presumably responding to the forces of the alcove in which it is housed. As the building bulges out, the table, its feet assumed fixed to the ground, is also pulled against its will by the same force that pulls the wall. This force depiction is particularly satisfying in that it sets up a dualistic treatment of the forces within the tower. From the inside, by working with the furnishings, Mendelsohn created an expression of suction complementing the external expression of expansion. These forces, inside and out, may then be seen as resolved, resulting in a sense of equilibrium.
It may be valuable to come to an understanding of the Einsteinturm as an example of architectural fancy or fantasy. The sober 'post-Tower' constructions may be seen as deadly serious, appealing to a direct discourse with social conditions, rather than possessing the characteristic dependency on inspirations outside the bounds of architectural language of the Einsteinturm. To define it as a fantasy, to promote this recognition, permits a decomposition of its mystery which may then promote an understanding of the impact of Mendelsohn's later works in reference to his earlier ones. The phenomenology of Gaston Bachelard provides such a fantastic framework.

In his discourse on 'Shells', Gaston Bachelard expresses an appreciation for the natural formation as provision of signals for association with very simple issues of shelter and security. He derives pleasure from a fascination with bigness; expanded objects to cradle the body provide a sense of fantasy or terror, in any case an otherworldly quality. He describes a certain cosmic linkage with dwelling in a world that does not normally accept the human form, and this strange juxtapositioning of the human body with the unexpectedly 'large', such as
giant nautilus shells, implies the primacy of the natural world. Bachelard associates the phenomenon of dreaming with shelter and ritual. "Who would not feel cosmically cheered at the thought of taking a bath [in a] shell?" 96

In the case of the shell...we see nature dreaming an immense dream, a veritable dream of protection... 97

Bachelard describes the excessive development of this element, this shell, as the 'hypertrophic daydream', and seeks comparison of this daydream to the fantasies of Hieronymous Bosch (fig. 26). Bosch typically employed an expansion of the commonplace, usually a natural growth, to imply terror or power in the unexpected. To Bosch, the human being was incidental to the ultimate power of nature, and would inevitably be sublimated by it. The Einsteinturm, in the best intentions of the Expressionist movement, likewise seeks an analogy to the natural. Like Bachelard, it is the 'shell'; like Taut, it is the phallus; like Bosch, it is the flower. For all of these artists, the analogue to another 'thing' is heightened by the terror of 'size'; like some of Aldo Rossi's sketches (fig. 27), the image in the mind
becomes a collage within the memory. Comparison within the mind produces an equivalency of objects in size; objects may thus be any size within the memory. The Einsteinturm is thus the 'daydream', subject to this horrifying hypertrophy which nonetheless aspires to a linkage with a higher cosmic order.

Bachelard continues that

...After hypertrophic daydreaming we always have to return to the type of daydreaming that is designated by its original simplicity. We know perfectly well that to inhabit a shell we must be alone. By living this image, one has accepted solitude. 98

Bachelard's seeking to distinguish dream from reality, and recognition of the essential solitude inherent in the demand of certain conditions, provides an appropriate armature upon which to place Mendelsohn. After his tremendous 'dream', that is, shortly after the period of the Einstein Tower, he proceeds into a 'new sobriety', evolving eventually into an aesthetic that was comparable to the 'Neue Sachlichkeit.'
B. Problems With The Aesthetic

Manfredo Tafuri states that

Though constructed in traditional manner, the Einstein Tower strives to evoke a language adaptable to form in movement...[it represents] the polyphony of life fixed in the dynamic of forms. 99

For all the successes of the Einstein Tower, for all of its triumphant balance and uniqueness and client satisfaction (Albert Einstein himself is reputed to have declared the building "organic" 100), its idiom was abandoned, leaving it to be identified as a period piece, stranded for all time. Reasons for this abandonment have been argued, and this act lies at the crux of the controversy of Mendelsohn's 'shift'.

It has been argued that the end of Mendelsohn's Expressionist phase occurred not from internal problems such as technical difficulties in construction, but from intellectual issues propagated within the greater Expressionist movement in the Netherlands and Germany.88 Banham states that Mendelsohn's tendency to compare his own work to the 'plastic' works of the Amsterdam Expressionists sparked a personal re-examination, causing him to abandon all experiments
in a massive, plastic vein, and to form a synthesis with
with J.J.P. Oud of Rotterdam, who took a more stripped
approach to form (fig. 28), and Michael de Klerk of
Amsterdam, whose works in a plastic vein more closely
resembled Mendelsohn's own work.\textsuperscript{101} (figs. 28a, 28b.)

In 1923, Mendelsohn stated that:

Certainly the primary element in architecture is
function, but function without sensual
contributions remains mere construction. More
than ever do I stand by my program of
reconciliation...Functional dynamics is the
postulate. \textsuperscript{102}

This quotation contains a rationale to explain the
beginnings of change in Mendelsohn's work. But in an
analysis of intellectual reasoning for the architect's
actions, it should be noted that the period in which the
Einstein Turm was completed also saw the rise of the Neue
Sachlichkeit movement, in which a stripped, functional
approach was regularly embraced, generally striving for
reductive masses that were true images of a machine
aesthetic. Wolfgang Pehnt states that Mendelsohn's
reason for abandonment of the Expressionist aesthetic
'lie' was a reaction to the technical difficulties
inherent in the creation of such a complex building.\textsuperscript{109}
Indeed, due to economic circumstances, the tower was constructed of a brick superstructure, shaping the complex forms out of cut brick which was then frosted over with a thin layer on concrete. Pehnt further notes the irony of this occurrence, citing that its impact was so strong on Mendelsohn that he never again attempted an expression of either monolithic structure or effect.

Mendelsohn favored working within an architectural avant garde, and it is this writer's conjecture that if non-technical reasons for the architect's move away from the plastic masses of the Einsteinturm are to be entertained, it would seem likely that the structure's critical reception as 'retardataire' by 1924 would have been as effective a deterrent to future explorations within the same idiom as any technical problem might have been.

The apparent non-communication of the Expressionist language is asserted by Bruno Zevi in his essay 'Architecture and Einstein's Space-Time.' Bruno Zevi stated that expressionism thus remained "an exception, a protest, a vital invective" incapable of offering any
linguistic alternative to pre-war architectural propositions. The fact that the building was the direct result of image sketches, changing minimally from their passionate conception, means that rather than being generated from rough conception into refined product, the sketch portrayed the genius and the intent. For all of Expressionism's intended emotional impact, Zevi's comment on its non-communicability seems ironic.

Mendelsohn specifically felt the need to establish an architectural language dissonant from the cliche of 'place'; he makes a fine distinction between the need for an architecture which is international in that it is 'nowhere', and one which is international by its ubiquity. In his 1919 speech, The problem of a new architecture, Mendelsohn states that

...internationalism means an aesthetic attitude with its basis in no one people in a disintegrating world. Supra-nationalism, however, embraces national demarcations as a precondition; it is free humanity that alone can re-establish an all-embracing culture.

It is certain that Mendelsohn sought to establish an architectural expression specifically embracing nationalism, and, consequently, regionalism. Rather than depend on language as a construct to link existing
culture, Mendelsohn understood that linguistic modifications could only occur within a new order. In the same speech he stated that

Naturally, this era will not be brought into being by social classes in the grip of tradition.\textsuperscript{107}

The Einsteinturm manipulates form and material into a ‘controlled chaos.’ Personal reaction to such a stance is evident in the writings of Mendelsohn, for in his lecture of 1923 entitled \textit{Dynamics and Function}, he stated

As creators ourselves we know how very variously the forces of motion, the play of tensions, work out in individual instances. All the more, then, is it our task to oppose excited flurry with contemplation, exaggeration with simplicity, uncertainty with a clear law...\textsuperscript{108}

reflecting a shift to an attempt to placate disresolution and promote clarity. In one of his ‘Glass Chain Letters’, the architect Hans Luckhardt stated in reference to Expressionist drawing as a medium of exchange:

Stimulating as they are, one does not sense the final intellectual conquest that exists in a perfectly worked out design. I have the impression that something in the public mind rejects architectural sketches. It is obvious that architecture can in fact only be built and
can never exist merely in sketches. The sketch is justified only in the field of literature.  

