

# Hugo Häring's "Philosophy of *Gestalt*": An Alternative Approach to Architectural Theory

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**This paper provides a long-overdue discussion of Häring's "philosophy of *gestalt*" and its intellectual roots. I shall argue that his *gestalt* theory—alongside the notion of the "New Building" (*Neues Bauen*)—can be understood as an "alternative" approach to architectural design for its underlying holistic way of perceiving (*vorstellungsarten*) in contrast to the mechanical parallel. I shall further argue that Häring's view towards building as "living organism" and his focus on the immediate experience of what is "happening" (*geschehen*) presented an architectural adoption of German romanticist tradition and, more specifically, Goethe's *Naturphilosophie* and its reliance on "primal phenomenon" (*urphänomen*).**

German architectural historian Julius Posener (1904-1996) maintained that Hugo Häring (1882-1958) was the only early modernist architect who had formulated an entire theory of architecture of his time.<sup>1</sup> Häring's theory, however, has received very little attention, especially in the English-speaking world.<sup>2</sup> The author who has substantially contributed to articulating Häring's thinking was Peter Blundell Jones (1949-2016), who wrote the only monograph on Häring in English as well as a number of articles that aimed to promote the architect's organicist ideas. Nevertheless, Blundell Jones did not develop a critical account that fully explains the genesis of Häring's thinking.

In addition to the lack of accessible scholarship, there are several reasons responsible for the obscurity of Häring's architectural philosophy. First of all, Häring's writings are extensive and yet extremely fragmented. The first published book of Häring's primary writings edited by Jürgen Joedicke consists of his essay publications and lecture manuscripts from 1924 to 1954. Even though it collects Häring's most important theoretical works, it lacks necessary coherence and consistency. In fact, Häring himself always wanted to publish a book on the subject of the "problem of *gestalt*," a theme that had occupied his mind since he studied under Theodor Fischer (1862-1938).<sup>3</sup> The book, unfortunately, had not gotten finished when he died in 1958. Yet, Häring left a huge amount of manuscripts in the form of fragmented notes, which were later published by his longtime assistant Margot Aschenbrenner in 1968. But neither did this

second edition of Häring's theoretical discourse effectively reduce its immanent complexity nor can it untangle its philosophical anarchy.

Secondly, Häring's writings are not easy to understand. Modern German is usually written with an initial capital letter not only for names, titles, and the first word in a sentence but also for every noun. Häring, however, like some of his German contemporaries, rebelled against this norm, claiming that one should not give equal emphasis to *Gott* (God) and *Stein* (Stone).<sup>4</sup> His peculiar way of writing therefore also caused some difficulties and inconvenience for his readers.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, this paper will provide a long-overdue discussion of Häring's "philosophy of *gestalt*" and its intellectual roots. I shall argue that his *gestalt* theory—alongside the notion of the "New Building" (*Neues Bauen*)—can be understood as an "alternative" approach to architectural design for its underlying holistic way of perceiving (*vorstellungsarten*) in contrast to its mechanical parallel. I shall also argue that Häring's view towards building as "living organism" and his focus on the immediate experience of what is "happening" (*geschehen*) presented an adoption of German romanticist tradition and, more specifically, Goethe's scientific methods and its reliance on "primal phenomenon" (*urphänomen*).

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A discussion of Häring's theory may appropriately start with an introduction of its general historical background. Hugo Häring was born in 1882 in Biberach, a little town in Upper Swabia. He studied under Theodor Fischer (1862-1938) in Stuttgart, among whose students were Paul Bonatz (1887-1956), Ernst May (1886-1970), Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953), J.J.P. Oud (1890-1963), and Bruno Taut (1880-1938). Later Häring worked in Dresden, Hamburg, and Albstadt; his career was interrupted by his service during WWI. He returned to practice in 1921-22, and shared an office with Mies van der Rohe, so that these two very different men worked in close proximity. In 1923, a group of architects began to meet in Mies's studio to discuss the possibility of *Neues Bauen* (New Building) and the obstacle that governments were putting in the way of its realization. This marked the birth of the *Zehner-Ring* (Ring of Ten).<sup>6</sup> Häring made himself the spokesman and later became the secretary when the group in 1926 expanded to 27 members. During this transitional

moment, Häring identified a change of attitude towards architecture, resulting in two fundamental directions of creation: function and expression. As he wrote in one of his earliest texts titled “Approaches to Form” (*Wege zur Form*) (1925):

