CONSTRUCTING A MODERN VIENNA: THE ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURAL CRITICISM OF ADOLF LOOS

by

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Adolf Loos is most widely known for his essay *Ornament and Crime* (*Ornament und Verbrechen*), in which he sarcastically compares architectural ornament to the tattoos of "savages." Loos sought to modernize Vienna through the introduction of American and British culture and was known as one of Austria's most notorious cultural critics. Celebrated for breaking with the historicist culture of the late nineteenth century, Loos is often heralded as the father of the Modern Movement, but many of his writings and designs contradict such a classification. This thesis will explore the origins and motives behind Loos's conception of modernism to suggest a better understanding of his role as cultural critic and architect in Vienna as well as his relationship to the architects and architecture of the subsequent generation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A simple granite cube incised with the name "ADOLF LOOS" in the *Zentralfriedhof* (central cemetery) of Vienna is the self-designed headstone of Austria's most controversial twentieth-century architect. The massive, cubical form echoes some of the fundamental components of Loos's architectural designs: austere and unornamented facades, sumptuous materials, and simplified forms. From house to headstone, Loos advocated architecture suited to its own time, capable of meeting the constantly evolving needs of the modern man. Adolf Loos is often called the father of Modern architecture because many of his architectural designs contain clean, straight lines and white, unornamented facades that are characteristic of the architecture completed by the generation of architects after him. Although many of Loos's designs do seem to share some aesthetic similarities with Modern architecture, his buildings and writings often challenged the ideologies of the Modern Movement.

His pen not only transcribed architectural designs from mind to paper, but also functioned as his primary weapon in his assault on the Viennese bourgeois culture. Despite their elevated role as documents of architectural history, Loos's essays and lectures were intended for non-specialist audiences and were meant to educate the public. Whether

writing about short hairstyles or architectural ornament, Loos's essays provide powerful insight into his conception of the modern Austrian. Loos's essays touched on all aspects concerning modern life in Vienna. Although a prominent architectural figure throughout Europe, Loos is best known for his essay "Ornament and Crime" ("Ornament und Verbrechen"), in which he sarcastically compares architectural ornament to the tattoos of "savages." This essay received a great deal of attention during Loos's own life and has only grown in popularity. Originally presented as a public lecture and later published as an article in a local newspaper, in 1920 "Ornament and Crime" was included in the second edition of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, a journal organized by the Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, and the French painter, Amédée Ozenfant.

Many scholars have interpreted Loos's participation in *L'Esprit Nouveau* as a sign of his alignment with the architectural ambitions of the Modern Movement and the austere, cubic facades of his residential designs, such as the Villa Müller, are frequently considered ample evidence to confirm these Modernist associations. Scholarship on Loos often stops here, declaring Loos the "father of the Modern Movement" and situating him within the canon of Modern architectural history. However, this account conveniently omits many of Loos's architectural designs and writings, which complicate such a simple reading of his work. In fact, many of Loos's writings and designs challenge the ideas put forth by Modernist architects, such as Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. This thesis argues that Loos's work cannot be easily categorized as "Modern" and that such a classification has created problematic and misleading interpretations of his work. Through a careful examination of his architecture and writing, this thesis investigates Loos's

conception of modernity to provide new insight into his work and suggest a different understanding of his connection to the architecture of the Modern Movement.

Because Loos was both a prolific writer and architect it is important to look at both aspects of his career to construct a comprehensive understanding of his views of architecture and modernism. Due to the overwhelming amount of literature and architecture produced by Loos, it is impossible to include all of his works within the scope of this paper. Instead this thesis will highlight only a few of his most intriguing works. The culture and architecture of the United States was an undeniable influence on Loos's architectural ideology and therefore will be a major point of exploration in the second chapter. In 1893 Loos visited the United States and spent time in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, and Philadelphia. While in Chicago, Loos was introduced to the new American skyscrapers, the architecture of Louis Sullivan, and the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. The second chapter will also delve into Loos's personal background and situate Loos within the cultural, professional, and political context of Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. Loos worked in Austria at the height of art movements such as the Viennese Secession, Jugendstil, and the Wiener Werkstätte, which Loos generally opposed due to their excessive use of ornamentation and their conflation of art and craft.[1]

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[1] In some versions of *Ornament and Crime* Loos attacked four prominent designers by name: Josef Hoffman, Otto Eckmann, Henry van de Velde, and Joseph Maria Olbrich. Loos removed Hoffman from subsequent publications. See Christopher Long, "The Origins and Context of Adolf Loos's 'Ornament and Crime,'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68 (2009): 206.

Expressing frustration with the cultural, political, and artistic limitations of Austria, Loos often mocked Viennese culture through his written works. In one essay Loos wryly nicknamed Vienna "Potemkin City,"[2] because he felt that the excessive amount of ornament applied to the newly constructed buildings were unnecessary and expressed a sort of pathetically regressive ideology.[3] Chapter Three will focus on some of Loos's writings. Upon returning to Vienna in 1896, Loos wrote favorably about American culture and the modern disposition of its citizens in his magazine *Das Andere (The Other)*, subtitled 'A paper for the introduction of Western Culture to Austria.' Loos was a prolific writer and began his career as an architectural and social critic, working with other social revolutionaries, such as the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus and the publisher and art dealer, Herwarth Walden. Seen as a maverick for his critiques of contemporary theory and culture, Loos often positioned himself in opposition to popular opinion and caused a great deal of controversy.[4] In "Ornament and Crime," published in 1908,[5] Loos equated the progress of culture directly to the removal of ornament from everyday objects. It was the excessive decoration, characterized by historicist styles and works of the Secession, which Loos considered

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[2] This reference refers to Loos's essay "Potemkin City," which will be discussed in greater detail in the third chapter.

[3] Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works* (London: Art Data, 1995), 53.

[4] Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73.

[5] 1908 is the commonly accepted date of publication for *Ornament and Crime*, but as Christopher Long's article, "The Origins and Context of Adolf Loos's 'Ornament and Crime,'" suggests the dating of the essay is slightly more complicated and cannot be securely dated until 1910.

as a weight that burdened civilization and retarded progress towards a more efficient, productive, and modern society. Additional essays by Loos, including "Architecture" ("Architektur") and several of his essays on fashion, will also be used in the primary analysis of his writing. These publications will then be presented alongside Modernist manifestos to analyze how these works have been categorized, studied, and interpreted since their initial publication.

The Villa Müller, located in Prague, Czech Republic, will be the primary example used to discuss Loos's residential architecture in Chapter Four. Built in 1930, just three years prior to his death, the Villa Müller is the pinnacle of Loos's residential architecture. Completed the same year as Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy, France and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in Brno, Czech Republic, the Villa Müller will illustrate how the principles espoused in Loos's writing were applied to his architecture. The comparison of the Villa Müller to these contemporary architectural works by Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe will illustrate how each architect conceived of modernity and architecture's role in the modern world.

Despite Loos's numerous publications, he was first and foremost an architect. Chapter Five will analyze his public architecture and his submission for the 1922 *Chicago Tribune* competition will serve as the primary example. Loos's *Tribune* Column is one of the most famous entries to the competition and his design has become one of the most contentious architectural works of his entire oeuvre. At first the proposed design for the new *Chicago Tribune* Tower seems to hold little parallel to his previous writings and architectural designs, but upon closer examination Loos's

choice for a colossal Doric column begins to make more sense. A careful analysis of this building in the context of his other works will provide the foundation for understanding Loos's principles regarding public architecture.

In addition to suggesting a new insight into Loos's conception of modernity, this thesis will begin to examine the ways in which Loos's works have been studied and presented by scholars. What are the repercussions of looking at Loos's discussion of ornament or his design for the *Chicago Tribune* Tower when removed from the context of his other writings, his architectural designs, and the cultural context in which they were created? Since the initial publication of "Ornament and Crime" in 1908, Loos's essay has been presented as lectures, republished in numerous periodicals and books, and adopted as part of the twentieth-century's canon of architectural literature. However, by isolating Loos's writing from its larger context and conveniently omitting particular buildings from the discussion of Loos's works, historians and architects have artfully constructed an inaccurate representation of his role in the development of Modern architecture and Viennese culture.

CHAPTER II

AN AUSTRIAN INTERACTS WITH AMERICA

At the age of twenty-three Adolf Loos embarked on a trip to America that forever altered the trajectory of his architectural career. By 1893 the United States had become one of the world's most powerful countries, with unprecedented progress in agriculture, architecture, and industrialization. Loos entered the country like thousands of other immigrants, hoping to find a prosperous life in the United States. Between the years of 1893 and 1896, this young Austrian visited Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and St Louis. The three years that he spent in the United States helped develop his opinions regarding arts and crafts, cultural evolution, and architecture's role in society. Loos is known for his scathing critiques of Viennese architecture and bourgeois culture, with its affinity for ornate, decorative aesthetics. Although it is impossible to pinpoint the exact origins of his thoughts regarding ornament or modernism, his writing suggests that his time in America helped to formulate and develop these ideas.

Prior to leaving for the United States, Loos completed his studies at the Dresden College of Technology, where he was trained as an architect. In addition to his architectural training, Loos was also acquainted with the stone-masonry business. When Adolf was a child, his father owned a sculpting and stone-cutting workshop that

was located next to their house in Brünn, Moravia (now Brno, Czech Republic). After his father's sudden death, his mother successfully managed the business, but their relationship became increasingly tense.[6] After graduating from school Loos traveled to the United States alone and without the support of his mother.

Like millions of immigrants, Loos entered the United States through Ellis Island, the new Federal portal, which had opened the previous year. He arrived in New York on July 14, 1893 and quickly began to explore the city. Loos worked several odd jobs to help finance his travels within the United States, including employment as a dishwasher, a laborer in a marquetry factory, and a reporter at a newspaper.[7] After spending some time in New York, Loos continued on to Philadelphia, where his uncle, Benjamin, worked as a watchmaker.[8] Not long after his arrival in Philadelphia, Benjamin and his family moved to the countryside. Loos moved with them and performed some unskilled labor in their service. While living in a rural community, Loos began to recognize cultural idiosyncrasies in the relationship between country dwellers and city dwellers in America; a relationship he found fundamentally different than that in Austria. Unlike the rural population of Austria, the American farmers lived in sizable houses, wore urban clothing when not working, and had active contact with the city. In Austria the rural inhabitants had very little contact with cities and the

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[6] Ralf Bock, *Adolf Loos: Works and Projects* (Milano: Skira; New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007), 13.

[7] Nikolaus Pevsner, introduction to *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*, by Ludwig Münz (New York: Praeger, 1966), 13.

[8] Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works* (London: Art Data, 1995), 29.

culture found in each region was so vastly dissimilar that one might suspect their inhabitants lived in different countries, rather than a few miles apart.[9] Loos approved of the American citizens' fluid relationship between the city and country and used it as a model for the cultural development of Austria. Despite Loos's favorable opinion of the American rural population compared to that of Austria, country life did not suit him and he eventually moved back to New York.[10]

Although Loos had visited several large cities, it was the city of Chicago that held the greatest interest for him. While in Chicago, Loos was exposed to the architecture of Louis Sullivan, the new American skyscrapers, and the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. Celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World, the Columbian Exhibition attracted over twenty-seven million people to Chicago. The Chicago fair dwarfed previous exhibitions, covering 633 acres, with over 65,000 exhibits.[11] Loos visited the fair during his first year in the United States and later described his experiences there by saying:

> When, some years ago, I left Austria in order to get to know architecture and craftwork on the other side of the Atlantic, I was still convinced of the superiority of German craftsmen. It was with a feeling of pride that I made my way around the German and the Austrian sections in Chicago. I looked down on the American efforts at "arts and crafts" with a pitying smile. How my feelings have changed! [...] I still blush to think what an exhibition the German craft industry made of itself in Chicago. All those grandiose reproduction showpieces! Nothing but vulgar fakery.

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[9] Bock, *Adolf Loos: Works and Projects*, 14.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 The World's Columbian Exposition* (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1992), 20.

> [...]In those days I was of another persuasion. Now, however, I have no hesitation in admitting that at that time the most foolish fop was far above me in matters of taste. The bracing American and English air has blown away all my prejudices against the products of my own time. Unscrupulous people have tried to turn us against our own times, telling us to look backwards, to take other ages as our models. Now the nightmare has flown. Yes, we live in beautiful times, times so beautiful that I would not exchange with any other. Our clothes are beautiful, so beautiful that, given the choice of clothes from any age, I would unhesitatingly pick out my own.[12]

Having written this account only two years after his return to Austria, it is clear that a major transformation had taken place during his time in America. In addition to acquainting Loos with the most up-to-date arts and crafts, the Columbian Exhibition introduced Loos to new technologies, the famous landscape architecture of Frederick Law Olmstead, and a sample of work by several of the leading American architects.