The problem was that expressionism emerged from drawn intent to reality without shedding its degree of caricature. Its narrative approach really had no relevance to the needs of built function. The expression of emotion in forms other than what were popularly accepted became universally rejected. Vittorio Gregotti notes Expressionism's natural shift from a nihilistic stance to an exhibition of a 'mystic return to one's origins, offering no alternatives to the real conditions of society. Consequently, he continues, Expressionism's most 'energetic artistic results' were achieved as satiric deformation emphatic of its own arbitrary character. Gregotti laments this usage of "caricature, which is of course the image of the grotesque discrepancy between reality and appearance..." He then continues to note, perhaps ironically, that though 'deformation' was an element of Expressionism, it was somehow transmitted to the successive Neue Sachlichkeit. This would imply a theme of continuity between Expressionism and the Neue Sachlichkeit; that the seeds for the latter were contained within the former.
Despite other factors, the Einsteinturm was quite simply
difficult to build; ship builders were required to
construct templates for the complex compound curves from
which the walls were composed.\textsuperscript{113} Furthermore, the
difficulty of representing the tower on a
two-dimensional medium such as a working drawing proved
inadequate as a method of description of the intentions
and construction details of such a complicated
building.\textsuperscript{114} However, this 'constructability' problem
would seem inadequate reasoning without knowledge of the
changes in the art world that affected the sensibilities
of Mendelsohn and must ultimately be seen as having
caus[ed his change of direction more than technical
issues. The technical problem as catalyst is but a
convenience. [The existence of Rudolph Steiner’s quite
complicated Goetheanum in Dornach (see fig. 54), with
its many buildings of complex compound curves, lessens
the impact of this reasoning. Such an argument is of a
piece with the modernist cliche’ that traditional
architecture had become impossible due to the
non-existence of craftsman; this was a self-fulfilling
prophecy!]

The Expressionist mode provided an anti-contextual
approach to design. Expressionism's greatest monuments are all free-standing object buildings, able to exist only in isolation. It is likely that the shock of a true expressionist building within an urban context would produce more than just a confrontational response. But the need for Expressionist monuments to be viewed in the round necessitated an anti-urban stance and, thus from a practical standpoint, lessened the possibility of commissions for the architect, and, therefore, any subsequent Expressionist experience.

To refer back to Bachelard, the solitude which he complains of might be derived as an argument for the 'object' versus the 'non-object'. Bachelard seems to support, by biological analogy, that to dwell alone, or for our purposes, to build alone, is a 'great dream.' But the terror of agoraphobia calls us back to the commune; the collective is emblematic of a necessarily shared set of experiences. The lone construction "expresses the isolation of the human being withdrawn into himself." The refusal to participate in the dialogue may assure self destruction; the willfulness of the Einsteinturm assures that it can be only an exception.
After the Einsteinturm and the later Hausleben project [see section on Richard Neutra for an explanation of the Hausleben project], Mendelsohn began to wean himself from pursuits in compositional mass in building design, and one would expect his spatial considerations to follow suit. The Neue Sachlichkeit, which Mendelsohn was moving toward at this point, did not seek to portray emotional issues in architecture. The new programming was to be the emergence of a self-referential architecture based on Platonic masses. A value for the static nature of 'things' began to emerge; Mendelsohn himself stated in 1924 that

It is therefore impossible - both technically and from the point of sensibility - to transfer the static requirements of stability on dry land to the dynamic reality of the ship. Such a mixture indicates a lack of building logic and technical culture. Only an unencumbered attitude to our age can recognize the problem and solve it. It must be solved! 116

This comment represents a surprising turn about of attitude, indicating in Mendelsohn a possible degree of regret for his past concerns. Mendelsohn's schooling
encouraged the expression of emotional issues; studies
with Theodor Fischer had insured that popular values,
and a regard for vernacular architecture, would be
included in Mendelsohn’s own architectural program. But
the urban condition required a return to a more
familiar, trabeated form; the Neue Sachlichkeit provided
an avant-garde expression with a more conventional,
practicable idiom embracing this necessity.

In any case, the Expressionist work as an urban and
public proposition deserves discussion to assess the
city’s possible role in determining the success of the
idiom. In an urban dialogue, the need for plastic
expression to retain its objective autonomy can be
viewed as a critical attempt to boycott the existing
image of the city. Manfredo Tafuri states:

...Expressionism in no way aspired to reconcile
the individual with the metropolis. On the
contrary, it recognized in anguish-ridden dissent
the sole ascertainable reality. The experience of
shock, of anguish, was therefore not to be
sublimated or dispelled, but...interiorized.117

Tafuri’s perspective establishes the problem that
Expressionism, through promotion of the ‘anxious
object’, refused an admission of the urban condition in
twentieth century Europe. In 1918, Mendelsohn attended a lecture by Heinrich Tessenow in which the negative effect of the metropolis on culture caused by the post-War condition was discussed. The anti-urban sentiments of the early twentieth century might have promised the success of the Expressionist idiom by its refusal to adopt the language of the city. This inability to participate was assured by the need for Expressionistic composition to establish a hostility through outward form. By nature of a reactive language, the formal composition relies on organic expression rather than 'architectural' expression. By seeking an idiom outside accepted language as an attempt at universal language, the Expressionist idiom assured its inaccessibility and consequent failure. Tafuri states that Expressionist objects "were not innovatory organisms but masses designed to mimic the 'anti-grace' of the big city." Expressionist language propagated a rejection of the 'city'; the Neue Sachlichkeit served as a language of antidote to the urban condition. It is significant that Mendelsohn maintained little connection with his Expressionist contemporaries such as Hans Poelzig and Bruno Taut; whereas they were developing the
Expressionist 'object' as a means of urban confrontation or urban imitation, that is, illustrating the urban condition by a constructed 'urban critique' that masqueraded as a functional building, Mendelsohn's goals were elsewhere. Mendelsohn's post-Einsteinturm projects slowly accepted and embraced the urban condition from a 'fabric' point of view. Rather than continue a program of 'hostility' inherent in Expressionist form, Mendelsohn pursued a policy of 'accommodation'. This shift in approach will be inspected in several of his subsequent projects.
Post-Einsteinturm: Other Works Exhibiting Change

A new rhythm has seized the world, a new movement. The man of the Middle Ages, out of the horizontal calm of his contemplative working-day, needed the vertical cathedral in order to find his God high above him. The man of our day, out of the excitement of his rapid life, can find compensation only in unrestrained horizontality. [my emphasis]

-Mendelsohn, Dynamics and function, 1923

The next period to be discussed in the career of Erich Mendelsohn describes a series of specific architectural examples in which transitional themes appear. While it is clear that Mendelsohn had begun a systematic rejection of the plastic manner of the Einsteinturm, it is notable that remnants of this former aesthetic continue to appear.