The things that we create are the results of our efforts in two directions; on the one hand, we place demands on function (*Zweckerfüllung*), and on the other hand, we place demands on expression (*Ausdruck*) ... The buildings of everyday life: houses, ships, fortifications, bridges, canals, etc. have always been dominated by function, while our buildings for deities and for the dead have been left almost entirely to expression. The derivation of form from these two concerns explains our whole conflict in the choice of form, as functional forms do not always fulfill expressive needs and vice versa.<sup>7</sup>

Häring went on to argue that functional forms, being determined by life and given to things based on their lawfulness, were natural and anonymous, therefore not deriving from man’s subjective expression. Expressive forms, on the contrary, were products of the human mind and bound to particular cultures at various stages of their development. The history of man-made forms, therefore, was largely a record of variations in the ever-changing human expression. Over the forty years that preceded his writing, claimed Häring, there had been a great change of attitude. Previously, under the reign of “geometric culture,” form was dominated by laws hostile to life and nature. He and his contemporaries had discovered, he continued, that forms created for functional demands can also satisfy our craving for expression, and that the more functional they are, the more we admire them. Thus, people at the turn of the century witnessed the emergence of the appreciation of machines, ships, cars, aircraft, and other tools and instruments.

### PHILOSOPHY OF GESTALT

In these new forms, Häring saw a new approach to form-making, or *gestalt*—a concern that had occupied his mind while still a student.<sup>8</sup> Häring’s idea of *gestalt* was present as early as in his “*Wege zur Form*” of 1925, but it only became fully elaborated in his writings of the 1930s, substantially touched on in “*Kunst- und Strukturprobleme des Bauens*” of 1931 and “*Versuch einer Orientierung*” of 1932, and further developed in “*Proportionen*” and “*Probleme der Stilbildung*,” both of 1934.

The German term “*gestalt*” has no equivalent in English. In psychology and, to some extent, in biology, the German expression has been retained. The underlying concept of *gestalt*, as contrasted with form, is the idea that a complex whole contains more than a mere aggregation of parts, that comprises more than a surficial shape. In other words, there is “more in harmony than the notes forming the chord.”<sup>9</sup> In architecture, the connotation of *gestalt* is quite different. Detlef Mertins, for instance, considered the notions *gestalt* and *gestaltung*—along with *Bauen*—as the architectural counterpart of *Sieg*

(style). Unlike the expression-based conception of style, the term *gestalt* refers both to form and to the process of forming or shaping; it implies the “vital, creative energy of becoming in the concreteness of the resultant form.”<sup>10</sup> The term *gestalt*, according to Mertins, thus could not be adequately rendered as either “form” or “design,” as it clearly has both meanings. Peter Blundell Jones also claimed that “Work on *gestalt* was for Häring a mystical theme.” Even though *gestalt* consistently translated as “form” throughout his writings on Häring, Blundell Jones reminded us that it was rather an inadequate rendering. He, too, contended that there was no one-on-one correspondence between *gestalt* and any innocent English words. Like Mertins, Blundell Jones stressed that *gestalt* in German implies a sense of internal lawfulness or energy, which Häring described as the “essence” or “being” of form.<sup>11</sup>

Häring would agree with this connotation of the term *gestalt*, as he described the secret of *gestalt* as the “formative power” of living things. He believed that the change of attitude in architectural practice was deeply associated with this understanding of *gestalt*, because it could transform our view of buildings as physical objects, making them more akin to living organisms in nature. As Häring wrote, “The New Building (*Neues Bauen*) no longer understands things as objects, it treats them as organs just like humans.”<sup>12</sup> In a note with the title of “*gestalt*,” Häring, too, dismissed the “purely materialistic” way of understanding architecture, for its premise was that *gestalt* has no “organ.”<sup>13</sup> Häring further argued that the secret of *gestalt* was analogous to the “purely spiritual entity” in natural organisms.<sup>14</sup> In his “Approaches to Form,” Häring proposed his theory of *gestalt* as follows:

[I]n our creation of functional forms we follow the path of nature. In nature form is the result of the organization of many individual entities in space in an order that life can unfold and action can take place, a fulfillment of both part and whole, (whereas in the world of geometrical cultures form is derived from the laws of geometry). If we prefer to search for forms rather than to impose them, to discover forms rather than to construct them, we are in harmony with nature and act with her rather than against her.<sup>15</sup>

Then, how to understand Häring’s idea of creating functional *gestalt* by following the “path of nature”? What did he mean by “in harmony with nature rather than against her”? To answer these questions, it is imperative to put his writings back in the intellectual milieu at the turn of the 20th century. In particular, we need to acknowledge and stress the influence of Leo Frobenius (1873-1938)—the German ethnologist and archaeologist who first formulated the idea of human cultures as “living organisms”—on his contemporary German intellectuals, such as Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), Adolf Portmann (1897-1982), and, especially, Hugo Häring.

### FROBENIUS AND CULTURE AS "LIVING ORGANISM"

Born in 1873 in Berlin, Leo Frobenius was a German explorer and ethnologist, one of the originators of the cultural-historical approach to ethnology. Largely self-taught as a social scientist, Frobenius led 12 expeditions to Africa between 1904 to 1935 and also explored centers of prehistoric art in the Alps, Norway, Spain, and Oceanian countries.

During his twelve expeditions to Africa, Frobenius started to acknowledge that culture was more than just an aggregation of cultural artifacts. Instead, he came to believe that a culture should be understood as an "organic" unity. Frobenius contended that, in order to reach an understanding of the "general basic principle of a culture," one has to ascertain both the evolution and the integration of "autogenetic" and "symphonic" cultural forms. According to Frobenius, "autogenetic" referred to the local evolution while "symphonic" is the cultural transmission. Frobenius himself experienced a reorientation in terms of his approach from a focus on disparate and unconnected cultural traits to the organic integration of cultures. As Frobenius recounted:

Each culture is to be considered as a living creature that is born and passes through childhood, manhood, and senility. The forms of culture are subject to the process of growth, comparable to those of human individuals ... Culture lives on man. Today I would rather say that it lives through man ... The forms of culture are bound to definite areas, the culture circles ... If the forms are transplanted, they change and due to contacts ...<sup>16</sup>

This organic conception of culture was defined in close association with "the spiritual essence of culture in general," or what Frobenius called the *Paideuma*.<sup>17</sup> He contended that human culture springs like a seed, grows, and attains its maturity, after which it begins to age and finally dies. He used terms *Ergriffenheit* (emotional involvement), *Ausdruck* (expression), and *Anwendung* (application) to describe the stages of youth, maturity, and age traversed by a culture, comparing them to life curve. These terms were adopted by Häring, frequently appearing in his account of architectural history.

Häring accepted Frobenius's idea that in every culture "there is a lawfulness and an orientation toward a specific purpose."<sup>18</sup> In his 1931 article "The problems of art and structure of building" (*Kunst- und Strukturprobleme des Baunes*), for instance, Häring directly borrowed Frobenius's idea:

For millennia, [the structural concept] led through geometric, it can now only lead to the organic structure. Frobenius regards cultures as organisms; if we take up this idea, it is natural to say that in the rich history there have been crystal formations which we have become used to in the history before it arrives at the organic age.<sup>19</sup>

Another affinity between Frobenius's organic conception of culture and Häring's organic principle of architecture can be found in a similar way in which they formulated the dualism of methodology in their own respective fields. Just as Häring identified two opposing approaches to form—expression and function, or geometric and organic—Frobenius, too, elaborated a distinction between "mechanical" and "intuitive" modes of understanding.<sup>20</sup> According to Frobenius, the "mechanical" mode of thought sought to understand processes and phenomena by establishing "laws" which determine what were regular and irregular, normal and abnormal, whereas the "intuitive" mode tended to look "sympathetically" at one's subjective position and place it within the general structure of a grand universal scheme. The latter approach allowed one to become immersed in the "lawless profusion of spiritual activity" wherein the observer surrendered to the "inner logic of growth, evolution, and maturity." This method strongly resonated with the early 19th-century romanticist, historicist approach which held that, in order to penetrate different thought worlds, one had to clear one's mind of "habitual association" via "critical and philosophical studies." Insofar as he insisted that one could sympathetically apprehend the "inner logic" of "paideumatic" development, Frobenius's "intuitive" approach to culture situated him well within the tradition of German Romanticism.<sup>21</sup>