Popularly known as the "White City," the buildings at the Columbian Exhibition were constructed by applying white stucco over wood structures and were illuminated at night by an intricate system of electric lights. The primary architects of the fair used the classical tradition as a common architectural language and theme on which they based their designs. All of the participating architects designed their buildings using the classical style in order to create a unity of design never before seen at a World's Fair. In many ways, the Columbian Exhibition set the standard for World's Fairs and exhibitions for years to come. Someone who was as interested in architecture as Loos could not miss the use of the classical tradition on such a monumental scale. Like the unornamented style of the American arts and crafts, such a

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[12] Adolf Loos, "The Jubilee Exhibition: The Silver Court and Neighboring Pavilions (1898)," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 32-33.

powerful display of classicism in Chicago could have contributed to the use of classical elements in his own architecture.

Among the small group of architects participating in the design of the Columbian Exhibition, one architect in particular created a lasting impression on Loos. Louis Sullivan was one of the leading architects working in Chicago when Loos visited the city. Not only had Sullivan designed several skyscrapers and smaller structures throughout Chicago, St. Louis, and New York, but he would later, in 1896, publish the most influential architectural text about skyscraper design titled, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered." In this article Sullivan would insist on the tripartition of the building into base, shaft, and capital. Like Loos, Sullivan wrote commandingly about the proper way of designing and ornamenting a building, considering both the functional and structural aspects as well as the building's artistic expression. Loos became acquainted with Sullivan and it is almost certain that he would have read Sullivan's essay prior to designing the *Chicago Tribune* Column in 1922. This essay appeared in *Lippincott's* March 1896 issue, just as Loos, Sullivan's "brother in spirit"[13] was leaving the United States to return to Vienna. Sullivan also sent a copy of the essay to Loos in March 1920, two years prior to the formation of his design of the *Tribune* Column, in the hopes of finding a European publisher.[14]

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[13] Sullivan to Loos, around October 1920; the letter seems to be lost, although in the 1970 article "Bekenntnis zu Adolf Loos" published in *Alte und moderne Kunst* Loos's disciple and biographer, Heinrich Kulka remembered seeing the letter, which began with the words: Adolf Loos, my dear brother in spirit…". See Burkhard Rukschcio and Roland Schachel *Adolf Loos: Leben und Werk* (Salzburg; Wien: Residenz Verlag, 1982), 252.

It is uncertain to what extent Sullivan influenced Loos, but considering their ongoing correspondence, it is possible that Sullivan may have provided further influence for his young, Austrian friend. In his autobiography Sullivan's best-known pupil, Frank Lloyd Wright, mentions how Sullivan gave him the works of the evolutionist, Herbert Spencer, to take home and read.[15] Spencer was one of the most widely read evolutionists of the late nineteenth century, disseminating the doctrines of Social Darwinism and coining the term "survival of the fittest."[16] Loos scholar, John Lubbock, suggests that it is very likely that Sullivan would have also urged his young Austrian disciple to read Spencer.[17] Loos's library was full of books on economic and social theory and Spencer's theories of social progression and clothing would likely have been of particular interest to Loos.[18]

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[14] Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 19.

[15] Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (New York: Horizon Press, 1977), 125.

[16] Herbert Spencer first used this phrase in his 1894 publication of *Principles of Biology*, where he connects his economic theories to Darwin's evolutionary theories presented in *On the Origin of Species*. "This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called 'natural selection', or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life." See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology* 1 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864), 444.

[17] Jules Lubbock, "Adolf Loos and the English Dandy," *The Architectural Review* 174 (1983): 47.

[18] Loos's library contained an interesting collection of books including several works by American and English authors. Included in his library was Charles Dickens' *American Notes for General Circulation*, which details his first trip to America from January to June 1842. His library also included several works by Jane Burr (Rosalind Mae Guggenheim), an American author who wrote a number of novels, poems, plays, and articles. She was considered part of a radical group of New York artists and writers and wrote articles on women's rights, marriage, dress reform, birth control, and changing sexual attitudes.

In addition to the 1893 Columbian Exhibition and his interaction with Sullivan, there were several examples of American architecture that may have contributed to Loos's formulation of his architectural ideologies and influenced his later designs. These buildings include the skyscrapers of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, the design for the Detroit Memorial Column,[19] and the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The skyscraper was an entirely new and exclusively American building type. These structures, would have been impressive to any foreign visitor, would have been of particular interest to anyone with an enthusiasm for architecture.

Echoes of these American landmarks resurfaced throughout Loos's own architectural career in designs for public buildings such as the 1922 design for the *Chicago Tribune* Tower and his entry to the 1898 competition for emperor Franz Josef's jubilee memorial church. A clear distinction is made in the way classicism is used in his public as opposed to private structures; using classical elements primarily on the exterior of his public buildings, while using the same components sparingly and only on the interiors of his residential designs. Although he is famed for his anti-ornament polemics, his use of classicism is undeniable and key to understanding his architecture. Loos's use of fundamental classicism is apparent throughout his career in his architecture, his writing, and his teaching.

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[19] The Detroit Memorial Column, designed by Stanford White, could have been a design of interest by Loos. Although the Detroit column was never constructed there was a large prospective drawing published in the International Edition of *American Architect and Building News* in June 1900. Loos was particularly interested in American architecture and culture so it is feasible that he would have read this publication.

The architectural influences of the American classicism and monumentality were only part of the transformation that affected Loos while in the United States. Prior to his homecoming in Austria, Loos first stopped in London to purchase custom-made clothing from an English tailor. He was to re-enter Austrian society as a well-dressed gentleman.[20] Loos's interest in clothing was closely tied to his theories of architecture, and he polemically wrote that an architect was *not* an artist, but rather a kind of tailor.[21] Upon returning to Vienna in 1896, Loos's clothing not only distinguished him as a gentleman, but also as "Other." By adopting the sartorial ideal of the Dandy – propriety, gentlemanly discretion, and lack of pretense – Loos was identifying himself with the American and English cultures, rather than a member of the Viennese elite.[22] He placed a great deal of importance on the manner in which he clothed himself, but as Lubbock suggests,

> Such traits were merely the outward signs of the Dandy's superiority of spirit: he [the Dandy] was the leader of a spiritual revolution, in the period between the decline of the aristocracy and the rise of democracy; he was the inhabitant of the modern city, who merges unnoticeably with the crowd, and yet holds himself apart in order to observe it.[23]

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[20] Bock, *Adolf Loos: Works and Projects*, 14.

[21] Adolf Loos, "Architecture," in *On Architecture*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2002), 81-82.

[22] Lubbock, "Adolf Loos and the English Dandy," 44.

[23] Ibid.

According to Loos, modern clothing was not meant to express one's individuality, but was to act as a "uniform" or "mask" that hides or protects one's individuality from the overwhelming outside forces.[24]

Loos's fascination with clothing was apparent from the moment he returned from the United States, writing several articles within the first few years in Vienna for the *Neue Freie Presse* (*The New Free Press*), one of the most powerful and respected newspapers in Austria, including: "Underwear" (1898), "Footware" (1898), "Shoemakers" (1898), "Ladies' Fashion" (1898/1902), "Men's Fashion" (1898), and "Gentlemen's Hats" (1898). He also wrote favorably about American culture and the modern disposition of its citizens in his own magazine *Das Andere* (*The Other*), subtitled 'A paper for the introduction of Western Culture to Austria.' His discussion of American and English culture drew in part on personal experience, but also went beyond his experience to present Western civilization as a utopian model for Austrio-Hungarian culture to aspire to. In Loos's opinion, the simple English tailored suits, free of excessive ornament, were much better suited to their time than the lavish clothing of the Austrian elite, and therefore were more culturally sophisticated (as were the people who wore them). By positioning himself as an expert on Western culture and suggesting a cultural evolution through style, Loos created a very effective type of self-advertising that presented himself as the most culturally advanced architect in Vienna.

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[24] Patrizia McBride, "In Praise of the Present: Adolf Loos on Style and Fashion." *Modernism/Modernity* 11 (2004): 746.

Loos cast himself as a cultural revolutionary, as the prophet of modern society, but he did not believe in forcing this modernization upon people. According to Loos, good taste was not a set of regulations devised by the architect to be imposed upon a client but, rather, it was something inherent within a culture.[25] On April 26, 1900 Loos published a story called "The Poor Little Rich Man" in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, which was meant as a critique of the popular applied arts. The story recounts the tale of rich man who had everything in life, except for art. This rich man hires an architect to bring art into his house, and the architect created art of everything – ashtrays, cutlery, light switches – pleasing the rich man greatly at first. Soon the poor rich man became very unhappy because he realized that he could not live a normal life because the architecture of his house dictated the way in which he should live. He was no longer able to display photos of his family, wear clothing of his own choosing, or accept gifts from friends because these objects had no place within his architect's work of art.[26] The moral of Loos's story is quite clear; art should not be forced upon objects of everyday life. He often proclaimed that architecture was not art, saying:

> A work of art is a private matter for the artist, a building is not. A work of art is brought into the world without there being a need for it, a building meets a need. A work of art has no responsibility to anyone, a building to everyone. The aim of a work of art is to make us feel uncomfortable, a building is there for our comfort.[27]

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[25] Lubbock, "Adolf Loos and the English Dandy," 45.

[26] Adolf Loos, "The Poor Little Rich Man," in *Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays, 1897-1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H Smith, ed. Peter Eisenman and Kenneth Frampton (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982), 124-127.

[27] Loos, "Architecture," 82.

It is important to understand that Loos was working and writing during a period of acute political and cultural crisis. In his novel, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften (The Man Without Qualities)*, the Austrian writer, Robert Musil, referred to the last 25 to 30 years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as Kakania – a term originating from initials k.k. (kaiserlich und königlich), which means both "Imperial-Royal," a direct allusion to the Habsburg Empire, as well as "excrementia" or "shit land."[28] Fin-de-siècle Vienna was suffering from rapid economic change and intense issues of ethnocentrism. Many social and political movements including Nazism, Zionism, and German anti-Semitism had roots in Vienna. The massive influx of people relocating to Vienna during the second half of the nineteenth century[29] resulted in mass housing shortages. The majority of the houses that did exist were vastly inadequate. By 1910 there were 5,734 single-family homes in the city, which housed only 1.2% of the total Viennese population and less than 10% of all buildings used exclusively as dwellings were equipped with bathrooms and toilets.[30] Rather than placing governmental energy on finding a solution to the housing shortage, Emperor Franz Joseph began an imperial building program from 1858 to 1888. The construction of the Ringstrasse, which included the new Imperial Palace, two museums, Reichstag building, Imperial Opera

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[28] Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 13.

[29] The population of Vienna grew from 476,220 in 1857 to 2,031,420 in 1910. See Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 50.

[30] Ibid., 51.

House, and the Imperial Theatre was all created as part of Emperor Joseph's architectural agenda. Even more important than the architectural functionality of these buildings were their political functionality. Constructed in an attempt to strengthen the illusion of the empire's political, cultural and pecuniary stability, the facades of these buildings were covered with historicist ornament that recalled previous eras of political and social prosperity.[31]

The Imperial architecture of Franz Joseph demolished the belt of the city's medieval walls in order to raise a new ring of false palaces in its place. According to Loos the Ringstrasse was immoral because it was based on lies and imitation. It was this immorality that Loos sought to remove from his architecture and to expose in Viennese society. In 1898 Loos published an article intended to expose the falsehood of the Ringstrasse architecture titled, "Potemkin City." The term "Potemkin" refers to the Russian minister, Grigori Aleksandrovich Potemkin, who ordered the construction of what became known as "Potemkin villages," during Empress Catherine II's visit to Crimea in 1787. These villages comprised of a series of hollow facades that were constructed along the desolate banks of the Dnieper River in order to impress the monarch and her travel party, and thus improve the minister's own standing. Like the hollow façades of the Potemkin city, Loos considered the contemporary Viennese

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[31] For the most comprehensive work on the planning and rebuilding of the Ringstrasse see Kurt Mollik, Hermann Reining, and Rudolf Wurzer, *Planung und Verwirklichung der Wiener Ringstrassenzone* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1980).

architecture representative of a regressive approach to architecture that detrimentally retarding the city's evolutionary progress.[32]

> Poverty is no disgrace. Not everyone can come into the world the lord of a feudal estate. But to pretend to one's fellow men that one has such an estate is ridiculous and immoral. After all, should we be ashamed to live in a rental apartment in a building with many others who are our social equals? Should we be ashamed of the fact that there are materials that are too expensive for us to build with? Should we be ashamed to be nineteenth-century men and not men who want to live in a building whose architectural style belongs to an earlier age? If we ceased to be ashamed, you would see how quickly we would acquire an architecture suited to our own times. This is what we have anyway, you will object. But I mean an architectural style that we will be able to pass on to posterity in good conscience, an architectural style that even in the distant future will be pointed to with pride. But we have not yet found this architectural style in our century in Vienna.[33]

One of his closest companions was Karl Kraus, the satirical writer and publisher of *Die Fackel (The Torch)*. Both Kraus and Loos fought to expose hypocrisy that could be found in almost all aspects of the late Habsburg society. Life in Vienna was fraught with duality, presenting the illusion of a society lead by an unwavering government full of monetary and moral wealth, while in reality Vienna's political and social stability was disintegrating.

