



THE LION OF BELFORT. MAX ERNST COLLAGE  
PUBLISHED IN GIEDEON'S 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'

*'Giedion's comparison between the Bauhaus and the Picasso shows that in Gropius work of 1926 abstraction is not wholly denied; and it's indisputably this 'abstract' element which most clearly separates the Bauhaus from the production previous to the First World War'*

*Colin Rowe, 'Mannerism and Modern Architecture' in 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and other essays', p.44*

## Abstract

### 'A guide to something lost'

Siegfried Giedion pulls a straight line between French Revolution and Modernism; or to translate that to the aesthetic norm of that time, from Empire style over mass adornment to functionalism.

Motion, or movement is a key word to reach that goal. But in so doing Giedion locks Adolf Loos, the artisan with his tools and toys, partisan of a modernism that indeed not yet had a name in the 19th century.

Giedion is being flanked here by Colin Rowe. Rowe sets in on a same reasoning bringing up Hume's Mannerism that fully embarked in the Arts from the 18th century onward with articulations on individualism, liberalism, romanticism.<sup>1</sup>

Mannerism helped to bring the Renaissancean preoccupation with High Art, idealisation, standardisation, deduction, down to a more free expression which than later became strengthened again with rules, codes to reach (say) a more 'abstract plane of consistency' from the 19th into the 20th century.'

Within Rowe's articulations on Mannerism, the architecture of Loos comes into the picture. Loos is a free radical who 'innervates' and who is being left therefore in the 19th century.<sup>2</sup>

This gives way to think about. When it comes to philosophical implications C. Rowe is, where I was told, the Popperian in charge.

In our text we will focus on Plato as well as Hume, rationalism next to subjectivity. According to Karl Popper they are the main obstacles to overcome on our way to make the world a freer place. Liberalism, individualism can only arise through interaction with man made tools, allowing in such for the growth of 'abstract' knowledge. Ironically so, Karl Popper is reaching again for a theory of deduction vis à vis Hume's theory of induction or the empiricist theory as mannerism is also called.

1 'The ethos is both abode and manner, homeland and style.'

Mannerism (and territory) : one line in 'A Thousand Plateaus', Deleuze and Guattari p.320

2 contradiction and complexity :

In an additional page (whereby Rowe explains that he keeps to the main of his arguments) advancing as he was Brutalism in the name of Mannerism; he will later suggest it was maybe Post-Modernism he was aiming for.

In 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays p.29, p.34, p.50



PICASSO L'ARLESIENNE

It brings along an interesting development concerning the artisanal architecture of Loos. A whole generation of critics may have displaced him.

Democracy has many fathers, politics comes into play

Tellingly, the Swiss Siegfried Giedion is a Napoleon's man. In disregard of the excesses of war, colonisation, art robbing - he praises the equality between the races and the sexes, egalitarianism instead of class struggle, freedom of religion: The revolutionary heritage.

For Karl Popper however this is too much of an idealisation - while he weighs the pro's and con's of the Austrian enlightened despotism that was swept away by Napoleon's troops. Today, the mild tenuous approach of the Habsburgers is increasingly seen as 'a blueprint' of European political culture.



ROLAND BORTHES. PHOTO TAKEN BY DIANA AGREST

## 'BECAUSE'

(I try to spell it right here)

'The signifier is defined by what it is not'; is very much a reading of the Kantian noumenal world.<sup>3</sup>

We can say therefore: 'this is a cat because it is not a dog'.

### Signs as an uncatchable/catchy thing

My notion hereto about the 'Signifier/Signified' has been fairly plain and simple and could be brought back to Foucault's 'Les Mots et les Choses' (Words and Things) in a sense that the word 'covers' more or less the object it refers to. On top I took into account that words may mean different things in different languages; or that things are called otherwise in different cultures, which allows in fact for a margin for play.

Refreshing to me is that the signifier applies to half a sentences, aphorisms, apriorisms. That in a true transcendentalist tradition something should stand above (it).<sup>4</sup>

A line as, 'the world is written through and through by signs' exactly has this effect. The effort is than to resolve this Signification in something 'manifest' (de signifier) and something 'latent' (the signified).

Psycho-analysis treated Dreams already in similar ways<sup>5</sup>. They are depicted in what is manifest (being physical disturbances - ticks etc.) and what is latent (being suppressed traumas that were suffered in the past).<sup>6,7</sup>

In 'Mythologies' Roland Barthes tries to make a difference by arguing that myth is all posture, front with nothing behind, nothing to hide.<sup>8</sup> 'Myth is Idea emptied in Form; is Tale emptied in Speech'.

Myth Is what it Is: a double signifier. Tale is late. Poetry ... well, Barthes does not understand the aversion of modern poetry for myth.<sup>9</sup>

3 Neil Leach in Rethinking Architecture, p.165

4 Roland Barthes p.112 in Mythologies, 'the tridimensional pattern'

5 Roland Barthes p.114 in Mythologies

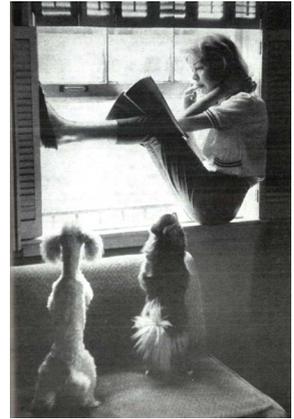
6 p.143 Barthes (see Further with 't Raum' and Adolf Loos)

7 Jennifer Bloomer. Freudian Mechanisms of signification. p.14

in 'Architecture and the text : The (s)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi.

