The term Mannerism cannot yet be said to have become a necessary part of the vocabulary of every educated man or woman, but it should not be assumed that its uses are limited to those of a plaything for art historians. As Nikolaus Pevsner showed in his article on Wollaton Hall (March, 1950), it may be used to throw light on the fascinating enigma of the Elizabethan style in architecture; it is Colin Rowe's contention, in the following article, that it provides the key to a fuller understanding of the architecture of the Modern Movement. But how precisely did the term arise, and what does it mean? To answer this question it is necessary to glance back to the 1880's, when the term Baroque came into being to make it possible to distinguish between styles represented by Raphael and Bramante, say, on the one hand and Rembrandt and Vanbrugh, say, on the other—styles which had hitherto been lumped together indiscriminately as Renaissance. This distinction between Renaissance and Baroque received its final form in the writings of Wolfflin and Sehmarsow in the '90's and after, but it very soon became clear that a simple dichotomy was not enough to meet the case; for there still existed an art which was emphatically not Renaissance, but equally emphatically not Baroque either—the art of such painters of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as Bronzino, Piazzetta, Tintoretto and Greco. Basically this art was cold, perverse, intricate and intellectualized; more superficially it was consciously imitative of the manner of Michelangelo—and hence the term Mannerism. The isolation, so to speak, of Mannerism in painting was achieved in the early 1920's by Dvoračk, Pinder, Pevsner and some others; the fact that this should have happened in the age of Picasso, Chirico, Mondrian, etc., has a significance which will be appreciated when it is remembered that the first awareness of the Baroque as a distinct style had coincided with Impressionism's re-discovery of Dutch and Spanish seventeenth century painting and with the most baroque phase of nineteenth century architecture. Attempts to apply the term Mannerism to architecture have been more recent; in fact the only general attempts in English have been Nikolaus Pevsner's article in The Mint for 1946 and Anthony Blunt's lecture at the RIBA in 1949. In applying it to the architecture of the Modern Movement Colin Rowe breaks completely new ground—and turns a number of stones which have been hiding other things than some people thought.

MANNERISM AND MODERN ARCHITECTURE

The Villa Built by Le Corbusier at La Chaux-de-Fonds, his first considerable work to be realized, in spite of its great merits and obvious historical importance, finds no place in the collection of the Oeuvre Complète. This building, in a sense, is out of key with his later works, and by its inclusion, the didactic emphasis of the collection might have been impaired; but the omission is all the more unfortunate, in that six years later, the design was still found sufficiently serious to be published as an exemplar of proportion and monumentality.1

The house is of nearly symmetrical form, and in spite of a general lightness deriving from its concrete frame, its conventional character is fairly emphatic. The principal block is supported by flanking wings; and a central hall, rising through two storeys and crossed by a subsidiary axis, establishes for the plan a simple, balanced, and basically cruciform scheme. Externally the appearance of these same characteristics of restrained movement and rational elegance seems to invite appreciation in Neo-Classical terms. Thus the elliptical windows are part of the stock furniture of French academic architecture; and while the lack of ornament with the simplified cornices suggests the influence of Garnier, and the expression of the concrete frame in the flanking walls indicates an obvious debt to Auguste Perret, the building as a whole, compact, coherent and precise, is an organization which the late eighteenth century could have relished, and a work towards which a Ledoux, if not a Gabriel, might have found himself sympathetic.

One may, it is true, admit innovation in the simplification of elements, although adequate Austrian and German prototypes could be suggested; one might also perceive in the two bedroom suites of the first floor a premonition of later spatial complexity; but having made these observations, in plan and in three façades at least, there is little to be found, which detracts from a conventional, conservative excellence. But the fourth and entrance elevation presents quite distinct problems of appreciation. Behind its wall, the presence of a staircase continued to the second floor has led to an increase in height, which somewhat detaches this part of the building from the rest; and this elevation affects a severe and obvious distinction from the mass behind, with which on superficial examination it seems indeed scarcely to be related. Its succinct, angular qualities are foreign to the curvilinear arrangements of the block, and its in-