> The sensuous worldly splendor and glory apparent on its surface were, at a deeper level, the very same things that were its misery. The stability of its society, with its delight in pomp and circumstance, was one expression of a petrified formality which was barely capable of disguising the cultural chaos that lay beneath it."[34]

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[32] Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, 53.

[33] Adolf Loos, "Potemkin City," in *Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays, 1897-1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H Smith, ed. Peter Eisenman and Kenneth Frampton (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982), 96.

[34] Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 37.

The decline and fall of the Habsburg Empire deeply influenced the lives and experiences of its citizens, helping to shape the central and common preoccupations of artists and writers. As a result, the cultural products of the Kakanien society possess certain characteristics that reflect the social and political character of this epoch.[35] While Vienna was known for being a center of cultural production, some of the most innovative thinkers had the most difficulty gaining recognition there, such as Loos, Arnold Schönberg, and Sigmund Freud. The artistic and cultural life of late Habsburg Vienna was the concern of a closely-knit group of artists, musicians, and writers who often exchanged ideas and worked together, to create an interdisciplinary approach to the arts.[36] Many ideas that drive Adolf Loos's writing and architectural designs, including his concern for authenticity and practicality, can be found in the work of his contemporaries working in different fields.

In his most famous essay, "Ornament and Crime", published in 1908, Loos disparages the Viennese love for ornament in architecture and everyday objects. Once again he uses the Americans as an example of a more culturally evolved society, contrasting it with the Papuan natives who use tattoos to ornament their own skin. For Loos, ornament was a crime not for reasons of abstract moralism, but because it presented itself as a form of foolishness, useless repetition, or degeneration.[37] When Loos wrote "Ornament and Crime" he was living in Austria during the height of the

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[35] Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 14.

[36] Ibid., 18.

[37] Aldo Rossi, preface to *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, by Benedetto Gravagnuolo (London: Art Data, 1995), 15.

Viennese Secession, which was known for its highly decorative and ornate works. As in the tale of "The Poor Little Rich Man," Loos criticized Vienna's bourgeois taste and his writing often sparked controversy, creating professional and political tensions. His later "assault" on the Wiener Werkstätte in 1927 and conflict with bourgeois morality in 1928 made headlines in the local press and even resulted in a brief prison sentence.[38] It was in his writings that Loos most clearly formulates his architectural principles and his respect for American culture. These are the writings we will explore in more detail in the following chapter.

[38] Adolf Opel, introduction to *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, by Adolf Loos (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1998), 2.

CHAPTER III

THE OTHER IN VIENNA

Loos's return to Austria marked the beginning of his recorded writing career. While in the United States Adolf Loos worked for a newspaper, but it is unclear if he was working as part of the writing staff or in an administrative capacity because his work has not been documented. It is through the writing of Loos that we are able to construct an understanding of how Loos thought architecture should function in a modern society. Unlike other architects of the early twentieth century, such as Henry van de Velde, Bruno Taut, or Theo van Doesburg, Loos did not write a program or manifesto defining a set of architectural guidelines by which all architects should abide. Although Loos never published a manifesto delineating the rules that architects should abide by, he did write a great deal about the problems of the contemporary Viennese architecture. According to Loos, architecture, like any other utilitarian object, should change and adapt to the needs of an evolving society.

In the context of other architects Loos's written oeuvre is unconventional, not only its lack of a manifesto, but also for the tone and content of its works. Loos never shied away from harsh critiques his contemporaries' work and his opinions frequently went against popular opinion. It is important to note that the majority his texts were

intended for non-specialist audiences and were published in daily newspapers, a few specialized papers, and occasionally presented as lectures. His writing often makes use of satire as a way to convey his point. Some of his commentary, although addressing serious concerns, is intended to jokingly ridicule the society in which Loos lived and worked. Although this satirical and caustic tone is not typical of most twentieth-century architectural writing, this style of critique was popular in Viennese cabarets and the writing styles of Loos's friends.[39] He aligned himself with the most innovative and avant-garde artists, writers, and musicians in Vienna, including Oskar Kokoschka, Arnold Schönberg, Karl Kraus, and Peter Altenberg. He often collaborated with his friends on projects, including an article for Karl Kraus's journal *Die Fackel (The Torch),* a publication known for its attacks on the corruption of the Habsburg Empire, the nationalism of the pan-German movement, and laissez-faire economic policies, among other things. Even among his contemporaries, Loos's orthography was idiosyncratic. Although he wrote using the traditional German standards of grammar and punctuation in his personal letters, notes, and newspaper publications, he insisted on the use of the English rules of capitalization rather than the traditional German capitalization of nouns when he initially published *Spoken Into the Void* and *Trotzdem.*[40]

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[39] Christopher Long, "The Origins and Context of Adolf Loos's 'Ornament and Crime,'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68 (2009): 207.

[40] Janet Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna: Adolf Loos's Cultural Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 35.

He wrote profusely while he lived in Vienna and periodically published essays throughout the remainder of his life. As Benedetto Gravagnuolo points out, Loos devoted a great deal of time and attention to seemingly trivial subjects, such as fashion and etiquette.[41] Loos shared his often-controversial opinions about every aspect of Austrian culture: fine and decorative arts, architecture, politics, fashion, music, and literature. Two topics in particular remained at the heart of Loos's writings: fashion and architecture.

Das Andere and Ideas of Western Culture

Loos's interest in the United States continued throughout his career, as illustrated by his writing. Interestingly, his writing refers very little to his actual experiences in the United States and, instead, draws more upon the literature available to Loos in Austria. The Austrian and German opinion of American culture was complicated. Despite the positive reception and reproduction of some American literary works, there were articles in the daily newspapers that illustrate some of the reservations related to the "Americanization" of Europe.[42]

Loos's knowledge of American culture was formulated out of a combination of his experiences in the United States and texts written by American and English authors. While living in Austria Loos continued to stay informed on American culture, but some of this knowledge was likely gleaned directly from mainstream Austrian and

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[41] Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works* (London: Art Data, 1995), 18.

[42] Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna*, 46.

German publications.[43] *Die Zeit*, the Viennese weekly newspaper, often cited works by notable American authors, including Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson. On January 9, 1897, *Die Zeit* printed a review of an essay on Emerson, which contained the following lines: "Being aware that one is well-dressed – he is reported to have said – gives one greater moral certainty than the comforts of religion."[44] In his 1898 article, "Men's Fashion" Loos states,

> Somewhere an American philosopher says, "A young man can count himself rich if he has a brain in his head and a decent suit in his wardrobe." That is a philosopher who knows the world. He knows people. What use is a brain if one doesn't have the decent clothes to set it off? The English and the Americans expect everybody to be well dressed.[45]

Walt Whitman, like Emerson, was admired among the Germans and Austrians, and was well respected as a modern thinker.[46] Loos included a portion of the Whitman's poem, "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" in the conclusion of his 1898 article entitled, "Shoemakers."[47] By incorporating the positive public knowledge of American culture within his own texts, Loos craftily helped promote a positive image of Western culture

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[43] Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna*, 45.

[44] Review of Emerson lecture published in *Die Zeit* (9 January 1897: 31), translation from Janet Stewart's *Fashioning Vienna*, 45.

[45] Adolf Loos, "Men's Fashion," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 39.

[46] Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna*, 46.

[47] Adolf Loos, "Shoemakers," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 105.

and strengthen his argument for modernization, or what some might call "Westernization."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Vienna was in a state of political and social upheaval at the turn of the twentieth century. In an effort to help Vienna move forward during this time of political collapse and social restructuring, Loos often wrote about Western culture and used it as an ideal model for the Austrians to emulate. In 1903 Loos founded the journal *Das Andere* (The Other), subtitled 'A Newspaper for the Introduction of Western Culture to Austria'. In *Das Andere* Loos presents himself as 'the Other,' and the vehicle of knowledge of Western culture. The journal was short-lived, only producing two issues, but Loos was able to cover a number of topics including: clothing, etiquette, table manners, and various other subjects meant to educate the Austrian public.

Loos uses the term 'the Other' in many of his essays. In his texts 'the Other' signifies not only Western culture, but also, more specifically, American, English, German, Jewish, Turkish, Classical Antiquity, Australian, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, New Guinean, Scottish, and others. Although his usage of the term seems all encompassing, Janet Stewart has classified Loos's idea of 'the Other' into three distinct categories: the first connotes progressive 'Western' culture and typically includes America, England, and Classical Antiquity. The second group is the diametrical opposite, consisting of the Balkans, China, Turkey, and Papua New Guinea. The third falls somewhere between these two groups and consists of Germany and Japan. It is

this third group that is most closely related to the position of Austria on Loos's linear cultural evolution.[48]

Loos's conception of American or "Western" culture, as he calls it, is difficult to pin down. His experiences living and working in American cities would have exposed Loos to both the positive and negative effects of the industrial revolution and capitalism in the United States. Despite his first-hand knowledge of America's imperfections, Loos painted American culture in an idealized manner. Throughout Loos's writings, 'America' symbolizes a sense of utopian possibility, and 'America' and 'the American' signify the foremost position on a linear scale of cultural progression.[49] This modern and utopian view of Western American culture provided Loos and his readers with a powerful comparison to their own traditional culture, which was ruled by a single man who resolutely feared modernization and change – the Emperor. In her article, "In Praise of the Present: Adolf Loos on Style and Fashion," Patrizia McBride suggests that while Loos's discussion of England and America drew on his personal experience, "the two countries also functioned as a discursive trope that allowed Loos to articulate a desirable model of Western civilization, which did not necessarily correspond to the reality of contemporary Great Britain or the United States, nor was it meant to."[50]

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[48] Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna*, 44.

[49] Ibid., 47.

[50] Patrizia McBride, "In Praise of the Present: Adolf Loos on Style and Fashion," *Modernism/Modernity* 11 (2004): 746.

Loos uses this idea of a cultural evolution in his writing about architecture, arts and crafts, and clothing to help illustrate Austria's position in the world. Many of his articles addressed different topics but contained similar critiques of the Viennese bourgeois. In 1898 Loos wrote two articles that were very similar in their critiques of Viennese culture. The first, published in July of 1898, was "Potemkin City" (discussed in the previous chapter), in which he critiques the architecture of the Ringstrasse. Like a pauper in fine clothing, Loos considered Vienna to be hiding its true identity under the "clothing" of historicist architectural styles. Although Loos is famous for his critiques of the architecture and arts of Vienna, some of his cultural and social critiques offer insight into his architecture. Only recently have authors such as Patrizia McBride and Janet Stewart begun to explore the closely intertwined nature of Loos's writings on fashion and architecture. In September of 1898, only two months after publishing "Potemkin City," Loos wrote a similar article, but instead of discussing architecture he was writing about underwear. Throughout the article Loos makes a very similar critique of the Viennese bourgeois clothing as he had of the architecture of the Ringstrasse.