The isolated circumstances in which the Einsteinturm was conceived made it a target for accusations of employing an idiom for the idle rich, as its predecessor idiom, the Art Nouveau, often was, and in radicalized post-World War I Germany, this was a stance not to be advocated. Issues of social concern became paramount after the November Revolution of 1918, and any reminder of a more decadent antebellum period was not tolerated.
Concerns for urban rebuilding and reprogramming could not sustain the perceptibly excessive needs of a 'decorative' style. Mendelsohn's attempt at resolving an urban infill problem with Expressionism can be seen in his project for the Hausleben Insurance Company building project of 1920. (fig. 29) Begun after the Einsteinturm, the program was a modest facade renovation in money-tight post-War Berlin. The building was coated with a frosting of concrete, and Mendelsohn described coloration for the scheme as follows:

The blue-grey windows set in red and the red display windows in blue-grey bases are beginning to enliven the building and to carry over the abstract into the life of the street."^{123}

The color scheme of the project was apparently similar to the palettes of Franz Marc and Paul Klee,^{124} both of whom were involved in the Blaue Reiter movement, and which thus affirmatively ties an artistic association onto the building. The timid flaring window frames are a last gasp of the massiveness achieved in the Einsteinturm, now reduced to a suggestion. Urban examples of Expressionism such as Hausleben could only achieve a scenographic quality, and refer to the architect's earlier interest in set design. But the idiom is also still one of mass; the punctured windows
convey this sense. This punctured aesthetic must be seen as the architect’s chosen manner; to state that he used this aesthetic because it was a given condition from the existing facade is invalid, for Zevi includes some studies from this project in which a multi-leveled spandrel window was explored describing a more transitional facade (fig.30). In any case, Mendelsohn was at this point still making use of dominant vertical expression; horizontality was yet to evolve as a compositional device. The Hausleben project expressed the inherent compromise in plastic expression under such infill circumstances.

Mendelsohn stated that his particular brand of abstraction was intended to "...carry over the abstract into the life of the street."125 This clearly asserts Mendelsohn’s recognition of the need for an urban dialogue; that kinetic illustration would inherently lend itself to the urban experience. In this instance, the dialogue is achieved by means of color, a reminder of Mendelsohn’s artistic needs, and also asserting a timid measure of expression; if more aggressive physical manipulation was not possible, coloration would take its place. This attempt is similar to Bruno Taut’s efforts
toward dynamic intervention by means of painted facades in civic buildings in Magdeburg of 1921. (fig. 31)

In 1921, Mendelsohn was given the commission for the Steinberg, Hermann and Company Hat Factory in Luckenwalde, Germany.\textsuperscript{128} (fig. 32) In addressing the needs of this manufacturing complex, the seeds for the remainder of Mendelsohn's career can be found. In terms of form, the horizontal is not yet dominant in the factory; in fact, a zig-zag system of tapering forms is used as a modulating device for the factory shed. This form clearly recalls the tapered furniture and angularity of spaces within the Einsteinturm, and in fact, Mendelsohn retains this aesthetic for interiors long after he has abandoned it in exterior expression. Most notable in this factory complex is the famous Dying Vat, with its hat-like high peaked vent crown and low, wide-brimmed floor area. The form of this small building is quite sculptural, with its faceted, funicularized exterior, and the form of one of its end walls closely resembles one of architect Walter Gropius' only Expressionist works, the Memorial to the March Victims in Weimar, of 1920-21. (fig. 33) The little building also tends to recall the obsessively faceted
works of the Glasserne Kette, or Glass Chain, such as Bruno Taut’s 1914 Glass Pavilion. (fig. 9) [For text describing the Glasserne Kette, see Wolfgang Pehnt, Expressionist Architecture, 1979.]

Turning to the interior of the building, the great open hall of the factory (fig. 35) shows the same dog-leg type of shapes, here more rationally used in the form of concrete piers, reminiscent of the Paris Hall of Machines of 1889. (fig. 36) However, because this was a factory, it had become necessary to sublimate the needs of aestheticism to functional needs. Consequently, the building was planned as a long and low skeletal structure of concrete, of necessity trabeated. Conceptual sketches of the building show it to have employed a horizontal expression in response to the low slung needs of a manufacturing facility. (fig. 37) Capitalizing on this directionality is the system of ribs embedded in the exterior walls, forming long horizontal lines running generally uninterrupted across the length of the building. Ultimately, however, the dominant theme still evident in this structure is the pointed ‘feet’ of the chamfered exterior walls transferring the now only implied masses to the ground.
In the Villa on the Karolingerplatz in Charlottenburg of 1922 (fig. 38), Mendelsohn composed a diagonally symmetrical duplex situated on a curving corner. Zevi describes the rough exterior brick work of the building as attempting to "conquer the inert quality of the building"\(^{126}\); this roughened brickwork is reminiscent of the 'feathered' edges of the Mossehaus. [see section entitled 'Richard Neutra: Influence and the Mossehaus'.]

The small house still features punched windows, though they are set into a horizontal band of lighter, smooth brick riding zig-zag over the surface of the building in an early Mendelsohnian expression of horizontality, consistent with the linearity set up by the deeply grooved brickwork. Zevi obliquely justifies this compromise by explaining a preclusion of true ribbon windows owing to "this kind of construction."\(^{127}\) The central mass of the facade rises slightly above the rest of the mass, expressing verticality with a vestigial tower.

Mendelsohn again designed furniture for the interiors of the houses, allowing for a greater comprehension of intent. In the 'Diele' [lounge] (fig. 39), the shapes
of the built-in furniture are here inflected toward a central axis, implying a central source of energy which ties together into this point. The three-legged table, by virtue of its 'three-leggedness', implies an instability and lack of repose which makes it rely on the center for its existence. The top is expressed compositionally as a period to the descending light fixture's exclamation point, the whole of which becomes a central shaft within the space. The light fixture and the table, in their extremely self-conscious placement and ambiguous relationship to function (they might be reversed in placement without detriment to their nature), create a spool around which the space feels tightly wrapped, peeling off from the centrifugal force and thrown up the stairs.

This twisting, wrapping space, dispositioned here deep within an interior, later becomes similarly expressed in the stairway of several of Mendelsohn's department stores. The stair became a Mendelsohnian trademark, tautly wrapped, departing from the mass of the Karolingerplatz houses and re-emerging in the articulated body of the Schocken store in Stuttgart of 1926 (fig. 41). It seems obvious that precedent for this
articulated stair exists in the composition for the Werkbund Pavilion of 1914 by Walter Gropius and Adolph Meyer (fig. 42). Another likely source for the stair as appendage, and in a more retrospectively expressionist idiom, was Hugo Haring's design for a farm building complex at Gut Garkau of 1924 (figs. 43, 43a). The Garkau farm hangs a prow-like form from the plan, the resulting shape reminiscent of some of the more obvious instances of Expressionist hypertrophy. Haring had explored this form still earlier in his project for a Railway Station in Leipzig in 1921. (fig. 44)

The difference between the attitude present in the Karolingerplatz building and the Stuttgart store is significant; Mendelsohn has embraced a manner of kinetic abstraction independent of massive support at Schocken. Whereas dynamism had previously been an 'applied' feature unconnected to the structural or functional needs of the building, it is here constituent in a most obvious manner. The Karolingerplatz houses have been turned inside-out at Schocken, paralleling a typically Neue Sachlichkeit manner in which the exterior was made to clearly illustrate the interior articulation and function. Zevi says of the Stuttgart Schocken:
Numerous cylindrical or at least curved shapes are also found in the courtyard. Joints, projections, and swollen corners emerge, ready to leap from their frames and walls.\textsuperscript{129}

The Schocken store pulls tightly around the corner, and the extra masses such as the stair tower were pulled closer and closer back into the mass of the building. Similarly, the Petersdorff Store of 1945 in Breslau, Germany (fig. 45), has pulled the corner so tightly that it can no longer be occupied by a stair. The windows are now true ribbons, and the dynamic horizontal is emphasized by projecting eaves trimmed in steel in a manner similar to the Mossehaus.

By the time of the Petersdorff store, the curving signature facade had become purely emblematic statement of Reklamearchitektur. Tafuri notes that Mendelsohn’s Reklamearchitektur was emblematic of the chaotic stimuli of the cultural center, and through his personal manipulations Expressionism might lose its anguished attributes and be reformulated into an illustration of dynamism exclusive of plastic mass.\textsuperscript{130} He further notes that Mendelsohn’s eccentric forms were intended "not so much for the particular company or store commissioning
the building as for the vital forces inherent in the contemporary metropolis." The curving "feature" is invariably reserved for the facade of the store, establishing an armature for "sign", and in fact, very large letters spelling the name "Schocken" were placed free standing atop the lowest overhang. The curve is significant of a Mendelsohn front; without the stair or other space specifically located within the curve there is no programmatic necessity for such a flourish. There still exists here a slow metamorphosis from willful mass to more typical, and arguably more mundane, observance of rational mass.