Strongly influenced by Frobenius, Häring viewed both human culture and architectural form as organisms, as he believed that "The structural organization of a building is entirely identical to the essence of the structural organization of a society."<sup>22</sup> Similar to Frobenius—who stated, "It is not the will of man that creates cultures"<sup>23</sup>—Häring, too, argued that the architect was not the creator of form. Rather, the role of the architect was more like a gardener who cultivates a plant; form should appear to the architect as an independent entity determined by its own intrinsic law. In his article "Problem of Stylistic Identity" of 1934, Häring wrote:

Just like a gardener cannot grow a fir out of an acorn, he cannot grow a plant from which is not in it and what does not correspond to the intrinsic law of its essence. The thing that determines the form should be in the form itself ... Forms are not our creation, they live in nature without us. They live by their own laws, over which we have no power. If we want to take the forms that we need out of nature, and if we want to breed them further, this can only happen within the limits of the laws of these forms themselves.<sup>24</sup>

With this "gardener-architect and plant-building" analogy, it is easier for us to grasp Häring's idea of *gestalt*, as he put it in a simple and direct manner at the outset of this unfinished book on the subject of the "philosophy of *gestalt*":

The secret of *gestalt* is that the invisible becomes visible in it ... The secret of *gestalt* is the secret of the being that

appears in the form. The secret of *gestalt* is not how it arises but what it is.<sup>25</sup>

For Häring, the primary task of *gestalt* is, “a technical work ... whose mission is to build, according to the instruction of its essence, the *gestalt* in which it can appear.”<sup>26</sup> He called the building conceived according to his “philosophy of *gestalt*” “organ-building” (*Organbau*).

Häring subsequently distinguished the “New Building” (*Neues Bauen*) from the “Modern Architecture” (*Moderner Architektur*). He said, “the proponents of the New Building strive to start their work from the essence of the objects and to develop their forms from their individual creative will, meaning to form inside outward, very much like the growth of things like organisms.” He saw this organicist approach to architecture arose in the same countries from which the Gothic had emerged and spread. Whereas in the Latin region, people tended to turn to pure geometric forms as a generative principle, which means that the form of building is to be determined externally and subject to the laws of harmonious order of geometry. This “geometric” tendency took into account neither the individuality of the objects nor their particular form of performance (*leistungsform*). The “New Building” therefore separated itself from the “Modern Architecture,” despite the fact that the proponent architects and critics of the latter seized the control of the public identity of the Modern Movement of architecture and urbanism through a series of events including the 1927 Weissenhof Estate exhibition, the CIAM meeting in 1929, and the 1930 MoMA “International Style” exhibition.

### “IN FRONT OF” OR “BEHIND” THE STAGE

Both Margot Achenbrenner and Heinrich Lauterbach noticed the affinity between Häring’s conception of *gestalt* and Adolf Portmann (1897-1982)’s theory of animal form. Portmann—a theoretical biologist and a former professor of zoology at the Basel University—devoted his time to the question of animals’ *gestalt*, or the “total visual picture” of living organism. Portmann was particularly interested in how animals appear to other animals, of the same and different species. The premise of his theory was that animals are in some way related to others and the world, an unorthodox idea that made him one of the most controversial biologists of the postwar period. Portmann’s theory was two-fold. Firstly, he argued that many of the morphological features of organisms may be driven not only by a selective process that increases their vital function, as it had been explained by the conventional scientific view (Darwinian theory), but also by “what serves the appearance.”<sup>28</sup> Portmann suggested that “we must remain open or at least try to become open to everything that is beyond mere survival, because of the secret of the inner life of a peculiar worldly life and the obvious mystery of the self-expression of this inwardness.”<sup>29</sup>

Consider features such as horns, antlers, and the wonderful pattern on the surface of an animal’s body. According to

Portmann, the ideas like signs of mutation, natural adjustment, or sexual characteristics could not solely account for species modification, nor could they explain the richness of animal’s self-expression, the complexity of animal’s moods, or animals’ social abilities such as communication. Rather, Portmann maintained that animals have their own “inwardness.” By “inwardness,” he meant the essential feature of animals, a complex inner mental, or spiritual, life not merely related to survival. As a result, he considered the outer surface of living organism as a specific organ that serves a self-representational role; the surface display is a part of the presentation of the self, or inwardness, of a living being. Portmann’s core conception was called “self-representation of life forms” (*Selbstdarstellung der Lebensformen*). With the presupposed existence of the “inwardness” of the living thing, which is “a non-dimensional reality which is spatially located neither in the spatial inside or in the center,” the outer organ can be seen as a manifestation of the self-representation of organic “inwardness.”