Many Viennese loved the traditional folk costume of the Austrian peasants so much so that associations were formed with the sole purpose of making the peasants keep their traditional attire.[51] While some Viennese adopted the modern clothing popular in England and America, underneath these tailored suits businessmen were still wearing the traditional national dress of outdated linen underwear. Loos argued that

[51] Adolf Loos, "Underwear," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 114.

this was another falsehood, stating, that it was simply ungentlemanly behavior to go around "playing" the modern, advanced European in the externals alone and trying to pull the wool over people's eyes.[52]

In his essays Loos often referred to the Viennese and German societies as "degenerate," because of their infatuation with period costumes and their inability to embrace the present. In the article Loos reiterates his ideas of cultural evolution, suggesting that a person can step up the ladder of civilization by choosing to wear the knit underwear popular in America and England over the traditional linen underwear commonly found in Austria. He suggested that this cultural evolution, more than being stylistic, also contained some physical aspect, stating,

> Those who find woven materials more comfortable than knitted ones are welcome to wear them. …The fact is, people who are culturally up-to-date find linen uncomfortable. We will, therefore, just have to wait until the Austrians also begin to find it uncomfortable.[53]

Loos even included an endorsement for the Viennese company of Tausky & Mandl on advertisement for underwear published in *Das Andere*, which reads:

> "Gentleman! It gives me great pleasure to be able to inform you that I have had the opportunity to evaluate articles of underclothing manufactured by your firm. I find these articles to be of serviceable quality and hygienic with respect to the requirements of the highest standards of culture. Because of your firm's existence, it is no longer necessary to order nightgowns and combinations from England.[54]

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[52] Loos, "Underwear," 115.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Adolf Loos, *Das Andere* 1 (Vienna, 1903): 14. Translation from Adolf Loos, *Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays, 1897-1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H Smith, ed. Peter Eisenman and Kenneth Frampton (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982), 70.

Loos's fascination with clothing was apparent from the moment he returned from the United States, writing several articles within the first few years in Vienna. *Das Andere* was filled with advertisements for tailors and clothing, which was one of his favorite subjects. Although famous for his critiques of the architecture and art of Vienna, some of his cultural and social critiques offer deeper insight into his architectural works.

Loos's own manner of dress, which consisted of fine tailored suits, became his signature uniform and was rarely photographed wearing anything else. Loos intended to return from the United States and enter the Austrian society as a knowledgeable and refined gentleman of the most modern and rational taste. More than an attempt to look fashionable, Loos was trying to create an image that suggested his connection with Western culture and the idea of modernity. It was important to Loos that one always be "well dressed." For Loos, being well dressed did not mean being beautifully dressed, but rather to be well dressed meant to be "dressed in such a manner as to attract as little attention to oneself as possible."[55]

Clothing played another important role for the individual. According to Loos, contemporary style cannot be identified as a style because it should correspond so closely to the way people live that it does not make a statement.[56] Likewise, Loos believed that the exteriors of his houses should be like the clothing of the individual:

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[55] Loos, "Men's Fashion," 40.

[56] Adolf Loos, "Surplus to Requirements," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 154-155.

unobtrusive, fitting into the landscape of the surrounding buildings, while being true to its time. Patrizia McBride writes,

> The outside of the individual, his or her clothing, becomes a protective screen rather than the expression of his/her individuality. In this regard the polarity inside/outside becomes inscribed onto the distinction between the private and the public sphere: clothing, much like a house exterior, belongs to the public sphere.[57]

In "Men's Fashion" Loos writes that one should dress in such a manner as to not draw attention to oneself, but he makes a very important exception to this rule. He suggests that if one were properly dressed in Hyde Park, he would certainly attract attention in Peking, Zanzibar or in the center of Vienna.

> [...] one cannot expect a person from a culturally advanced society to dress in the Chinese fashion in Peking, in the East African in Zanzibar, and the Viennese in St. Stephen's Square. My proposition therefore needs a rider: being correctly dressed means not to attract attention to oneself at the center of one's own culture.[58]

Based on this text it becomes clear that, rather than identifying with the culture in which he lived and worked, Loos located himself at the center of American and English culture and presented himself as an outsider, as 'Other,' within his native culture. Loos not only identified himself with the American or English culture, but he also deliberately drew attention to himself in Vienna, where he attempted to build his architectural career. Loos used his wardrobe as a source of self-promotion, as a sort of walking billboard that advertised his knowledge of the most advanced cultures.

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[57] McBride, "In Praise of the Present," 756.

[58] Loos, "Men's Fashion," 40.

Ornament and Crime

The bringing together of civilization, race, and taste as a means of explaining cultural evolution was by no means exclusive to the writing of Loos.[59] His argument is based on theories presented in works by Darwin[60], Nietzsche[61], the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who was well known for his work with physiognomic criminal profiling,[62] and the works of the English evolutionist, Herbert Spencer. The most famous example of Loos's ideas of cultural evolution based on the triad of civilization, race, and taste is his 1908 essay, "Ornament and Crime." No single work by Loos has become more widely reprinted and discussed — and perhaps misinterpreted — than this short essay. Reproduced in several publications during his lifetime, including the 1912 edition of *Der Sturm* and the second issue of Le Corbusier's *L'Esprit Nouveau* in 1920, Loos's article received a great deal of attention and was one of his only publications to be widely translated and circulated outside of Vienna. Over one hundred years after its initial appearance, "Ornament and Crime" is considered one of the formative architectural texts of the twentieth century and is often

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[59] Jimena Canales and Andrew Herscher, "Criminal Skins: Tattoos and Modern Architecture in the Work of Adolf Loos," *Architectural History* 48 (2005): 236.

[60] Loos's "discovery" equating the evolution of culture with the removal of ornament was previously presented in Darwin's 1859 publication of *On the Origins of Species*. See Charles Darwin, *On the Origins of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859).

[61] Nietzsche's *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, states that adornment was a disease whose symptoms plagued historicist architecture just as much as they did contemporaneous historiography. (Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 123.

[62] Lombroso's *L'Uomo Delinquente* was first translated into German in 1887 and was extremely popular in Vienna. See Canales, "Criminal Skins," 238.

included in collections of twentieth-century architectural programs and manifestos. One question that arises in these later publications is this: if this text, when isolated from the original context of a Viennese newspaper or lecture hall, retains the same meaning, or do these new contexts create a new understanding or interpretation of his work?

In *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture*, Loos's essay is positioned alongside Frank Lloyd Wright's "Organic Architecture," Bruno Taut's "Programme for Architecture," Le Corbusier's "Towards a New Architecture: Guiding Principles," and so on. Although a few of the texts in the collection are not entirely serious, something of Loos's original sarcasm and humor seems to be lost when isolated from its original context. "Ornament and Crime," like his other essays, was meant for a non-specialist audience and poked fun at his contemporary culture. In his lectures Loos was known for doing humorous impersonations of the Viennese and German elite and his essays are rooted in their obsession with costumes and ornamentation of past periods. When placed in the context of other architectural manifestoes this somewhat sarcastic comparison between ornament *and* crime seems to be taken quite literally and turns into an equation where ornament *is* crime. Loos's text has been interpreted and represented by architects and critics as equating ornament and crime, but this sort of misreading or misrepresentation of his work has been going on since its initial publication in 1908. Despite complaints from Loos, the Vienna tourist board persisted in referring to his essay in their literature as "Ornament is Crime."

With this one well-penned cultural critique Loos became known as the father of the Modern Movement. Adolf Loos chose to reprint "Ornament and Crime" in the 1920 publication *L'Esprit Nouveau*, a journal organized by the Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, and the French painter Amédée Ozenfant. Many scholars have taken this as a sign of Loos's alignment with the architectural ambitions of the Modern Movement, of which Le Corbusier played a central role. *L' Esprit Nouveau*, embraced the new age of mechanization and industrialization and Le Corbusier saw the machine as a tool to improve living conditions and therefore improve society. In *Towards a New Architecture* Le Corbusier again emphasizes how man should embrace these new technologies in their everyday lives.[63] Le Corbusier's idea of modernization is closely tied to his ideas of mechanization, engineering, and technology. Loos, despite all of his interest in modernizing Austria, rarely writes about the machine as a tool for modernization.

In "Ornament and Crime" Loos equates the evolution of society with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects. Unlike *Das Andere*, where Loos uses the idea of 'the Other' in a positive light to encourage modernization, "Ornament and Crime" draws on the fear of the unknown and the primitive. Similar to his article "Architecture", which discusses the progression of classical architecture, "Ornament and Crime" traces the progression of everyday objects from complexity to simplification, where America, Classical Antiquity, and England are the ideal models to emulate. In Loos's opinion, Austria was lagging too far behind the more "civilized"

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[63] Le Corbusier, *Toward a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 271.

societies, so he combined information about the Papuan natives with Lombroso's criminal profiling to create a cautionary tale for those who do not evolve with the times.

> The Papuan slaughters his enemies and devours them. He is not a criminal. But if a modern person slaughters someone and devours him, he is a criminal or a degenerate. The Papuan covers his skin with tattoos, his boat, his oars, in short everything he can lay his hands on. He is no criminal. The modern person who tattoos himself is either a criminal or a degenerate. There are prisons in which eighty percent of the inmates have tattoos. People with tattoos not in prison are either latent criminals or degenerate aristocrats.

Loos uses the Papuan natives' desire to ornament everyday objects as an example of cultural primitivism. The Papuan had not evolved to the moral and civilized circumstances of modern man who, should he tattoo himself, would either be either a criminal or a degenerate. Loos then goes on to compare this ornamentation of the body to the ornamentation of buildings, saying that anyone who has the urge to ornament the walls is either a criminal or a degenerate. To ornament everyday objects is a mis-directed effort for Loos, because it impedes cultural development.[64]

In this essay Loos equates the evolution of culture with the removal of ornamentation from the objects of everyday use.[65] The relationship of the Papuan native with the Viennese is used as a didactic tool to illustrate the relationship between the Viennese and the Americans. He uses examples of America's unornamented boxes and cigarette cases that he saw at the Columbian Exhibition as an example of how

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[64] Loos's interpretation completely misses the view of pre-literate cultures in which an objects utility is enhanced by embellishment, ornament recognizes and re-doubles the magic power of utilitarian objects; the objects utility is enhanced by embellishment

[65] Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 167.

advanced their society had become, because they were no longer wasting time, money, and resources to create unnecessary ornament for their utilitarian objects. Austria was precariously situated between the Papuans and the Americans on his linear evolution, teetering on the brink of social stagnation or regression due, in part, to the architects and designers' infatuation of past centuries and the aesthetics popular in Vienna. As in the tale "The Poor Little Rich Man," discussed in the previous chapter, the houses and possessions of Vienna's elite were so elaborately decorated that they were cumbersome and life more difficult for the people who used them.

Whether talking about architecture, underwear, or tattoos, Loos places these elements on a linear evolutionary scale defined by how a society ornaments its utilitarian objects. In his writings *ornament* functions as the formal connection between architecture, clothing, and the human body. In each instance America is placed at the peak of this ladder of civilization. Loos appropriates the idea of American culture, pairing public knowledge of the United States with his own experience to create a fictional modern utopia meant to provide Austrians with a sense of hope and an ideal model to emulate. On a more personal level, Loos adopts the guise of the American in his style of dress and demeanor as a form of self-promotion for his architecture and writing.

When "Ornament and Crime" is placed into the context of his other writings about architecture or his own architectural designs, it becomes apparent that Loos's views on ornament and architecture are not congruent with those of the Modern Movement. A comparison of ideas presented by Loos and Le Corbusier will clarify

their divergent philosophies. "Ornament and Crime" may have helped to form Le Corbusier's own architectural philosophy, but Loos took a critical stand against Modern architects' optimism and moralistic view of architecture as a means of creating a utopian society. Loos had a strong respect for history, saying, "The present is built on the past just as the past was built on the times that went before it."[66] His view of history is non-nostalgic in that he considers history important for the preservation of the unique quality of a place, but he has no interest in recreating what already exists. Loos argues that architects and designers should create new forms that are true to their own time, forms that not based on a given "style," but that fit into an existing city. Likewise, as we will see in the next chapter, when he designed a new building he took into consideration the individual character of a city and created a dialogue with the existing structures.[67]

In Le Corbusier's "Guiding Principles of Town Planning," and in his urban designs, he shows a frustration with what already exists and prefers to work with a clean slate.

> The town is a working tool. Towns do not normally fulfill this function. They are inefficient: they wear out the body, they frustrate the mind. The increasing disorder in our towns is offensive: their decay damages our self-esteem and injures our dignity. They are not worthy of the age. They are no longer worthy of us.[68]

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[66] Adolf Loos, *Meine bauschule,* (1913), in *Sämtliche Schriften* (Vienna: Herold, 1962), 323.

[67] Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, 22.

[68] Le Corbusier, "Guiding Principles of Town Planning," in *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century architecture* by Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1964), 89.

Le Corbusier considered the house a "machine for living" that could be used to teach people a new and better way to live.[69] Le Corbusier applied his functionalist architectural ideology to all of his designs, whether they were public or private structures, maintaining a particular and singular style throughout all of his buildings.