An appropriate illustration of the change that occurred in Mendelsohn's conception of interior space from this point forth can be viewed by comparing an interior room of the Einsteinturm with an interior room in Mendelsohn's Schocken store in Stuttgart of 1926-28. (figs. 46-46a) The interior spaces of the store reflect the greater issues of movement crucial to Mendelsohn, but the idiom of expression has shifted to one of thin-ness and taut, stretched form. Particularly, the interior office space in the non-public portion of the store is comparable to the work room space in the
Einstiehturm. The 'void' rather than 'mass' quality now exhibited by the windows indicates that a plastic mass has been sacrificed, the benefit being a much greater expanse of space. The window sash is much thinner, and tries to conceal itself as a delimitation of fenestration in order that the autonomy of the opening might exist without encumbering trappings. This is a quite different attitude than was expressed in the workroom of the Einstiehturm; the windows in that space utilized quite heavy frames which resemble sinewy webs, thus supporting the room's aesthetic intentions. Unlike the Einstiehturm, this room contains neither modeling nor plastic manipulation. The furniture pieces in the space, designed by Mendelsohn, no longer possesses the passionate forms of those of the former building; these chairs do, however, retain a timid, vestigial rear leg inflection reminiscent of the Einstiehturm furniture, but more likely belonging to the general language of practical furniture construction. The table, as well, makes no hierarchical assertion; its roundness allows for no greater comprehension of the space. This space, then, contains little of the implied movement seen in Mendelsohn's earlier work, and the furnishings, beneficial to the comprehension of space in the
Einstieinturm, are now absent.

In his 'high Expressionist' phase, then, Mendelsohn's interior spaces, integrally furnished, strained to emerge from their static existence; they aspire to a dimensional plane outside of the one in which they exist. Mendelsohn's sketch for a lounge chair, (fig. 47) shows that, even in furniture, his ideas did not deviate far from their original conception, indeed, they often retained the cartoon-like quality of the sketches. This chair possesses a wildly exaggerated 'hind leg' and spiny front leg, its arm akimbo as it leaps forward into space. Similarly, the vanity (fig. 48) is attenuated and pulled, pushing to grow upward like a plant seeking light, and we might appreciate such an appropriate biological analogy. But more than seeking a merely Art Nouveau posture of form imitating plant, Mendelsohn's forms are multi-planar; they seek to eliminate their stasis. This multi-planarity provides a successful medium of 'segue' from sinuous early tendencies to the blocky gymnastics that were to emerge later in Mendelsohn's work.

Begun shortly before the Petersdorff store, the WOGA
complex of 1926, which included the well known Universum Cinema, provides a glimpse at another transitional construct that gave a premonition of Mendelsohn's final German works. The Universum (figs. 49,49a,49b,49c) is perhaps Mendelsohn's most comprehensible use of the tightly wrapped curve. Rationally placed at the corner of a prominent site on the Kurfurstendamm, the Universum is paired with a cabaret theatre across the street, the two curving legs emerging from an apartment block at the rear. The twin curves actually do frame the entrance to the intervening street, and the counterpoint of marquee is utilized reasonably as counterpoint to the sweep of the curve. Advantageous to the exterior composition is the great expanse of facade, allowing a great line of rectangular windows to wrap the building in what might resemble a ribbon of film.

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The Universum film strip 'analogue', intentional or not, represents the richness that Mendelsohn had sought without the mawkishness of plastic Expressionism. Here the institution of Theatre, or more specifically Cinema, is represented in form and treatment, and admissible of a pre-extant urban condition. Comparatively, in an
article entitled *The book and the building: Hugo’s theory of architecture and Labrouste’s Bibliothèque Ste-Genevieve*, author Neil Levine describes the intentional literary analogue prepared by Labrouste as remedy to Victor Hugo’s admonition of literature in reference to architecture; ‘Ceci tuera cela’ ['This will kill that’]. Like Mendelsohn, Labrouste sought (in the first half of the nineteenth century!) a re-infusion of recognizable architectural values as useful as the cathedral before the widespread advent of available printed media. The ‘book’ was viewed by Hugo as culpable for the demise of an architecture parlante; Labrouste sought to rectify this trouble by means of an analogous architecture:

The machine killed architecture by allowing for interminable ‘restatement’ of the same hackneyed ideas in conventionalized forms. These forms, previously executed by hand...were ‘cheapened’, ‘butchered’, and rendered meaningless by such mechanical reproduction.132

The solution of Labrouste might have served as an exemplar for the type of analogue Mendelssohn searched for throughout his career; literacy without literalness. It was an intention of the Bibliothèque Ste-Genevieve (fig. 50) to "be literary in form and resemble
books,"\textsuperscript{133} though it would have been preposterous for Labrouste's building to mimic the actual form of a book. Such a move would have returned the project to the extreme realm of several of C.-N. Ledoux's surrealistic explorations into type in the late eighteenth century.

Mendelsohn's desire to reinstate a cosmological identification within his work by means of hypertrophic analogue was an extension of the nineteenth century view that architecture

\ldots \text{had lost its direction and purpose because there was no longer any coherent body of myths or beliefs or moral or social principles to express...A belief in architectural resurgence was therefore most often linked with a Utopian social or religious programme.}\textsuperscript{134}

The moral or social 'principles' which emerged after World War I complemented this need, and as we have seen, eliminated the need for the plastic dream of the Einsteinturm.

The WOGA / Universum complex is perhaps Mendelsohn's greatest exposition of an acceptance of a social and urban armature. The collaging of functions, specifically the joining of theatres, commercial spaces, and housing units, admits the existence of an urban
infrastructure that could not have been represented by the anti-urban expressionist objects. The WOGA is a recognition and accommodation of urban multiplicity, capitalizing in a true functional manner Tafuri’s "polyphony of the city." The WOGA complex contains what is Mendelsohn’s only large multi-unit housing complex, which rationally recognizes a collective need over an individual need. The complexity of the program is the embodiment of urban collage, at odds with the specifically anti-urban previous stance embraced by the Einsteinturm and Expressionism. The complex reflects a completion of ‘shift’, with minimal plasticity held over from the days of the Einsteinturm. Moreover, the fortuitousness of having received a program for such a combination of functions must be recognized as having mandated such a solution.

It is clear that Mendelsohn systematically shed his tendency toward plastic Expressionist forms in his works after the Einsteinturm. However, each example contains a synthesis of Expressionist and Neue Sachlichkeit sensibilities, rather than a complete rejection of the former idiom. Mendelsohn’s tendency toward personal
expression may be seen in conjunction with his attempt at more popular, or at least more familiar, expressions that were appropriate to an urban dialogue.
Richard Neutra: Influence

In October 1921, Mendelsohn invited a less well-known contemporary architect, Richard Neutra, to join his growing practice. Neutra had been appointed to the position of city architect of Luckenwalde, East Prussia, only six months earlier. The importance of hiring Neutra cannot, in this writer’s estimation, be over-emphasized. It is likely that Mendelsohn saw quite a bit of himself in Neutra, and was hoping to nurture a kindred spirit. Neutra, born in 1892 in Vienna, had become familiar with Mendelsohn’s work through the architectural press and was especially familiar with the Einsteinturm, which he had visited and toured in December of 1921. Neutra had been particularly attracted to the interior spaces of the Einsteinturm, which he described in a letter to his mother-in-law dated Eichkamp, December, 1921:

...The laboratory...is all yellow in yellow, while the photochemical basement is red and black. From the cupola, I viewed the snowy silent landscape. The whole building is filled with smoke from the burning coal fire that is to dry out the interiors...