Häring in his writing acknowledged Portmann’s work. He wrote in 1952:

The biologists have just discovered that the *gestalt* work is the goal of creation and technical work is only for its construction. And since the *gestalt* originates from the realm of the mind and is not already given with the invisible matter, it turns out that the biologists too prepare for the transition into the realm of creativity of the mind. But the secret of *gestalt* work is higher than the construction. This transition steers us into a new age.<sup>30</sup>

Like Häring who tried to articulate the theoretical foundation of his “philosophy of *gestalt*,” Portmann also pondered the intellectual scope of the way he obtains biological knowledge. In fact, they adopted similar methods to clarify their respective ideas. Just as Häring used his “gardener-plant” analogy to describe the relationship between architect and building form, Portmann used a metaphor of theater—that is, the observer and the play performance being observed—to describe the relationship between a biologist and the study of the appearance of animals. He suggested that there existed two distinct approaches to biological research: “the view from the front,” and “the view from behind the stage.” Both of these two approaches, for Portmann, have their own value because “each has different requirement and provides answers to different problems.”<sup>31</sup> More specially, from the back of the stage people can find all the paraphernalia, the technical underpinnings that make a performance possible. From the front of the stage, one can focus on, instead of the machinery that makes the play possible, the performance itself through observing the setting of the play, grasping the meanings of words and gestures, and engaging with the sensory appearance.

For Portmann, it is the visible form, which is meant to be seen “in front of the stage,” that invites us into the knowledge about



life itself that can be known. In other words, it is the visible form that allows us to see that there is anything to know at all. Portmann insisted to remain "in front of the stage," in order to fully understand the "performance" as such rather than to stay "behind the stage" where he could better acknowledge what is going on in the workshop that makes the "performance" possible. Portmann stressed that his preference was in line with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's approach to studying nature, as he recognized Goethe as an "intensive empathetic observer before the stage."<sup>32</sup> In fact, Goethe was famous for his approach to natural scientific research and theory. He characterized his approach as *Zarte Empirie*, a delicate, or better yet, a tender empiricism. As a response to the emerging crisis of what was at the time the new empiricism of Newton's physics, Goethe's delicate empiricism recalibrated perception by deploying empiricism as a form of analysis.

In his conversation with Johann Peter Eckermann (1792-1854), Goethe discussed two different viewpoints from which people contemplate biblical subjects, especially the Bible. "There is the first point of view," Goethe said, "of a sort of primitive religion, of pure nature and reason, which is of divine origin." The other point of view of the church is of a "more human nature" because, even though this secular view of the church may be subject to change, it would last as long as there are human beings. Here Goethe's distinction of the divine and human world was analogous to that of the front and back of Portmann's "stage." As Portmann who chose to remain in front of the stage, Goethe preferred the earthly world, as he believed in "the human will and power, to produce something which may be compared with the creations that bear the names of Mozart, Raphael, or Shakspeare."<sup>33</sup> What both of them valued was the direct experience derived from the sensory appearances of the observed objects. More especially, for Portmann, that was the matter of the animal appearances and, for Goethe, that was the matter of science and art as the earthly product of mankind.

Like Portmann, Häring's standpoint was akin to that of Goethe. In fact, Häring's posthumous book mentioned earlier—*Fragments: The Training of the Mind to Work on the Gestalt*—was intended to be entitled "a nursery for the world of spirits" (*die erde eine pflanzschule für geister*), a motto that came from the ending of the conversation between Goethe and Eckermann on March 11, 1832.<sup>34</sup> In addition, Aschenbrenner has also reminded us that Goethe's essay "Meaningful Progress by Way of a Single Witty Word" (*Bedeutende Fördernis durch ein einziges geistreiches Wort*) (1823) deserved credit for helping with the formation of Häring's thinking.<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Thus far, we could add another dimension to the explanation of Häring's philosophy of *gestalt*. Häring's architectural theory was built upon a peculiar mode of "living" thought. *Gestalt*, in the framework of Häring's theory, therefore should be understood as the form-making process of "living organ-like