Loos, on the other hand, had no interest in creating a consistent style, and used differing philosophies in designs for public and private spaces. Loos argues that people should live in their houses according to their own rules and personalities, allowing the interior of the house to change and grow with an individual beyond the boundaries of style.[70] Unlike Le Corbusier, who wanted to teach people how to live, Loos wanted the interior of his houses to reflect the taste of their inhabitants rather than tyrannize them.[71] The next chapter will closely examine contemporaneous villas by Loos, Le Corbusier, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to illustrate how these principles translate into physical structures.

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[69] Le Corbusier's famous definition of a house can be found in his *Toward a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986).

[70] Aldo Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, by Benedetto Gravagnuolo (London: Art Data, 1995): 12.

[71] McBride, "In Praise of the Present," 755.

CHAPTER IV

THE MODERN HOME

The unornamented, white facades of Adolf Loos's urban, residential designs are often presented as the visual evidence that connects Loos and his architecture with the architectural principles of the Modern Movement. Loos's Villa Müller, completed in 1930, has been at the center of many scholarly discussions of his "Modern" tendencies. The Villa Müller is the most developed example of Loos's residential designs and is considered by many to be the crowning masterpiece of his career. Due to this villa's prominent status, it will be analyzed and discussed alongside Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye in Poissy, France, and Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in Brno, Czech Republic, to illustrate how each architect addressed the issues of living in a modern city. Commissioned and built contemporaneously with the Villa Savoye and the Villa Tugendhat, Loos's Villa Müller provides an ideal comparison of his work in relation to the emerging High Modernist aesthetic and theories. This chapter explores these aesthetic similarities, but also delves inside each structure to gain an understanding of each architect's conception of the modern home.

At this point in his career, Loos was well acquainted with the architecture of Modernists such as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius. Loos's

article, "Ornament and Crime," achieved newfound popularity after its 1921 reprint in the journal, *L'esprit Nouveau,* produced by Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier. Loos, Mies, and Le Corbusier all strove for a clean, ornament free aesthetic in their residential designs, which resulted in three white, geometric villas. While these buildings share aesthetic similarities, these resemblances remain on the surface level and are the products of divergent architectural philosophies. At the crux of these architectural philosophies is each architect's understanding of modernity and architecture's role in the modern world. These divergent philosophies most clearly manifest themselves architecturally on the interiors. Each of these villas will be examined, inside and out, to illustrate how these architects address the needs of people living in the modern world.

Villa Müller

During the last few days of October, 1928 Dr. Frantisek Müller, the co-owner of a successful civil engineering company, employed Adolf Loos and his associate, Karel Lhota, to design a villa in the suburb of Střešovice, near Prague. The engineering company of Dr. Müller and Lumir Kaspa, which accomplished some of the most important engineering projects in prewar Czechoslovakia, had offices in several cities. In 1928 Dr. Müller decided to relocate his family from the industrial city of Pilsen to the cosmopolitan center of Prague, where he could work in another branch of his

company's office.[72] Loos worked closely with the firm of Müller & Kaspa on many of his commissions in Pilsen between the years of 1928 and 1933.[73] Müller first approached the Czechoslovakian architect Karel Lhota to prepare a building project for his villa and it was Lhota who suggested his former architecture professor, Adolf Loos, be brought onto the project.[74] Between the years of 1928 and 1933 Loos completed many commissions in the Czech lands, but the Villa Müller was the largest and most important of his Czechoslovakian commissions.[75]

The Villa Müller is situated in an affluent neighborhood comprised of detached family residences. The plot of land is steeply sloped and the house, which has a sweeping view of the Prague cityscape and castle, is nestled into a hillside. The residential designs of Loos, from the Villa Steiner of 1910 to the Villa Müller of 1930, contain several elements that express his understanding of a modern home. In each house there exists a strong dichotomy between the exterior and interior spaces. Much of this division between the interior and exterior is, in part, achieved through the

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[72] Leslie van Duzer and Kent Kleinman, *Villa Müller: A Work of Adolf Loos* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 22.

[73] Maria Szadkowska, Leslie Van Duzer, Dagmar Černoušková, *Adolf Loos – Works in the Czech Lands* (Prague: City of Prague Museum and KANT, 2009), 228.

[74] Karel Ksander, Petr Urlich, and Václav Girsa, *Villa Müller* (Prague: Argo, 2000), 28.

[75] Although the primary focus of Loos's professional interests would remain in the city and society of Vienna, he retained contacts in Bohemia and Moravia and was happy to work there later in his life. "…One must be at home somewhere and I was born in Czechoslovakia – that is the main reason why I feel at home in Czechoslovakia. I have lived in Vienna for a long time, but have never heard a word of thanks for my work from that city. I have not lived in Czechoslovakia, but I have been received here gentlemanlike by the government and by individual personalities (notably by Dr. Markalous)." See Vladimír Šlapeta et al., Catalogue of the exhibition "Adolf Loos and Czech Architecture," B. Rieth Gallery in Louny, 1984, without pagination.

selection of materials. The cladding of each building, whether on the inside or outside, is carefully chosen to reflect the function and importance of each space. In his September 4, 1898 article, "The Principle of Cladding," Loos writes about building materials and how each is not equally suited to all purposes.[76]

> Every material possesses its own language of forms, and none may lay claim for itself to the forms of another material. For forms have been constituted out of the applicability and the methods of production of materials. They have come into being with and through materials. No material permits an encroachment into its own circle of Forms. Whoever dares to make such an encroachment notwithstanding this is branded by the world a counterfeiter.[77]

In the Villa Müller, each room is handled differently: Dr. Müller's library is sheathed in mahogany, Mrs. Müller's sitting room is covered in a light lemon wood, Cipolin marble is used in the living room, and so on. The function of a room and even the gender of the person who was intended to use it are suggested by the materials. For example the rooms most commonly associated with Mrs. Müller, such as her dressing room and sitting room, are sheathed in light colored woods such as lemon wood and maple, while rooms that are associated with Mr. Müller, such as the library and dining room are covered in a rich mahogany. Architectural historian, Beatriz Colomina, has suggested that looking at these gendered spaces provides more insight into the way in which people lived in this house. In addition to the cladding, the

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[76] Loos's principles of cladding did take some influence from Gottfried Semper (1803-1897), German architect, art critic, and professor known for his discussions on materials. For further reading on Semper's writing on cladding see Gottfried Semper, *Four Elements of Architecture and other writings* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[77] Adolf Loos, "The Principle of Cladding," in *Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays, 1897-1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H Smith, ed. Peter Eisenman and Kenneth Frampton (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982), 66.

mixture of built-in and other pieces selected by both Loos and the Müller family resulted in a mismatched collection of items that reflect the family's style. The vibrant and sumptuous character found on the interior in no way reflects the austerity and conservatism of the white, stucco façade. This dichotomy between the exterior and interior is more than a stylistic choice for Loos and is a product of the principles that Loos wrote about in connection to both architecture and culture.

In "The Principle of Cladding" Loos describes how clothing was used to protect and shelter our bodies and thus was the predecessor of architectural cladding.

> Man sought shelter from inclement weather and protection and warmth while he slept. He sought to cover himself. The covering is the oldest architectural detail. Originally it was made out of animal skins or textile products. The meaning of the word is still known in the Germanic languages.[78] The covering had to be put up somewhere if it was to afford enough shelter to a family! Thus the walls were added, which at the time provided protection on the sides. In this way the idea of architecture developed in the minds of mankind and the individual men.[79]

Loos's theory of architectural cladding neatly mirrors his views on contemporary dress. As discussed in previous chapters, for Loos, clothing was a uniform that served as a mask or shield, protecting individuality, subjectivity, and inner difference from outside forces.[80] Like the finely tailored suits that Loos wore, the facades of his buildings were modern and reserved.

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[78] In the German language the word for cladding or the technique of sheathing is "Bekleidung," which also the word for clothing.

[79] Loos, "The Principle of Cladding," 66.

[80] Patrizia McBride, "In Praise of the Present: Adolf Loos on Style and Fashion," *Modernism/Modernity* 11 (2004): 746.

Viewed from the street, the Villa Müller is a white cubical mass perforated by small, irregularly spaced windows. The house is dramatically situated into the slope overlooking several garden terraces and the main boulevard on the north side of the house. The south entrance is the highest point of the property with a sloping driveway that runs parallel to the residential street and wraps around the south and west facades of the building before reaching the garage at the basement level of the house. Each façade has an irregular arrangement of windows, niches, terraces, and doors. The severe exterior does not suggest the luxurious and lively settings to be found within its white, stucco walls. Access to the house is gained by passing through the gate facing the quiet, residential street to the south side of the house. It is only after one passes through the wooden gate that separates the public street from the private property and starts to walk down the sloped driveway, that the entry niche becomes visible. The entryway and bench are sheathed in travertine and set into the façade of the building, and remains unseen from the street level. The camel colored travertine provides the visitor with the first indication of the lush materials found within and contrasts with the white walls, creating a sense of warmth that draws the visitor towards the entrance and into the house. Through the utilization of travertine for the entry alcove, Loos creates a transition between the reserved exterior and the colorful interiors.

The character of each room is constructed through the use of materials, size of the rooms, and the organization of space. The interior rooms are filled with bold, vibrant colors. For example, the entry hall juxtaposes bright green walls, covered in Opaxit tiles, with a red radiator. Cipolin marble, mahogany, and lemon wood, are used

generously throughout the interior to express the elegance and stature of the house and its owner. The interior organization of the Villa Müller is the most advanced manifestation of Adolf Loos's idea of the *Raumplan*, which can be loosely translated as "space plan." After reviewing Lhota's initial drawings for the Villa Müller, which prescribed a traditional arrangement of space on well-defined floors, Loos chose to change the organizational system of the house that created a single space divided vertically according to the importance of the room. Many of his residential structures are designed based on the idea of the *Raumplan*, which Loos explained during a conversation in 1930:

> My architecture is not conceived in plans, but in spaces (cubes). I do not design floor plans, facades, sections. I designs spaces. For me, there is no ground floor, first floor etc… For me, there are only contiguous, continual spaces, rooms, anterooms, terraces etc. Storeys merge and spaces relate to each other. Every space requires a different height: the dining room is surely higher than the pantry, thus the ceilings are set at different levels. To join these spaces in such a way that the rise and fall are not only unobservable but also practical, in this I see what is for others the great secret, although it is for me a great matter of course. Coming back to your question, it is just this spatial interaction and spatial austerity that thus far I have best been able to realize in Dr. Müller's house.[81]

The various heights of the rooms destroy any sense of distinct floors when one first visits the Villa Müller, but when looking at a plan, one can categorize the rooms by floors. At the basement level, which is half-embedded into the hillside, there is the garage, boiler room, staff quarters, and storage space. The main level consists of the primary living spaces, such as the living room, dining room, kitchen, library, and Mrs.

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[81] Adolf Loos, Shorthand record of a conversation in Pilsen, 1930, Villa Müller Museum and Study and Document Center website: http://www.mullerovavila.cz/english/raum-e.html. Accessed April 27, 2010.

Müller's boudoir. The next floor contains the family's private rooms, including the master bedroom with flanking his-and-her dressing rooms, a guest room, the children's bedroom and playroom, and the maid's quarters. Culminating this series of floors is a room that was used for attic space and a Japanese-style breakfast room with doors that open onto the large rooftop terrace. This rooftop terrace is the largest of several terraces and provides the framed view of the Prague castle. Within the Villa Müller each room is distinct and defined, yet there are smooth and subtle transitions from one room to the next. On the main floor, transitions between each room require a person to ascend or descend a few steps, turn a corner, or pass through a short corridor to reach the next room.

Loos was attentive to the physiological effects of his space and strove to create spaces that were comforting and responsive the needs of its owner. Rooms were not decorated according to particular style dictated by Loos, because one's tastes evolve and change with time. The interiors of the Villa Müller reflect the personal taste of the Müller family, with rugs, furniture, and artworks that were chosen by the family, rather than the architect. As in "The Poor Little Rich Man," discussed in previous chapters, Loos did not believe that an architect should dictate the furnishings of his homes.

Based on his writing, it is clear that Loos does not view the architect as an artist, but rather as a person whose task is to provide a livable and rehabilitative space. In his 1910 essay "Architecture," Loos directly states that architecture is not an art.

> A building should please everyone, unlike a work of art, which does not have to please anyone. A work of art is a private matter for the artist, a building is not. A work of art is brought into the world without there being a need for it, a

> building meets a need. A work of art has no responsibility to anyone, a building to everyone. The aim of a work of art is to make us feel uncomfortable, a building is there for our comfort. A work of art is revolutionary, a building conservative. A work of art is concerned with the future and directs us along new paths, a building is concerned with the present.[82]

The white façade of the Villa Müller was Loos's response to the hostile urban environment. He wanted to create domestic architecture that would act as a sanctuary from the day-to-day stresses of urban life and foster and protect the development of the individual. It was a retreat from the burdens of society, representing the freedom of the owner to feel comfortable in their space, with their own belongings.