Elsewhere in the same letter, Neutra notes his participation in the finishing of the Einsteinturm:
...we meanwhile had to paint and build in furniture. 138

Apparently, Neutra's talent was immediately recognized by Mendelsohn. He appears to have risen quickly within Mendelsohn's organization, and was assigned to the project for an addition to the headquarters of the Mosse Publishing Company, producers of the influential daily, Berliner Tageblatt. 139 The project had been won by competition in 1921. 140 The specific contribution by Neutra on the project was, by Neutra's own account, substantial: 141

I hasten to give you the good news. Erich Mendelsohn has returned...He is enthusiastic about my concept. Today the client from Silesia came again. I was in my element...He trembles that Mendelsohn might change my design sketches...How much I have contributed to the design of the Mossehaus... 142

The Mossehaus was to become one of the more notorious architectural projects of contemporary Berlin. Its unique solution (fig. 51) was to add two floors to the two existing wings of the building, and to join the two at the corner by a 'tower' section, running down to the street and engulfing the two existing wings. This bird-like structure was to become the tallest building in Berlin, 143 indeed, an attribute which was to attract
quite a bit of controversy.

The project featured the collaboration of sculptor R.P. Henning, who was responsible for preparing models of the building's 'corner pieces'. The 'tower' section of the building is articulated at its edges by a feathering of the brick, visually corbelling out the corners and thus asserting the aviary analogy. The differences between the old and new portions were intended and capitalized upon for greatest dramatic effect. Most dramatic and radical for the period, beside the fact that the building would be the tallest in Berlin (with the exception of some churches), was the projecting entrance canopy, which was required to pass building variances before its construction would be allowed.  

Like the Steinberg-Hermann factory, the Mossehaus' addition employed an insistent horizontality, in this case juxtaposed with the inherent verticality of the existing structure, providing what Zevi called a 'nice dissonance'. Mossehaus was constructed of "...steel frame encased in concrete and faced with cement rendering. Strips of glazed tiles form a dividing line
between the old and new buildings, and also to give horizontal emphasis here and there." Stainless steel trim added emphasis to the linearity of the new portion. However, the vertical divisions in the facade were not yet sublimated to the horizontals; there are the remains of a punched window aesthetic, the last cry of massive expression. Details of the upper floor windows (fig. 52) still feature the moulded window hoods, bent at the corners to imply protrusion. Unlike the Hausleben building, though, this work has become completely angularized and streamlined. On the interior, the conference room and private office for Lachmann Mosse were designed by Neutra, and contain none of Mendelsohn’s tendencies to carve mass and taper line. The conference room (fig. 53) possesses an almost cubist quality, verticals and horizontals are very stiff and played off of each other quite strongly. The chair backs are noticeably straight, and not only has the zoomorphic quality of Mendelsohn’s interiors in previous projects been lost, but some anthropomorphic sympathy has also been discarded.

Tafuri believes that the Mossehaus is Mendelsohn’s most successful attempt at urban discourse by means of
compositional 'collage', for he states that this manner of collage represents an interpretation of the 'discontinuous and polyphonic character of the contemporary metropolis', and that by adopting this technique, he achieved an urban accommodation by employing 'projecting' forms that would involve the public. It is unlikely that an intent at collage composition would have been any more communicative than any outright Expressionist form. More important than the compositional quality of the structure, however, is the development of, or reversion to, an architecture of normative language. The specific requirements of urban participation have endured here -- existing structure, rhythm, line, articulation -- to force the architects to recognize and embrace these values. Any Expressionist maneuvers in mass would therefore be non-constituent to the program. They would have been, and are, merely decorative.

By virtue of the fact that the design of the Mossehaus was forced to accommodate an existing built fabric condition, it became a means by which Mendelsohn was able to hook into a more conventional expression. While it is true that the addition was contrived for its
confrontational qualities\textsuperscript{149}, it nonetheless had to conform to the trabeated pre-condition. Furthermore, the building marked an acceptance of urban 'collaboration' in that it sublimated a single design voice for an expression of combination. The building also recognized the role of the urban condition by embracing the corner rather than opposing it (as Mendelsohn had in the Karolingerplatz houses).

It may be no coincidence that so much change occurred during the employment of Richard Neutra. During the design of the Mossehaus, the commission for the Weichmann Silk Factory in Gleiwitz, Silesia entered the office. (fig. 54) The project was to include a retail area, a sales room, and two apartments on the uppermost floor. Zevi does not note the collaboration of Neutra on this project; however, in a letter dated Berlin, April 1922, Neutra's wife Dione wrote to her parents,

Richard left a large roll of plans on which he had worked for many nights...While he was gone, I looked thoughtfully at each sheet. As I was coming to the end, I noticed the design of a small [building]. Typically Mendelsohn, I thought, quite unusual, but I liked it. When Richard later on showed me the sheet, I did not quite dare to utter an opinion. Do you know what I discovered? It was Richard who had made this design for his Silesian client while Mendelsohn was absent. Now Mendelsohn is going to put his name underneath
this design, and nobody will ever know that it was another head that invented it. 150

It is quite possible that the influence for this rectilinear horizontality which had been broken down into strands and strips belonged in large part to Neutra, adapted by Mendelsohn, and employed and developed there forth in the remainder of the latter's projects as a suitable substitute idiom for the now lost romantic organism. The entrance of Neutra into Mendelsohn's office, and also the very fact that Mendelsohn took on collaborating employees, signified the latter's acceptance of the professional armature. Mendelsohn's personal identification as an artist had thus been eliminated; he had 'bought into the system'. This situation, then, represents an example of how Mendelsohn shifted his orientation from unique expression to collaborative enterprise.

By the time Neutra left Mendelsohn's office in 1923 after collaborating with him on the winning submission to a competition for the design of a 'Commercial Center' for Haifa, Palestine,151 Mendelsohn's idiom had shifted perceptibly and permanently. It was not until Mendelsohn arrived in the United States in 1941 to
embark on the last twelve years of his career that his work began to focus on some of the themes of his earlier years.
PART III: Conclusions

In 1925, El Lissitzky and Hans Arp wrote:

From cubism and futurism has been chopped the minced meat, the mystic german beefsteak: expressionism. 152

This short statement reflects the essentially derivative nature of Expressionism; for without specific precedents of architectural history, it could not have emerged. This supports the idea that Expressionism was not a historical 'free-fall'; its existence was rooted in a historical continuum. So, too, does the work of Erich Mendelsohn depend on the continuum of architectural history for the provision of a basis for revolution and production.

Mendelsohn's work was consistently calculated as a separatist response to normative popular expectations. By the same token, he was seldom set completely apart from any prevailing avant garde movement; as an artist / architect / professional he was favored by the presence of a critical mass of similar spirits which surrounded him, this group usually establishing an idiom from which he would then establish a point of departure. In this
sense it is hard to view Mendelsohn as a risk-taker. It is all the more inevitable, then, that metamorphosis would be unavoidable in his work, responsive as he had to be to an ever-shifting avant garde view.

Cornelius van de Ven is more generous in his proposition that "...the Functionalist movement developed naturally out of Expressionist feelings." 153 This simplification accepts the advantage of the extant architectural 'time line'; the Neue Sachlichkeit did, in fact, occur and develop after the 'fall' of Expressionism. The posture that it 'developed naturally' contains the implication that Expressionism shared a similar ethos with Functionalism; that there is something inherently functional within the Expressionist being. This peculiar posture ignores the necessity of reaction throughout the continuum of critical architecture. It is more likely that the need for functionalism and 'sachlichkeit' arose out of a 'guilty conscience' from a period which began to reject any sentiment as a valid basis for collective, or even private, expression. Van de Ven stated that Expressionism adhered to irrational feelings in mankind, turning away from objective philosophy and static
concepts of time and space. But the increasing unacceptability of an emotional expression was progressively accepted by Mendelsohn. His oeuvre might be seen as a progressive acceptance of ‘restraint’, and in fact, Mendelsohn, in his last years, ironically stated that he dreamed of returning to the destructive environment of his youth.