building." Häring's idea of *gestalt* was meant to be a deepening the openness of natural phenomena, and his speculating, as the original Greek term *theōria* implies, was an enhanced action of seeing. Häring's "philosophy of *gestalt*" holds on to experience and phenomena even when reaching to the theoretical level. In this sense, it is useful to recall the original meaning of "theory," which means "to behold." To obtain "the spectator theory of knowledge,"<sup>36</sup> one must see, envision, and behold in the mind as well as in the external world. Goethe believed that these two aspects—the human mind and the external reality, subject and object, or inside and outside—could be caught up into a single holistic wholeness. By "making itself utterly identity with the object" one's experience became "true theory."<sup>37</sup>

What both Goethe and Häring suggested was, with reference to Plato's Allegory of the Cave, that one does not have to act as the sage—a philosophic theorist "in love with the spectacle of truth"—who detaches himself from the earthly world and journeys into the radiant realm of "reality." Regardless of the possibility that whether or not he can gaze directly upon the beings in the metaphysical realm, Häring's position is always in front of the stage, as he wanted to remain faithful to the direct experience of *gestalt*. The principle of his "philosophy of *gestalt*" not only explains the appearance of a building but also is being explained by it. This unlikely attitude, which is counterintuitive to our normal habits of thought, is what I mean by Häring's "alternative" approach to architectural theory.

## ENDNOTES

1. Julius Posener pointed out, "Häring was the one whose written oeuvre has been the most important by far. Not only had he written considerably more than any other leading architect of the time, but his theory was also more consistent than the occasional manifestoes or essays written by his contemporaries." See Julius Posener, *From Schinkel to the Bauhaus* (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), 33.
2. For books on Häring in languages other than English see Jürgen Joedicke and Heinrich Lauterbach's *Hugo Häring: Schriften Entwürfe Bauten* (1965), Adrian V. Sudhalter's *Hugo Häring: Architect des Neuen Bauens, 1882-1958* (2001), *Das Andere Bauen: Gedanken und Zeichnungen* (1982), and Sergio Polano's *Hugo Häring, il segreto della forma* (1983).
3. "Preliminary Remarks," in Hugo Häring and Margot Aschenbrenner, *Fragments: die Ausbildung des Geistes zur Arbeit an der Gestalt* (Berlin: Mann, 1968), 12.
4. Ibid.
5. There is, in fact, another even more important factor that hindered the popularization of Häring's theory, which was the dominance of the orthodox historiographic narrative about the modern movement that centers on figures such as Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius. That, too, made Häring one of those figures from the "Zone of Silence"—to quote Reyner Banham's term from one of his 1960 articles. See Reyner Banham, "1960 History Under Revision: History and Psychiatry," *The Architectural Review*, vol. 127, iss. 759, (May 1, 1960): 325-327, 330-332. Indeed, Häring stood in opposition to these influential modern architects, and this position is also considered one of the reasons for the current resurfacing of Häring's theory as well as Hans Scharoun's later development and application of Häring's organicist ideas. Even though this story is crucial for any serious discussion of Häring's theory and practice, it is nevertheless out of this essay's scope and requires a separate occasion for further elaboration.
6. Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *The Break with the Past: Avant-Garde Architecture in Germany, 1910-1925* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).
7. Hugo Häring, "Wege zur Form," *Die Form*, no. 1 (Oct. 1925): 3-5. For its English translation, see "Approaches to Form, 1925-6," in Time Benton, Charlotte Benton, and Dennis Sharp, *Form and Function: A Source Book for the History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939* (London: Crosby Lockwood Staples in association with the Open University Press, 1975), 103, and "Approaches to Form (1925)," Peter Blundell Jones, trans., *aaq: Architectural Association Quarterly*, vol. 10, iss. 1 (Oct. 1978): 21.
8. "The *gestalt* of things is the secret that attracts us." (*Die gestalt der dinge ist das geheimnis, das uns lockt.*), see *Fragments*, 290. "The greater mystery is the *gestalt*," Häring wrote in another short note called "secret of *gestalt* (*geheimnis*

der gestalt)" (16VII53), "gestalt is a mystery in the realm of spirit ... The greater mystery is the *gestalt* that emerged in front of us, so now it came to the turn that we need to place this problem in the center of our concern in order to achieve a better understanding of the secret power that has long bothered our lives and our creations." (*Das größere Geheimnis aber ist die gestalt ... sie ist ein Geheimnis im reich des geistes ... Aber das Geheimnis der gestalt tauchte vor uns auf, und so kam es zu der Wendung, die das thema gestalt selbst in den mittelpunkt unseres suchen nach einem besseren verständnis der geheimen kräfte, die unser leben und unser schaffen umtreiben, gestellt hat.*) See *Fragmente*, 52.