Villa Savoye

Construction on the Villa Savoye began in September of 1928, only one month before Loos was contracted to begin work on the Villa Müller. Completed in the same year as the Villa Müller, the Villa Savoye is considered the finest expression of Le Corbusier's five points of new architecture and is one of the formative works of the International Style.[83] Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret jointly published "Fünf

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[82] Adolf Loos, "Architecture" in *On Architecture*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2002), 82.

[83] At the time the Villa Savoye was built the term "International Style" was not yet in use. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson coined the term during the creation of an exhibition of Modern Architecture at the 1932 Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The exhibition drew on aspects that were common to Modern Architecture from around the world in an attempt to define a style of the time. According to Hitchcock and Johnson architecture of the International Style contained these three principles: the expression of volume rather than mass, balance rather than symmetry, and the removal of applied ornament. The exhibition included several works by Le Corbusier, including a large model of the Villa Savoye placed in

Punkte zu einer neuen Architektur (Five Points Towards a New Architecture)," in the book, *Bau und Wohnung*[84], which describes the five points as follows: 1. The supports (*les pilotis*); 2. The rooftop garden (*les toitsjardins*); 3. The free plan (*le plan libre*); 4. The horizontal window (*la fenêtre en longuerur*); 5. The free façade (*la façade libre*).[85] Each of these points are clearly illustrated in Le Corbusier's design of the Villa Savoye, but the point that will be examined in greatest detail in relation to our comparison of Loos and Le Crobusier's villas is the idea of the *Raumplan* versus the *plan libre*.

Like the Villa Müller, the exterior of the Villa Savoye is an ascetic, multi-storey, white cube. Early plans of the Villa Savoye illustrate how important it was for Le Corbusier to maintain the pure, cubic form. The initial plan included a staircase attached to the exterior of the building, which began at the ground level and rose to the first floor terrace. The external staircase interrupted the façade and broke the perception of a boundary between internal and external spaces. In later revisions Corbusier pulled the staircase within the mass of the building, which created an

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the center of one of the exhibition spaces. (Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York, Norton: 1966)).

[84] See *Bau und Wohnung: die Bauten der Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart errichtet 1927 nach Vorschlägen des Deutschen Werkbundes im Auftrag der Stadt Stuttgart und im Rahmen der Werkbundausstellung "Die Wohnung"* (Construction and Housing: the buildings of the Weissenhofsiedlung built in Stuttgart in 1927 by the German Werkbund commissioned by the city of Stuttgart and in the Werkbund Exhibition "The House"). The book marked the 1927 opening of the Weissenhof Siedlung in Stuttgart.

[85] Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, "Five points towards a new architecture," in *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture* by Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1970), 99-100.

uninterrupted, cubic facade. Le Corbusier emphasized these boundaries in his writing and frequently referred to it as "a cell". Le Corbusier and Loos attempted to construct strict boundaries between external and internal spaces that were defined by the cube.

Other similarities exist beyond the aesthetics of these white, box-like facades. It is clear that Loos was a source of inspiration for Le Corbusier and he often mentioned Loos's ideas in his own writing. As Le Corbusier wrote, "Loos swept under our feet, it was a Homeric cleansing – exact, philosophical and logical. With it, Loos influenced our architectural destiny."[86] In 1921 Le Corbusier reprinted Loos's essay "Ornament and Crime" in *L'Esprit Nouveau* and thus was very familiar with Loos's argument for removing ornament from objects of everyday use. After attending the 1924 International Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, Le Corbusier published *L'Art decorative d'aujourd'hui* (*The Decorative Arts of Today).* In the book Le Corbusier argues that the applied arts were anachronistic. Their writing illustrates a shared disdain for decorative arts and a reverence for Classicism and rationality in architecture. Despite these substantial similarities, a closer look at their conceptions of architecture's role in the modern age begins to reveal their different theories on architecture.

Each architect had a different understanding of architecture's function in the modern society. Key to each architect's understanding of architecture was the idea of architecture as art. Loos clearly states in "Architecture" that architecture is not an art,

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[86] This passage is taken from Le Corbusier's essay on "Ornament und Verbrechen", published in 1930 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, quoted here from Stanislau von Moos "Le Corbusier and Loos" in *Raumplan versus plan Libre*, ed. Max Risselada (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1987), 19.

but for Le Corbusier, architecture was the ultimate art form. Along with the sister arts of painting and sculpture, architecture was meant to rouse and inspire people. Le Corbusier's journal, *L' Esprit Nouveau*, embraced the new age of mechanization and industrialization, because he saw the machine as a tool to improve living conditions and therefore improve society. The white façade of the Villa Savoye was an expression of this new machine aesthetic and as he described in *Vers Une Architecture (Toward a New Architecture)*, Le Corbusier viewed the house was the "machine for living."

Works of engineering, particularly ship design, inspired the design of Villa Savoye. The aesthetic similarities of the exteriors of the Villa Savoye and Villa Müller are in no way continued beyond the threshold of their white shells. The interior arrangement of the Villa Savoye allows the building to be simply divided into three distinct floors, with a consistent height for all of the rooms on each level. The ground floor contains the entrance hall, utility rooms, garage, servants' quarters. Part of the ground floor is a driveway created for the inclusion of the automobile as an integral part of the design. The majority of the living functions are located on the first floor, while the rooftop contains the private rooms of Madame Savoye and the rooftop garden.

Returning to the Le Corbusier's third point on new architecture, the *plan libre,* the interior of the Villa Savoye is fundamentally based on the idea of the column and the uninterrupted floor slab. Slender, white *piloti* (columns) support the cube-like upper levels of the house and create a grid of supports that allow the architect to freely

place the interior walls.[87] Large panes of glass span from floor to ceiling and blur the distinction between the exterior courtyard and the interior spaces. Le Corbusier dictated every aspect of the interior design, including the selection and placement of the furniture, wall colors, and in some cases the location and works of the client's art collection.

The same minimalism of the exterior is echoed on the interior of the villa. Industrial railings flank the ramp and stairs that rise through the structure, leading to the rooftop garden. The architectural promenade in the Villa Savoye was an essential idea in Le Corbusier's residential designs, the first signs of which can be seen in his 1922 design for Ozenfant's studio in Paris. Visitors approach the Villa Savoye from the driveway, which circles around the back of the house and delivers the visitor to the front door. Upon entering the house a person can choose to either ascend the flight of stairs to the upper level or walk up the ramp located at the center of the house. The ramp transverses interior and exterior spaces, terminating at the rooftop garden. The architectural promenade allows the visitor to fluidly and continuously experience the entire volume of the house by moving uninterrupted through the entire space – room to room, interior to exterior - rather than experiencing a series of individual moments and spaces. In many of his villa designs, including the Villa Savoye, the architectural promenade begins at the ground floor and continues until it reaches the rooftop garden or library, and is meant to elevate a person both physically and mentally to a place of meditation and reflection.

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[87] Arjan Hebly, "The 5 Points and form," in *Raumplan Versus Plan Libre*, ed. Max Risselada (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 47.

Based on his writing, it is clear that Le Corbusier felt that it was his duty as an architect to meditate on the issues of the modern world and implement solutions in order to improve society, as can be seen in his plan for the Radiant City (*La Ville Radieuse).*

> Let us imagine for an instant that quite suddenly, as a result of some sudden acceleration in social progress, the man of today has five extra hours of freedom at this disposal out of the eight or ten previously allotted to his work. We should be faced with social disaster, for no preparations have as yet been made to absorb such a vast flood of latent energies. [...]We must decide what the occupations are going to be - communal tasks and individual duties that will fill the space between two sleeps...Our task is to put man back on his feet, to make sure that his feet are firmly on the earth, his lungs full of air, his spirit bent upon constructive communal efforts and also animated by the joys to be derived from useful personal activities.[88]

In his plan for the Radiant City, Le Corbusier instills strict boundaries for each function in society and in life. A hierarchy is put into place with the government buildings and business centers at the top and the factories and heavy industry at the bottom. The architectural hierarchies of the Radiant City mirrored the class hierarchies of the people who were to live there. There were those who labored and those who were "well-enough endowed to have the ability and the duty to think".[89] Not only does this hierarchy imply who is in charge, but illustrates that Le Corbusier thought that the decisions made for society were to be made by the philosophers, the elite, and undoubtedly, himself.

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[88] Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* (New York: Orion Press, 1967), 65.

[89] Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today,* trans. James Dunnett (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987), 87.

The Villa Savoye was designed for the elite who were to meditate and make the decisions for the future. The architectural expression of the machine was meant to inspire and excite its inhabitants. While Loos's Villa Müller was designed in an attempt to meet the needs of the contemporary, modern man, the Villa Savoye is more concerned with inspiring solutions for the future of society. There is no sanctuary or protection for the development of the individual's personality in the Villa Savoye. By the standards of both Loos and Le Corbusier, the Villa Savoye is a work of art.

Villa Tugendhat in Brno

Situated in the same way as the Villa Müller, the Villa Tugendhat is nestled into a sloping plot of land that descends from a rural street towards the Brno city centre with a view dominated by the Spilberk castle. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe utilized the landscape to anchor the house into the hillside by placing the lower two levels into the hillside. From the street level the house appears to be a low one-storey structure. Grete Weiss Löw-Beer and Fritz Tugendhat commissioned the villa and Mies began the initial designs in September 1928. After a few meetings between the architect and clients the construction began and the villa was completed in 1930.

The exterior of the villa is also white and geometric, but it does not maintain the box-like form of the Villa Müller or Villa Savoye. The villa is divided into three distinct floors, providing a single height for all of the rooms on each level. Utilization of an iron framework enabled Mies to dispense with the supporting walls and arrange the interior according to the feeling of space and light. Like the Villa Savoye, the idea

of the free plan created a dramatically different sense of space than that found in the Villa Müller. While the interior spaces of the Villa Müller create a sense of distinct closed volumes, defined by Loos's principle of the *Raumplan*, the interior of the Villa Tugendhat is an expression of open volumes. Mies's free plan produced vast open spaces with divisions only where desired by the architect. In the Villa Tugendhat rooms are not well-defined, single function spaces, but are able to serve various functions.

> The first part of the ground floor was the living room, with conservatory, which could also double as a reception room, a study, and a room with a dining area – the structure of this multifunctionality was, however, merely indicated.[90]

The basement level of the house contains the utilitarian spaces necessary for the daily functions of the house. Along with the living and social spaces on the ground floor, the kitchen and servants' rooms are located on the second storey. The third storey contains the private rooms for the parents, children, and nanny, a large terrace, the entrance hall, and the chauffeur's apartment and the garage.

Rather than having a white cube pierced by windows, Mies used the long horizontal windows on the main floor, similar to the Villa Savoye, but increased their size so they would span the entire height from floor to ceiling. When combined with the open interior arrangement, the large windows removed the traditional sense of walls or massing in a home. Distinctions between interior and exterior are blurred even further than in the Villa Savoye by the fact that the windowpanes can be retracted into

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[90] Lenka Kudelková and Otakar Máčel, "The Villa Tugendhat in Brno," in *Mies van der Rohe: Architecture and Design in Stuttgart, Barcelona, Brno, by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,* (Weil: Vitra Design Museum; Geneva: Skira Editore, 1998), 181.

the floor and completely disappear. Interior curtains made of silk and velvet can be used to separate the different zones, which are also subtly divided by the arrangement of the furniture. Rooms are separated with ceiling height doors, which helped to break down the idea of the solidity of the wall.[91] Throughout the house Mies wanted to maintain a seamless continuity of space, so he insisted ceiling height doors with no doorframes and used white rubber to create a flat, seamless interior floor. Like Loos, Mies paid great attention to the materials he used for the interior. On the main floor there are shiny chrome casings for the supporting columns, a wall of honey-colored onyx divides the different zones of the floor, and the half-circular wall is sheathed in ebony wood. According to Grete Tugendhat's memoirs, Mies personally selected and customized the onyx wall and the green marble sideboard in the dining area and personally travelled to Paris to retrieve the ebony veneer.[92]

Although Mies was not solely responsible for furnishing of the house, he did determine all the built-in furniture. The remainder of the furniture was created in collaboration with Lilly Reich, Hermann John and Sergius Rugenberg, all of whom had previously work with Mies.[93] His designs, like Le Corbusier's, were heavily influenced by industrialization. In addition to the steel frame, which was very unusual

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[91] Fritz Tugendhat feared that the ceiling height doors might lead to the collapse of the ceiling, but Mies refused to change the ceiling-height doors, because he considered it an essential part of the design. (Kudelková and Máčel, "The Villa Tugendhat in Brno," 181.)