Parallel to his this response, Mendelsohn’s desire to return to his more theatrical past presented his own reaction to his moves along a less personal, more sublimated method of his later German works. As an architect, Mendelsohn was not without integrity; his acceptance of change and metamorphosis is in some sense his method of warding off inevitable death. As Thorlief Boman wrote, and in this case we might accept his ethnic proclamation, a static nature is unknown to a Jewish person. For Mendelsohn, change may have represented a talisman to ward off the ‘static’; that is, failure, or perhaps cultural ostracism.

The shift in Mendelsohn’s thinking may reflect what Tafuri refers to as an architecture "without
qualities. This reference implies an architecture stifled in its intent. Likewise, Expressionism was equipped with the tools and preparation for a new order; however, due to its references to the antebellum order, the possibility of an Expressionist alternative could not exist. The consequence is an architecture of futility and anxiety. Sigfried Giedion wrote that the Expressionist movement

...Eloquently states the grievances of mishandled humanity and indicts a tragic solution. But there is a fundamental difference between Expressionism and other movements...Faustean outbursts against an inimical world and the cries of an outraged humanity cannot create new levels of achievement...The other movements...did not weep over a time out of joint; they pointed to the way out, found - amidst the chaos - concealed patterns for a new life."  

To view the Expressionist movement, particularly as it pertained to Erich Mendelsohn, as a purely romantic period is to miss the tragic implications of its invention. A changed expression reflective of emotional and material sublimation seems to have paradoxically provided a simultaneous means of escape from a hated social structure and an opportunity for the unification of Mendelsohn, thematically, with his contemporaries.
Lissitzky and Arp tied Expressionism into a definitively German being, a "mystic german beefsteak." The connection between Mendelsohn and a mystical striving has been clearly indicated both programatically and personally. It was a specific intention of the Einsteinturm to represent the Theory of Relativity, and almost alone this reasoning gave the observatory its form and character. Mendelsohn's works possessed what van de Ven referred to as "a new idea of space...not the object of cold reason, but [possessive of an] intangible emotion...a drunkenness of space..." 159

Parallels to, but not the sources for, Mendelsohnian spirituality are found in the beliefs of Rudolph Steiner and the program of Theosophy / Anthroposophy [see Appendix 2, "The Influence of Theosophy"]. Van de Ven discusses the theory of Theosophy as inherently susceptible to metamorphosis, which thereby endows a building with a soul.160 In this sense, there is a logical rationale for the shift in Mendelsohn's oeuvre. Within the very predilection for emotional character, van de Ven seems to be saying, lies the potential for a metamorphosis which may, as in
Mendelsohn's case, lead to an extension of, and opposition to, earlier themes.

Often Mendelsohn's ideas were given form in a burst of thought. Van de Ven stated that "True art is Dyonesian, a process of sudden inspirations and flashing visions, received in trance and ecstasy." The nature of the artistic experience remained consistent for Mendelsohn throughout his lifetime. It is certain, however, that Mendelsohn's ecstatic nature lessened with his increasing concessions to practice; this coincides with Mendelsohn's transformation from possession of an artistic identity to one of an 'Architect'.

After a comprehensive viewing of the work of Mendelsohn it becomes apparent that there is a much greater sense of continuity and 'flow' than was initially expected. While it would appear that a great upheaval occurs after the completion of the Einsteinturm, and whereas an aesthetic shift of sorts actually does occur, it is nonetheless reassuring to notice that the shift is much more gradual. It is, in fact, a 'shift' rather than an
elimination. Evidence of early intentions remain through most of Mendelsohn's projects so that one may come to the realization that there is actually a metamorphosis, rather than an abandonment, and that this metamorphosis occurs with social, political, artistic, and personal constraints interwoven into the succeeding works. With this view, Mendelsohn becomes much less of an anomalous figure, and much more consonant with a historical continuum.

Historically viewed, Mendelsohn is placed enigmatically in a critical 'twilight zone', with little scholarship or even perhaps interest in re-view. It is worth noting that 1987, the centennial of the birth of this 'wayward father' of the modern movement, was marked by little publicity. Amidst the great accolades placed on the time-honored shoulders of such contemporaries as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, Mendelsohn has received little more than gratuitous mention. This popular perception has been no doubt manipulated by historians themselves, for in his very influential work, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, Sigfried Giedion does not mention Mendelsohn by name even once, though does mention, angrily, that
The Expressionist influence could not be a healthy one or perform any service for architecture...Men who were later to do grimly serious work in housing developments abandoned themselves to a romantic mysticism, dreamed of fairy castles to stand on the peak of Monte Rosa. Others built concrete towers as flaccid as jellyfish. 162

The problem of a historical view of Mendelsohn lies in the discrepancy of feeling toward his work. This thesis has emphasized a historiographic account of Mendelsohn in an attempt to sort out the negligent and diverse approaches of recent criticism and documentation surrounding him. Mendelsohn’s oeuvre has never been measured or interpreted in terms of its discontinuous content. It has thus been necessary to challenge positions such as Giedion’s, which tend to relegate the Expressionist movement into little more than a historical footnote. The position of dealing with critical views instead of specific dissections of Mendelsohn’s buildings has aided in the formation of a critical approach to his work, rather than mere appreciation of his projects.

The consensus of criticism concerning Mendelsohn’s architecture remains diverse, and is colored by as much emotion as was contained in the very works themselves.
Writings concerning his achievements tend toward passionate conclusion deriving from the individualistic nature of their form. But the difficulty in reception of his works is complicated by their inconsistent historical placement. Certainly Mendelsohn himself, as the manifestation of the 'hypertrophic daydream', is equated with an era strangeness and mysticism in architecture, thus adding increasing depth to the complexity of his analysis. What historians like Giedion could not produce was a proper placement of Mendelsohn into an integrated, comprehensive view of the impact of modern architecture. Perhaps the solution to the Mendelsohnian enigma might lie in his proper placement within a developed critical stance from which to reference recent architecture. It is in the anticipation of this goal that Bruno Zevi's enigma may begin to be understood.

Gregory Herman
May, 1988
Houston, Texas.
PART IV: Addendum

Endnotes

All notes refer to titles included in Bibliography.

1 Kafka, Metamorphosis, p. 7.
2 Zevi, Erich Mendelsohn, p. 9.
3 Ibid., pp. 9-12.
4 Zevi, "For Modernism and History as its Instrument", p. 48.
5 Zevi, "Hebraism and the Concept of Space-Time in Art", p. 155.
6 van de Ven, Space in Architecture, p. 172.
7 Ibid., 164.
9 (deleted)
10 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 33.
11 Tafuri, Modern Architecture, p. 144.
12 Pehnt, Expressionist Architecture, p. 121.
13 (deleted)
14 Whittick, Erich Mendelsohn, p. 37.
15 While Mendelsohn never specifies a consistency of Jewish patrons, it appears that most of his patrons were in fact Jews. This is verifiable through either common knowledge, (Albert Einstein was a Jew) or may be inferred from the fact that many of Mendelsohn's
clients or their families (such as Mosse) are described in articles in the Encyclopedia Judaica. Insofar as this study is concerned, this is interesting in that it tends to support the postures of Zevi and Boman (Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek). This also supports a strand of 'continuity', if not in Mendelsohn's work, then in his contacts.