9. *Documents of Gestalt Psychology*, Mary Henle, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).
10. Detlef Mertins, "Introduction," in Walter Curt Behrendt, and Detlef Mertins, *The Victory of the New Building Style* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 2000), 31ff.
11. Peter Blundell Jones, *Hugo Häring: The Organic versus Geometric*, 210: note 8.
12. Heinrich Lauterbach, "Introduction," in Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 8.
13. "Das rein materialistische denken hatte für den begriff gestalt kein organ, es hat dieses organ ja heute noch nicht." *Fragmente*, 52.
14. Ibid.
15. Hugo Häring, "approaches to form," in Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 36. (my translation)
16. Cited in Robert Heine-Geldern, "One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory in the German-Speaking Countries: Some Milestones," *Current Anthropology*, vol. 5, no. 5 (Dec., 1964): 415.
17. Frobenius, "The Nature of Culture," in Leo Frobenius, *Leo Frobenius On African History, Art and Culture* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007), 21.
18. Ibid., 39: "Es diht also in dem ablauf der kulturen eien gesetznäßigkeit und ein gerichteten auf ein bestimmtes ziel hin."
19. Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 26.
20. Frobenius, "The Nature of Culture," Haberland ed., *Leo Frobenius On African History*, 19.
21. Ibid.
22. Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 28.
23. Heine-Geldern, "One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory in the German-Speaking Countries: Some Milestones," *Current Anthropology*: 415.
24. Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 36.
25. *Fragmente*, 5.
26. Ibid.
27. Adolf Portmann, and Richard B. Carter, *Essays in Philosophical Zoology by Adolf Portmann: The Living Form and the Seeing Eye* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990), i.
28. For Adolf Portmann's idea, see Adolf Portmann, "Unterwegs zu einem bild vom organismus," in *Die Welt in Neuer Sicht*, Vol. 1 (München: Sechs Vorträge, 1957), 33. This book titled "The World in a New Perspective" encloses six lectures organized by the Swiss Association at Munich under the direction of Jean Gebser in May 1957. Jean Gebser presents an important philosophical source especially for Hans Scharoun. Also see Margot Aschenbrenner's "introduction," in *Fragmente*, xxiii; Heinrich Lauterbach, "introduction," in Lauterbach and Joedicke, *Hugo Häring*, 8.
29. Portmann, "Unterwegs zu einem bild vom organismus," 44. Also cited in Margot Aschenbrenner's "introduction," in *Fragmente*, xxiii.
30. Ibid.
31. Adolf Portmann, "Goethe und der Begriff der Metamorphose," originally published in *Goethe* 90 (1973): 11-21; this translation published as "The Concept of Metamorphosis," in Frederick Amrine, Francis J. Zucker, and Harvey Wheeler, *Goethe and the Sciences: A Reappraisal* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1987), 139.
32. Ibid.
33. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Peter Eckermann, and J. K. Moorhead, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).
34. The conversation reads: "God did not retire to rest after the well-known six days of creation, but, on the contrary, is constantly active as on the first. It would have been for Him a poor occupation to compose this heavy world out of simple elements, and to keep it rolling in the sunbeams from year to year, if He had not had the plan of founding a nursery for a world of spirits upon this material basis. So he is now constantly active in higher natures to attract the lower ones."
35. Aschenbrenner, "introduction," in *Fragmente*, xxv.
36. Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectator of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in its Cultural Context* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
37. As Goethe said, "The ultimate goal would be: to grasp that everything in the realm of fact is already theory. The blue of the sky shows us the basic law of

chromatics. Let us not seek for something behind the phenomenon—they themselves are the theory." See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, ed. Douglas Miller (New York, NY: Suhrkamp, 1995), 307.