[92] Ibid., 183.

[93] Ibid., 183-186.

in residential architecture, the central heating system, and electrically operated windows were extremely advanced for the area at that time.[94]

Mies did not write a great deal about his architecture and what he did write was succinct, thus to neatly define his conception of the modern home is more difficult than with Loos or Le Corbusier. In 1923 Mies published his theses along with a design for an office building in the first issue of *G*. He states,

> Architecture is the will of an epoch conceived into space.
> Living. Changing. New.
>
> Not yesterday, not tomorrow, only today can be given form. [...]
> It is hopeless to try to use the forms of the past in our architecture. Even the strongest artistic talent must fail in this attempt. Again and again we see talented architects who fall short because their work is not in tune with their age. [95]

Mies and Loos seem like-minded in their desire to have forms that are true to their epoch. In the 1927 Foreword to *Bau und Wohnung*, Mies reiterates this search for a "new space" is an artist aim.[96] The Villa Tugendhat realizes new artistic ideals and moves beyond the functional idea of the "machine for living." Mies's conception of the modern home is not simply a machine for living, but a functionalist space that feeds the spirit of the modern man who lives within. Rather than protecting his clients from the harsh, industrial, modern world, Mies' design embraces the industrialization and literally removes the barriers between the home and the outside world.

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[94] Kudelková and Máčel, "The Villa Tugendhat in Brno," 187-189.

[95] Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Working Theses," in *Tugendhat House, Brno*, by Christian Norberg-Schulz and Ludwig Mies an der Rohe (Rome: Officina, 1984), 37.

[96] Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, excerpt from "Bau und Wohnung," in *Tugendhat House, Brno*, by Christian Norberg-Schulz and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Rome: Officina, 1984), 37.

At first glance the residential designs of Loos, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe share certain similarities that begin to deteriorate upon closer inspection. Those similarities, that seemingly link Loos so neatly with the architecture of the Modern Movement, weaken once one moves beyond the facades of their residential designs. In the next chapter we will see how these similarities completely dissolve when looking at designs for public buildings.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC COLUMNS

Many of Loos's urban residences maintain a similar appearance to later Modernist works – stucco walls, straight lines, unornamented facades – but heterogeneity of design becomes increasingly apparent when looking at the interiors of his houses or his public buildings. Many scholars suggest that Loos's architecture should be considered within the canon of Modernism, but in most cases these accounts conveniently omit major works from his oeuvre, particularly analysis of his designs for public buildings. In his use of classicism, his ideology regarding the way buildings should function in society, and his use of materials, Loos's public structures challenge the classification of his work as aligned with Modern design. At the heart of their difference is Loos's concern with authenticity rather than the Modern architects' preoccupation with style.

As we have seen in his writing, American culture was a powerful influence in Loos's conception of what Austria should aspire to be. America was the utopian ideal, but Loos never returned to the United States and only designed one building that was to be constructed there. From the practical to the completely fantastic, this collection of skyscraper designs for the *Chicago Tribune* Competition has been a source of both

bemusement and careful study for architects and historians. More than any other entry to the competition, the massive Doric column submitted by Adolf Loos has puzzled historians with its unprecedented design that seemingly held little parallel to the architectural values that the architect espoused. By closely examining his design for the *Chicago Tribune* Competition in relation to a few other public designs, this chapter will illustrate the fundamental components of Loos's public architecture and provide a more comprehensive understanding of his entry.

On June 10, 1922 the *Chicago Tribune* Company seized the imagination of architects around the world. Exciting Chicago's citizens and capturing the international attention of the architectural community, the *Tribune* announced their program for a one hundred thousand dollar architectural competition. Originating from thirty-two countries, over 260 architects submitted entries to the competition; each of whom developed his own vision of what an American skyscraper should look like. The announcement of the competition coincided with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the *Chicago Tribune*, which had by 1922 exceeded a weekly circulation of four million copies and outgrown its existing administrative building designed by the firm of Holabird and Roche on North Michigan Avenue.[97] Like the city of Chicago, the *Tribune* had seemingly grown overnight into one of the most prominent daily papers in the world. The organizers of the competition sought to provide civic improvement to Chicago by "erect[ing] the most beautiful and distinctive office building in the world,"

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[97] Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler, *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, Inc., 1966), 192.

which would simultaneously improve the prestige of "The World's Greatest Newspaper" as well as the city of Chicago.[98]

From classical to modern, the collection of entries covered the entire breadth of architectural styles and approaches to skyscraper design. Although Loos's design did not win the competition, nor even receive one of fifty honorable mentions that were awarded, his design has remained one of the iconic images of the *Chicago Tribune* Tower competition. A single, colossal, twenty-one storey high Doric column of black granite was to rise out of an eleven storey cubical base, to reach to the full height of four hundred feet, a design Loos felt would be equally as monumental as it was distinctive.[99] A few architects contributed plans that included solitary columns, including Paul Gerhardt and Mathew Freeman, but none of these entries possess the intrigue that surrounds Loos's design. Interpreted variously as a joke, an allusion, and as a critique, Loos's proposal for an immense Doric column has been seen as incongruent with both his writing and previous designs.

Part of the ambiguity surrounding the design lies in inconsistency between Loos's design of the *Tribune* column and with his reputation as a critic who fought for the removal of superfluous ornament in both architecture and everyday items. Despite the fact the Loos wrote a great deal, few of his writings were circulated outside of Vienna. Loos's disdain for ornament was widely known after the publication of his

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[98] Tribune Company, *International Competition for a New Administration Building for the Chicago Tribune, MCMXXII* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 10.

[99] Katherine Solomonson, *The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition: Skyscraper Design and Cultural Change in the 1920s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 121.

essay, "Ornament and Crime," in 1908. For Loos, ornament was a crime not for reasons of abstract moralism, but where it presented itself as a form of foolishness, useless repetition, or degeneration.[100] Though Loos was known for often using a sarcastic tone in his writing, many scholars question the seriousness of his design, which can be interpreted as one colossal ornament. Was Loos's column a joke or a major miscalculation of the desires of American businessmen?

Skyscrapers were still a relatively new building type in 1922 and were being constructed primarily in the United States. The *Tribune* competition gave architects from all over the world their first opportunity to try their hand at designing this new building type. Many of these architects had never seen the American skyscrapers first hand and lacked an understanding of how they functioned. Entries such as the one by the Italian architect, Saverio Dioguardi, with its hollow triumphal arch form, would not allow for easy flow or communication from one part of the building to another, nor would elevators be able to reach the uppermost floors. Although his design also seemed to posses some of the awkwardness of the foreign designs, Loos had first hand experience of American skyscrapers.

While in Chicago, Loos was exposed to the architecture of Louis Sullivan, the new skyscrapers buildings, and the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. In organizing the exposition, Daniel Burnham turned to the classical tradition for a common architectural language and theme on which to base their designs.[101] Also known as the

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[100] Aldo Rossi, preface to *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, by Benedetto Gravagnuolo (London: Art Data, 1995), 15.

White City, the majority of the buildings at the Columbian Exhibition were made of white stucco and illuminated at night by an intricate system of electronic lights. The use of the classical tradition on such a monumental scale would have not gone unnoticed by Loos and may have contributed to his use of classical elements in his own architecture.

Among the small group of architects participating in the design of the Columbian Exhibition, one in particular may have influenced Loos's design for the *Tribune* Tower. Louis Sullivan was one of the leading skyscraper architects working at the peak of his career when Loos was in the United States. Not only had Sullivan designed many skyscrapers within Chicago, but, as mentioned in Chapter Two, he also published the most influential architectural text about skyscrapers, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered." In his article Sullivan insists on the tripartition of the building into base, shaft, and capital. He says,

> Certain critics, and very thoughtful ones, have advanced the theory that the true prototype of the tall office building is the classical column, consisting of base, shaft, and capital – the moulded base of the column typical of the lower stories of our building, the plain or fluted shaft suggesting the monotonous, uninterrupted series of office-tiers, and the capital the completing power and luxuriance of the attic.[102]

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[101] John Wellborn Root originally collaborated with Daniel Burnham on the design of the exposition, but he unfortunately died of pneumonia during the initial planning. After Root's unexpected death, Burnham supported the other architects in selecting one common style for all buildings, as a way of promoting unity of design, and that style proved to be classicism.

[102] Louis Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," *Lippincott's Magazine* 57 (March 1896): 403-409, reprinted in *Inland Architect and News Record* 27 (May 1896): 32-34.

It is almost certain that Loos would have read Sullivan's essay prior to designing the *Chicago Tribune* Tower. This essay appeared in *Lippincott's* March 1896 issue, just as Loos was leaving the United States to return to Vienna. Sullivan had also sent a copy of the essay to Loos in March 1920, two years prior to the formation of his design of the *Tribune* Column, in the hopes of finding a European publisher.[103] In addition to Sullivan's influential essay and the Columbian Exhibition, where he would have seen numerous classical buildings and the large obelisk at the fair, there were also several American structures that may have influenced his design, including the sixty-nine-foot ancient Egyptian obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle, dating from ca. 1475 BC, which had been moved to the city and erected in Central Park in February of 1881 and the Bunker Hill Monument. It was the influence of American structures, particularly the Bunker Hill Monument, that directly influenced his architectural designs when he returned to Austria.

In 1899, only two years after he returned to Austria, Loos submitted an entry into the competition for Emperor Franz Josef's jubilee memorial church. Only three sketches have survived, but Ludwig Münz describes Loos's plan for the church as reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome in its classicizing forms.[104] Next to the church there was to be a tall tower similar to an ancient obelisk but with a sweeping base, similar in form to the Eiffel tower. This plan, juxtaposing the obelisk with church design, is most likely based on the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown,

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[103] Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 19.

[104] Münz, *Adolf Loos,* 172.

Massachusetts, which also places a large obelisk next to a small classical building. After his death in 1933 a photo postcard of the Bunker Hill Monument was found among his papers, which he had kept from his trip to the United States. Münz says,

> [...] it was not so much that just at the time of his stay in America [...] a classical reaction had emerged victorious as against the style that was currently being taught in Europe, but that the basically different American attitude to building made their structures seem so much more akin to the Roman... The juxtaposition of these two structures [at the Bunker Hill Monument], so very different both as regards scale and articulation, is typically American. They stand beside each other in sovereign isolation and yet ideally linked – this is the Roman part – in a unity, each needing the other.[105]

Joseph Masheck suggests the plan for Franz Josef's tower is relevant to Loos's Chicago plan because Loos was thinking of something that would be both monumental and monolithic in effect.[106] Not only does the design for the jubilee memorial church illustrate Loos's desire to create a monumental structure, but also begins to illustrate the use of classicism in his designs. In his essay "Ornament and Education," Loos states, "Classical ornament brings order into the shaping of our objects of everyday use, orders us and our forms, and creates despite ethnographic and linguistic differences, a common fund of forms and aesthetic concepts."[107] In his own school of architecture, Loos placed emphasis on the idea of tradition and art history, using the Romans and classical antiquity as guides and inspiration for himself and his

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[105] Münz, *Adolf Loos,* 173.

[106] Joseph Masheck, "'His Native Doric' and Other Columns: Adolf Loos and the Chicago Tribune," *Things* 15 (2001): 22.

[107] Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Education," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays* by Adolf Loos (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1998), 188.

students.[108] The design of the *Chicago Tribune* Column was not a lapse into classicism, but rather a new facet of his continuing relationship with classicism that spans his entire career.

Loos's classicism, like the classicism of the Renaissance, is looking to history as the basis on which to build the new rather than to copy its structures. As discussed in the previous chapter, his 1910 essay, "Architecture," describes the progression of classical architecture towards more simplistic forms. To Loos, this progression was the correct path for the development of architecture and architects should continue in this direction.[109] Although famously known for his attack on ornament, his essay "Ornament and Crime" does not call for the removal of all ornament, but for the removal of ornament that is no longer relevant to its own time.[110]

In addition to these articles explaining his stance on classicism and ornamentation, in 1922 Loos also wrote about his entry for the *Chicago Tribune* competition in a five page explanatory pamphlet including both text and images, called 'The Chicago Tribune Column.' Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler suggest that the title of Loos's pamphlet was "no doubt meant to underline the double meaning of the

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[108] Joseph Masheck, "The 'One-Walled House': A New Facet to Loos's Dodgy Classicism?" *Word & Image* 23 (2007): 273.