16 Gay, Freud, Jews, and Other Germans, p. 164.
18 Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek, p. 31.
21 Ibid., p. 154.
22 Ibid., p. 154.
23 Ibid., p. 170.
24 Ibid., p. 310.
26 Ibid., p. 61.
27 Ibid., p. 62.
28 Ibid., p. 64.
29 Ibid., p. 64.
30 Ibid., p. 64.
31 Ibid., p. 56.
32 Ibid., p. 61.
33 Ibid., p. 62.
34 L. Glaeser, "Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig", Macmillan

35 Nerdinger, "Theodor Fischer", p. 64.
36 Piper, The History of Art, p. 36.
37 Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich, p. 94.
38 Ibid., p. 94.
39 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
40 Ibid., p. 103.
41 Ibid., p. 103.
42 Piper, The History of Art, p. 136.
43 Whittick, Erich Mendelsohn, p. 38.
44 Nerdinger, "Theodor Fischer", p. 64.
45 Boullee, "Treatise".
48 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 33.
49 Tafuri, Modern Architecture, p. 144.
50 Zevi, Erich Mendelsohn, p. 10.
51 Arch. Forum, 2-51, p. 93.
53 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 143.
54 Ibid., p. 143.
55 Ibid., p. 142.
56 Ibid., p. 296.
58 Ibid., p. 32.
59 Ibid., p. 32.
63 Ibid., p. 205.
65 (deleted)
66 Vidler, "The Idea of Type", p. 103.
67 Ibid., p. 103.
70 Ibid., p. 70.
72 (deleted)
73 Willett, *The New Sobriety*, p. 44.
74 Ibid., p. 44.
75 Ibid., p. 44.
76 Ibid., p. 45.
78 Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, p. 5.
79 Ibid., p. 45.
81 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 264.
82 Lane, Architecture and Politics, p. 11.
83 Willett, The New Sobriety, p. 49.
84 Chaitkin, "Einstein and Architecture", p. 133.
85 Lane, Architecture and Politics, p. 43.
86 Ibid., p. 43.
87 Bachelard, Poetics of Space, p. 124.
89 Portions of this quote overlap in separate sources. The portion "I believe that all original artists betray their individual significance in their first works -- pregnant with ideas, offering the best clue for everything that follows..." is taken from Arch. Forum, "The Last Work", Feb. 1955, pp. 107-115. The portion, "For when the first idea is deep enough, life is too short to expound it fully" came from D. Sharp, Modern Architecture and Expressionism, p.111.
90 Zevi, Erich Mendelssohn, p. 36.
92 Neutra, Promise and Fulfillment, p. 54.
93 Chaitkin, "Einstein and Architecture", p. 133.
94 Zevi, Erich Mendelssohn, p. 36.
95 Ibid., p. 36.
96 Bachelard, Poetics of Space, p. 122.
97 Ibid., p. 122.
98 Ibid., p. 123.
99 Tafuri, Modern Architecture, p. 143.
100 Norwich, Great Architecture, p. 238.
101 Ibid., p. 181.
102 Beyer, Letters, p. 60.
103 Norwich, Great Architecture, p. 238.
104 Pehnt, Expressionist Architecture, p. 121.
105 Zevi, "Hebraism", p. 188.
106 Conrads, Programs and Manifestoes, p. 55.
107 Ibid., p. 55.
108 Ibid., p. 73.
109 Pehnt, Expressionist Architecture, p. 121.
112 Ibid., p. 62.
113 Ibid., p. 168.
114 Ibid., p. 168.
115 Bachelard, Poetics of Space, p. 124.
117 Tafuri, Modern Architecture, p. 87.
118 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 247.
119 Tafuri, Modern Architecture, p. 89.
120 (deleted)
121 (deleted)
122 Whittick, Mendelsohn, p. 60.
123 Beyer, Letters, p. 52.
124 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 256.
127 Ibid., p. 56.
129 Ibid., p. 88.
131 Ibid., p. 144.
133 Ibid., 154.
134 Ibid., 153.
135.5 Neutra, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 44.
136 Ibid., p. 54.
137 Ibid., p. 54.
138 Ibid., p. 54.
140 Neutra, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 59n.
141 Ibid., p. 59.
142 Ibid., p. 59.
143 Ibid., p. 62.
144 Ibid., p. 62.
150 Neutra, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 60.
151 Ibid., p. 87.
152 Arp and Lissitzky, *The Isms of Art*, p. VIII.
154 Ibid., p. 154.
159 van de Ven, *Space in Architecture*, p. 156.
160 Ibid., p. 158.
161 Ibid., p. 158.
164 Ibid., p. 131.
165 van de Ven, *Space in Architecture*, p. 45.
166 Ibid., p. 45.
167 Ibid., p. 45.
171 Biesantz, *Goetheanum*, p. 87.
172 Ibid., p. 88.
173 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 36.
174 Biesantz, Goetheanum, p. 54.
175 Ibid., p. 124.
176 Morgenthaler, The Early Sketches, p. 208.
177 Conrads, Programs and Manifestoes, p. 54.
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Appendix

1. Mendelsohn and the Illustration of Relativity

Mendelsohn’s conception of form at the Einsteinturm requires an understanding of the importance of new physical theories which emerged in the early years of the twentieth century. This fertile period embraced an optimistic social criticism; new technology and ideas spurred an epiphany of creativity by the promise of universal harmony. In 1905, Albert Einstein formulated his Theory of Special Relativity,\textsuperscript{163} which was to liberate artistic exploration from historic sensibilities, but which was ironically to alienate art from the popular milieu by its unfamiliar expressions. A justification for architectural abstraction had been found to lie within the Theory, with the ostensible intent of clarifying relationships between space, things, and light. Einstein’s theory attempted to link the factor of time with the understood points of space and matter. It was theorized that perception of time was affected by a warp in the transmission of light to the earth by means of the effects of gravity.\textsuperscript{164} This prediction was actually
proven during a solar eclipse in 1919, when it was positively established that light was subject to the effects of gravitation. 165

The importance of change in the perception of an object became a 'raison d'être' in the art world; a new means of depiction was necessary if 'truth' was to be portrayed graphically. The shift of matter in light and the representation of time in painting and sculpture superseded most interest in normative artistic depiction.

Artistically, Einstein's concepts were approximated by the cubist explorations of Braque and Picasso beginning in 1910. Simultaneous depictions of space and time were derived from some unsuspecting object, the intention being a new perception of that object or person. Mendelsohn sought to represent such a 'shift' in the Einsteinturm as an illustration of a progression of matter as it changes through variations in light and time. The Einsteinturm was intended to be an appropriate depiction of the theory, resonant with the research being conducted within. As Mendelsohn's formal sensibilities derived from plastic formations, a cubist
experimentation utilizing flattened forms would not have been likely. The Einsteinium sought the expression of space-time, since it was to be used for the expressed purpose of providing a laboratory in which Albert Einstein might prove his theories. Justification for this new sensibility was given by Einstein himself, who stated in 1919, in retrospect,

Till now it was believed that time and space existed by themselves, even if there was nothing else – no sun, no earth, no stars – while now we know that time and space are not the vessel for the universe, but could not exist at all if there were no contents, namely no sun, earth, and other celestial bodies. 166

In response to the use of architecture to portray a force not normally perceived, van de Ven stated that such forces in the universe that would 'curve' space have no appreciable effect upon the tiny reality of architectural space or the human body, and even if it were an appreciable effect it would be imperceptible to the human eye. 167 The fragility of this depiction is obviated by an inspection of the value of such an effort more than simply for its means of expression. As a value, it has long been the tradition of art to depict what might not be normally perceived through interaction. Graphic and physical depiction records a
fragment of time and light and acts as a critical vehicle for that specific frame of reference.

Influence upon the Germans, specifically Mendelsohn, concerning space-time depiction, arrived via knowledge of experiments in Cubism and Futurism, the latter providing a specific physical manifestation as reference. The sculpture and paintings of Futurism, produced before the advent of the war, provided sources of reference of physical experiments in plastic manipulation. Umberto Boccioni's Futurist sculpture, 'Bottle Evolving in Space' of 1912 (fig. 55), incorporates tenets of Relativity. Like the sculpture, Mendelsohn's tower may be seen as a depiction of forces pushing and pulling like a precarious victim of the progression of time. Like Lartigue's photograph of the 'Grand Prix of the Automobile Club of France' of 1912, depicting a race car as it stretches around a bend, the tower is also in places stretched and attenuated in multiple directions in an attempt to appropriately represent the 'time shift' theory to be proven within. The tower itself portrays a 'shift', here translated into architectural forms, not unlike the very shift that Einstein set out to prove. The tower might therefore be
considered to be resonant with its contents, and as appropriate to its needs as an observatory as it was to a place in which to conduct physical proofs.