[109] Adolf Loos, "Architecture," in *On Architecture*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2002).

[110] Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime," in *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays,* comp. Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), 168.

word column, as an architectural term as well as a newspaper one."[111] Given the ironic tone in much of Loos's writing, scholars have often debated the seriousness of his competition entry. In 1922, the same year of the announcement of the *Chicago Tribune* Tower competition, Loos resigned as chief architect of the Socialist administration of Vienna and moved to Nice, France. It was in France that Loos is said to have resumed his links with the avant-garde that had been forged years earlier through the mediation of Arnold Schoenberg. Loos also became a member of the Parisian Dadaist circle of Tristan Tzara, for whom he designed a house for in 1926.[112] It was this year of extreme change that seems to provoke questions regarding Loos's intentions. Manfredo Tafuri writes,

> The fact is that in 1922 Loos seemed to have lost touch with the clarity of his prewar attitudes. His column is not symbolic; it is only a polemical stand against the metropolis seen as a world of change. But a single column, taken out of the context of its order, is not strictly speaking even an allegory: rather it is a phantom. As a paradoxical specter of a code outside time it is blown up to enormous proportions in a last attempt to get across an appeal for the interchangeability of values; but like Kandinsky's giants in *Der gelbe Klang*, Loos' gigantic phantom only succeeds in communicating its own pathetic will to exist. Pathetic because it is expressed in front of the metropolis, in front of the very world of change, of the eclipse of values, of the 'decline of mystique,' that makes that column and that desire to communicate absolute values so tragically out-of-date.[113]

Loos's column has also been interpreted as intentionally out-dated. Modernism was growing in popularity in Europe and just beginning to take hold in the United

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[111] Münz, *Adolf Loos*, 193.

[112] Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works* (London: Art Data, 1995), 173.

[113] Manfredo Tafuri, excerpt from "La montagna disincantata" printed in *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, by Benedetto Gravagnuolo (London: Art Data, 1995), 173.

States in the early 1920s. Despite the fact that his article, "Ornament and Crime," had been republished in Le Corbusier's journal *L'Esprit Nouveau*, Loos did not support the functionalist and purist designs of Le Corbusier. The choice to use the Doric column during a time of establishment for the Modern Movement can be seen as an ironic commentary on contemporary architecture.

Along similar lines, many scholars, including Benedetto Gravagnuolo consider the *Chicago Tribune* Column to be purely Dada. Similar to Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, Loos recycles a familiar element, removing it from its traditional setting, and places it in a different context that allows for the element to be seen anew. The column is extracted from its original context, scale, and function, radically altered and then placed in the contemporary context of the city. Completely convinced of Loos's ironic intentions Gravagnuolo writes, "But whatever the biographical data and whatever Loos himself may have said, the *Chicago Tribune* Column is Dada."[114]

It is precisely this biographical data and Loos's own comments about the design for the *Chicago Tribune* Tower that demonstrates his design is not meant as a joke or ironic commentary on contemporary culture. In the pamphlet accompanying his submission to the competition, Loos emphasizes and praises the jury's desire to build the most beautiful office skyscraper in the world. He argues that his design was both beautiful and distinctive enough to be identified with Chicago the same way that St. Peters is connected with Rome or the Leaning Tower with Pisa. Loos notes how the new, non-traditional architectural forms constructed in Germany, Austria, or France

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[114] Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, 174.

were characteristic of the American outlook on life right now, but were so common in American cities that a building of that style would not distinguish itself and would most likely become unfashionable as styles developed.

> Taking all of this into consideration, I have chosen the column as the best solution of the problem. The detached column is a tradition. The immense and massive column in the Place Vendôme was modeled after the Trajan column.[115] Loos then makes references to the triumphal column of the Roman emperor,

portraying the rank and success of the *Chicago Tribune*. Rather than recreating a triumphal column, Loos chose the form of the Doric column, which allowed for certain modernizations including vertical rows of windows, which would give the illusion of fluting. Completely aware of how strange the concept of an inhabited column may sound, Loos raised this question himself and mentioned his own hesitation in publishing this idea because of the potential for so many misunderstandings and doubts on the practical side of the design. One challenge that this iconic form presented was finding a way to fit all of the functions of a major newspaper within the predetermined space. Loos drew on his personal knowledge of the inner workings of a newspaper office in order to carefully organize the interior of the column.[116]

It is also possible that Loos looked to a house designed by François Racine de Monville, in the Désert de Retz for inspiration, when organizing the interior of his column. The Broken Column house survives in a French folly garden near Paris and could have provided Loos with the inspiration for creating an inhabited column. The

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[115] Adolf Loos, excerpt from "The Chicago Tribune Column," in *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*, by Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler (New York: Frederick A Praeger, Inc., 1966), 194.

[116] Münz, *Adolf Loos,* 194.

house was constructed in the form of an ancient ruined column nearly fifteen meters in diameter.[117] Although there is no direct record of Loos visiting the Désert de Retz, the landscape garden was well known and it is likely he would have known of the garden.

Drawing on his personal experiences in another way, Loos's column creates a powerful impression due in part to his choice of material. Departing from the pristine white surfaces of classicism that could have easily been recreated in glazed white terracotta, Loos chooses to use black polished granite. Few people have commented on his choice of material, but a significant part of the psychological impact of this building lies in its dark sheathing. Loos's father was a stonemason and Adolf gained an appreciation for fine materials early in life. Using marble, travertine, and other sumptuous stone in both his public and residential architecture, Loos chose to use the finest materials and left them unornamented. Whether granite was chosen for shock value, an ironic play on the idea of the "White City," an attempt to modernize the classical column, or simply a practical solution to hide the dirt and grime of the city remains unknown.

The way in which Loos used materials and classicism was consistent throughout his career. He deliberately accentuated the differences between interior and exterior, private and public, monument and house, creating a sense of duality in his work. Although Loos uses classical elements and the same fine materials in both his residential and public architecture, the way in which he uses them in each instance is very specific.

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[117] France Bequette, "Landscape Gardens: The Désert de Retz," *UNESCO Courier* 50 (1997): 46.

According to Loos, public buildings are for everyone and should reach out to all members of society. One building that perfectly embodies this duality between public and private space is the Looshaus in the Michaelerplatz. The first two stories of the building are intended for commercial activities and are covered in a green travertine, with four Doric columns marking the entrance. Above this commercial area is a white wall punctuated with windows, containing four stories intended for personal lodgings. The contrast between the two functions of the building is clearly delineated by the treatment of the façade.

In addition to the classical form of the column, the stepped, cubical form that the column rests upon is a reoccurring form in Loos's public designs. One of the earliest examples is a project for a department store in Alexandria, Egypt, designed in 1910. Although never built, it is clear that Loos was fond of the design, having kept a watercolor rendering on display in his house.[118] The design combines classical motifs with this stepped pyramidal form that later becomes a prototype for many of his monumental designs. In the project for the Grand Hotel Babylon that was to be built in Nice, France or the design for Mexico City's Town Hall, both designed in 1923, Loos uses these pyramidal forms as the fundamental design element in his designs. It has been suggested that these pyramidal plans relate to more ancient geometric forms, such as the Aztec pyramids or, in the case of the department store in Alexandria, a reference to Hellenism and the architecture of the Pharaohs.[119] The base of the *Tribune* Column

[118] The original watercolor, completed by his pupil, R.Wels, is currently held in Adolf Loos's living room reconstructed in the Historical Museum of Vienna.

holds the most resemblance to his design for a mausoleum for the art historian, Max Dvořák, created in 1921. Maintaining a similar silhouette to Chicago's column, but executed on a much smaller scale, the mausoleum was to reach a total height of seven meters and be sheathed in black granite. The mausoleum is both a tomb and a monument and, like the use of classical idioms, something of the monumentality of the pyramid form spoke to Loos when designing public structures.

All of Loos's public buildings make use of either or both classical elements or fine materials. Returning to his thoughts on classicism expressed in "Ornament and Education," Loos is using classical ornament as a way of bringing order into public spaces through the use of an architectural language that, according to Loos, is common to everyone. Loos did not suffer a relapse into classicism in 1922 while designing the *Chicago Tribune* Column, but rather continued to develop his ideas of public architecture and the monumentality that could be achieved in American skyscrapers.

Loos was perfectly aware of the loftiness of his own design, ending "The Chicago Tribune Column" essay by saying,

> "The Great Greek Dorian Column will be built.
> If not in Chicago then somewhere else.
> If not for the *Chicago Tribune* then for someone else.
> If not by me, by some other architect."[120]

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[119] The idea that these pyramidal forms reference ancient structures has been suggested by several scholars including Gustav Künstler, Ludwig Münz, and Benedetto Gravagnuolo, although none of these authors create a direct association between these forms and his public architecture.

[120] Adolf Loos, excerpt from "The Chicago Tribune Column," 195.

Loos's column has still never been built, but his plan remains an icon of skyscraper design. If built, Loos's design would have, as he suggested, become synonymous with Chicago the same way that St. Peters is associated with Rome. His design is both captivating and distinctive. Although there are many who would question the "beauty" of his design, Loos was genuine in his attempt to construct the "worlds most beautiful office skyscraper."

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the canon of Modern architectural history, Loos is revered for both his architecture and his architectural critiques. His writings have been removed from their original contexts, and his architecture has been selectively employed to support this Modernist reading of his work. Due to the notoriety of "Ornament and Crime" both during Loos's life and after his death, Loos has been classified, without much consideration, as the father of the Modern Movement. In many ways, Loos was deeply entrenched in the issues of modernization, fearing Austria would be left behind in the rapid changes occurring throughout America and Western Europe. The modernization of Vienna through architecture alone was not enough for Loos. His writing extends beyond his concern for the architecture to address issues of plumbing, hygiene, politics, and contemporary dress in Vienna. His writing and his architecture address concerns that Loos felt were facing contemporary Viennese citizens and his articles were intended for the public audience. Along with his allies, Loos took a stand against the forces he saw as slowing their social progress and tried to instill a sense of order and direction for his fellow countrymen.

If viewed from the Modernist perspective, Loos's architectural oeuvre is fraught with contradiction and ambiguities, such as the *Chicago Tribune* Competition entry. This is not to say that no similarities or exchanges exist between Loos and the Modern Movement, but that Loos's work cannot be so easily classified as "Modern" and needs to be studied from a new perspective to be fully understood. Due to Loos's connection to Le Corbusier, his work has been studied in the context of the evolution of the Modern architecture, propagating the understanding of Loos's "modernist tendencies," while Loos's strong connections to the Dadaists and Viennese avant-garde have been virtually ignored.[121]

His work inarguably influenced Le Corbusier, but their differing conceptions of modernity and the needs of the modern individual created opposing architectural philosophies. The austere façade of Loos's houses were meant to protect the individual from the stresses of the modern world and allow them to reflect inward. Le Corbusier and Mies, on the other hand, embraced the age of the machine and incorporated that machine aesthetic into their designs. Mies and Le Corbusier's villas are not designed to foster the inner development of their clients, but rather to open them up to the world. Differences in design philosophies are even greater when looking at designs for public buildings. Where Mies and Le Corbusier maintain a simple, minimalist aesthetic, Loos provides monumental buildings that contradict any supposition of Loos's "style."

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[121] Only in the past ten years have articles and research on Loos's writings about clothing been addressed and there are many other areas of Loos's work that are ripe for future research, including Loos's connection with the Dadaists and his connection with the circle of Viennese avant-garde.

Loos's conception of modernity was cultivated out of an interest in Westernization or "Americanization," and an interest in an evolutionary scheme that is based on culture. As a way to evaluate these cultures, Loos places each civilization on a linear evolutionary scale defined by how a society ornaments its utilitarian objects. The modernity of the Modern Movement was based on technology and the machine as mechanisms that could vastly improve society. The house became the "machine for living" and utilized the aesthetics of industrial design in both the interior and exterior.

Within the canon of architectural history Loos has primarily been studied, and often misrepresented, through a Modernist perspective. Loos reached the height of his popularity in the twenties, but was then rediscovered forty years later, when the Post-Modernists were asking, "Why is ornament a crime?" By looking at both his architectural and cultural commentary, it becomes clear that Loos contribution extends beyond architectural history and may resonate in the cultural history of modern Austria. A more contextual approach to Loos's work allows for more inclusive examination of his work and possibly new understandings of what it meant to be modern at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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