Perceptually, an attempt to add a 'fourth dimension' to the experience of architecture was made in order to aid comprehension. The difficulty of such a representation is that the institution enclosed within the structure cannot bear such a heavy artistic obliteration. The corporeal form of the building does not respond to any idiom derived from processes of construction, nor does it represent a conventional means of ornamentation.

The problem was that this program for abstraction constituted a nearly non-communicable doctrine for what was actually intended to be an 'architecture parlante'. The possibility of analogical relationship with biological forms, such as the Einsteinturm as phallic fertility symbol, asserted another means for implying direct application of this 'new architecture' to contemporary life.

Recalling Zevi's complaint that the demise of Expressionism was attributable in part to its
inaccessibility in popular terms, neither the practicable usage of any fourth dimensional device, nor the representation of architecture as enlarged organs, could survive as a method of architectural representation. What emerges here through Mendelsohn's depiction of Relativity is his device for a 'critical architecture.' Mendelsohn's buildings, and particularly the Einsteinturm, represent a timely discourse with 'social re-awakening,' facilitated by knowledge of technology, unseen since the politically reactive architecture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The expression of the Einsteinturm, however, is diluted by the pre-War sensibility that it furiously clings to. The building provided more of a discourse on what human capability could be than what human capability was; it responded to the possibilities of humanity rather than the realities. Mendelsohn's homage to the Theory of Relativity could not represent a scientific theory in any other way but through a personal interpretation, for there can be no literal architectural interpretations of what is not a specifically architectural theory. The design for the tower, then, can be seen as an intuitive illustration of Einstein's theory. This condition thrust the building
into a hopelessly naive, though optimistic position. As an expression of Relativity, it set the building to aspire, through manipulated architectural idiom, to a set of existential truths.
2. The Influence of Theosophy

Although Morgenthaler states that there is no evidence that Mendelssohn was a believer in the tenets of Theosophy, it is worth noting its parallel impulses within Mendelssohn in order to discover any consistent themes within the architect’s apparent discontinuity of expression. Rudolph Steiner and several of his Theosophical followers began in 1914 to construct a community in which artistic work in literature, music, dance and sculpture could be conducted with Universal harmony. Constructed on a hilltop site in Dornach, Switzerland, the compound’s centerpiece was the very plastic and idiosyncratic assembly hall, the ‘Goetheanum’. (figs. 56, 56a) The first Goetheanum burned to the ground in 1922; the second structure, entirely of reinforced concrete, began construction in 1924. As architectural pieces, both the first and second Goetheanum are comparable to Mendelssohn’s Einsteinturm in their attempt to defy adherence to architectural presuppositions. They were intended to present space as a plastic expression of the ‘soul’, which had inspired it; it was to be an ‘illustration.’\textsuperscript{169} The convoluted mass of both buildings was designed as a response to Steiner’s belief
in Theosophy, which attempted to establish and cultivate an understanding of the universe through human spiritual perceptions.\textsuperscript{170} Realization of the Goetheanums was conducted as craft, the followers of Steiner joining in the actual building and each contributing their talents to Steiner's total conception of the building. The fluidity and color of the spaces present a fantastic concoction of Expressionism by means of superficial treatment. An important point in the conception of form of the Goetheanum is that it was not perceived to be the result of an organic analogy; it derived its forms from an architectural past. Indeed, its utilization of reinterpreted classical forms is quite the opposite of Mendelsohn's intentions; the interior spaces of the first Goetheanum, with its columns of a 'new order' (fig. 57), attempt to integrate an existing language with a revised interpretation of that language's articulation.

But for Steiner, like Mendelsohn, an emphasis was placed on volumetric manipulation. Similar to Mendelsohn, the Goetheanum's architecture was used as a means of illustration of subconscious creative forces lying within the soul.\textsuperscript{171} This phenomenon is similar to the
'heroic act' theorized by Martin Buber, which had
influenced Mendelsohn so profoundly: for an 'object', to
have emerged fully formed, needless of further
elaboration or development, would have to have existed
previously 'in some subconsciousness. In the cases of
both the Goetheanum and the Einsteinturm, the exterior
form is contrived from forms lying outside of normative
recognition; function is sublimated to form. Both,
however, possess a spiritual existence; as Steiner
stated,

Sculpture and architecture are witnesses of a
spiritual world to which we belonged before our
birth. 172

A more direct line can be drawn between Steiner and
Mendelsohn by means of intervention of the painter
Wassily Kandinsky. Morgenthaler mentions that Kandinsky
was 'under the influence of Rudolph Steiner's
theosophical 'spiritual vision', particularly after an
episode in which he "...saw one of his paintings
standing on its side...[which] suggested to him a
painting of 'nothing but forms, no subject matter at
all.'"17. Mendelsohn's association with the Blaue
Reiter and Kandinsky suggests his embrace of this
'spiritual manner' of deriving abstraction.
An interpretation of materials seemed to have been common to both Steiner and Mendelsohn; whereas both were creating similar visions out of concrete [Steiner's second Goetheanum], both recognized its plastic capacity and expressive qualities. Steiner stated that the

...Goetheanum is to be built with...reinforced concrete. To bring about in a concrete building an appropriate and yet truly artistic style is extremely difficult. A very great deal is needed to solve this problem. 174

Whereas the second Goetheanum was constructed beginning in 1924,175 after the completion and subsequent publication of the Einsteinturm, it is quite possible that Steiner recognized the expressive potential of reinforced concrete from Mendelsohn's model. It is relevant that there is an obvious visual kinship in the attitude toward material disposition; Mendelsohn conducted a constant struggle to discover the 'true' nature of materials and their proper expression. Morgenthaler notes that "Mendelsohn stated that the building material intended for a project was the main source of the final architectural form."176

In a published speech of 1919, Mendelsohn declared his attitude to the power of emergent technology and
materials for building:

For the particular prerequisites of architecture, the reorganization of society taking place in response to the spirit of the times means new tasks arising out of the changed purposes of buildings which in turn result from changes in travel, economy, and religion, coupled with new possibilities presented by the new building materials: glass, iron, and concrete. 177

For Mendelsohn, new materials such as reinforced concrete provided the opportunity to explore the architectural ‘task’; Steiner’s use of materials responds to purely formal needs.

In 1910, Mendelsohn explained his belief in the dawn of a new cultural epoch "...based...on the great conceptions of antiquity...".178 He further notes the prevalence of the idea of a coming ‘cultural epoch’ in this period, similar to a theosophical belief in a coming ‘new epoch’. Thus whereas it cannot be stated that Mendelsohn was a follower of Steiner, it is certain that his ideas, and certainly the products of his ‘plastic’ efforts, are related to those of Steiner.
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2 T. Fischer, Photo of Interior of Garrison Church, Ulm
   (Ibid., p. 65.)

3 W. Kandinsky, Improvisation 6, 1909 (Peg Wiess,
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4 E. Mendelsohn, Interior of Becker House (B. Zevi,
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5 E. Mendelsohn, View of Becker House
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6 E. Mendelsohn, Sketch of Auto Factory
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8 E. Mendelsohn, Sketch of Optical Factory
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8a E. Mendelsohn, Model of Optical Factory ("Erich
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22 Plans of Einsteinturm (Zevi, Opera, p. 65 fig. 18.)

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27 A. Rossi, Sketch (P. Arnell, T. Bickford, Aldo Rossi, 1985, p. 178.)
28 J.J.P. Oud, Small Factory (Banham, Theory and Design, p. 172 fig. 59.)

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33 Photo of Monument to March Victems (Pehnt, Expressionist Architecture, p. 114.)

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57 Photo of Interior of First Goetheanum (Ibid., p. 39.)
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