8 p.129 Barthes

9 Poetry and entropy



'ET VOILA BABY DOLL  
MODE & FEMME EXPO 58

### Further categorisations

What is latently present in R.Barthes 'Mythologies' indeed is that he has just read De Saussure and likewise he wants to build his case on semiology as De Saussure did on psychology in what could be upheld as an expanded field of ontologies. But rather than a 'reassurance' Barthes provides us with a recipe of a misdemeanour. Where the book at first appears as an anthem, an anthology of French mass culture it lapses into an apology. The book strategically sets out as a wrestling with identity (columns on the women magazine 'Elle', the car label 'Citroën'...) in order to end with a declension in the face of decolonisation in the late 1950's.

So what is his strategy ? Barthes seeks solace in emptying out these barrels of subjectivity (and rationality) and have myth transferred<sup>10</sup> to a social science (being open for comments). Therefore he engages with two formidable images to make a point.

'Because my name is Lion' is this line that 'manifestly' represents to all second graders in Latin classes what is 'latently' there, namely : the rule about the agreement of the predicate.<sup>11</sup>

But immediately Barthes extends this citation with the picture of a (quote) 'negro-soldier' looking slightly aloof, while greeting the French flag whereby that person in arms complies in such to the ideal of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.<sup>12</sup>

### Catharsis

Is what we have to learn from this unusual association between the school benches and the army that colonialism, once induced by the Roman Empire at the beginning of our time calculation, is constituted time after time again in the heads of our brightest kids ?

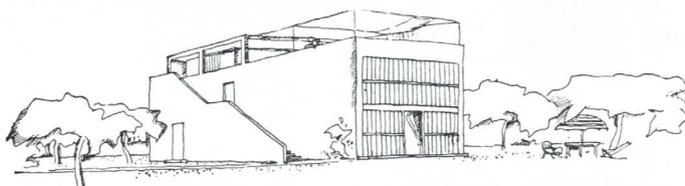
So this tribal mask, which is resembled on the cover of Mythologies, has to come off.

Struggle : on the last pages Barthes encounters only himself trying 'not' to put away a Mythologist as an Ideologist, as a Marxist.

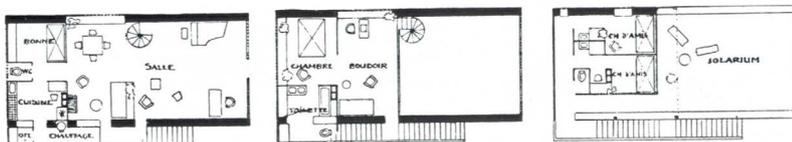
<sup>10</sup> Freud's word

<sup>11</sup> 'predictions, indications, proverbs, hypotheses, metaphysics' all in the category of synonyms.

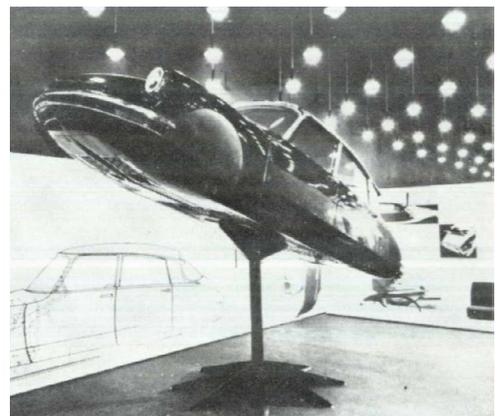
<sup>12</sup> Roland Bontres p121-124



Maison « Citrohan » 1920 "Citrohan" house 1920



LE CORBUSIER MAISON "CITROHAN" 1920



CITROËN DS EXPO 58 BRUSSELS

## Ideas and Forms

## architecture (1)

In an earlier text I wrote that Karl Popper's notion of architecture is poor (or austere)<sup>13</sup>. Unlike other thinkers there is hardly any reference made to it, but I have to correct this. The way he comes forward with architecture in the *Open Society and its Enemies* (the book on Plato) is massive:

'The idea the Ancient Greeks had of the world was derived from Oriental tribes before them, seeing the cosmos as something total, a grand tent, an edifice constructed out of build material.'<sup>14</sup>

This stirs a lot. Cosmic change

Popper brings Heraclitus to the fore as the founder of 'Change'. Both Heraclitus and Plato experienced throughout their youth a deterred feeling that socially everything is in flux. It determined their believes that as seasons come and go in a cyclic way; after the Golden Age of Cronos (being compared with spring and summer whereby 'men' literally spring from the soil) inevitably the age of Zeus will arrive. Here the people are abandoned by the Gods whereby they recede in corruption as they are deprived from wealth. It's the 'fall of man' (associated indeed with autumn and winter).

But having reached the lowest level, things will turn as 'the Gods take up the helm of the cosmos' and life will prosper again.

Where therefore, Heraclitus believed that change is ruled by an unchanging Law; Plato, following now Parmenides, will generalise it to all things. He assumes that for every decaying thing also a perfect and unchanging thing exists as a consequence of which he arrives to his central doctrine of 'Forms and Ideas'.<sup>15</sup>

Popper grasps it all as the onset of Historicism, Determinism whereby the search for origin and destination is developed from Heraclitus, over Plato further on by Hegel in more recent times.

And Popper puts it with a sense for drama : 'Their over-articulation of change is vested in a subconscious fear for progress'<sup>16</sup>. In essence, all these revolutionaries (while he names also the French and American Revolution)<sup>17</sup> are eager to return to the Classical tales of power and suppression.'

In an *Open Society* everything has to move piecemeal.<sup>18</sup>

13 Nothing there in 'Objective Knowledge'

14 'Tent, Mantle; Karl Popper in 'The Open Society and its Enemies', p.11

15 With Plato 'Forms' are 'Ideas'

('The History of philosophy', Dutch version, HJ Störing p.171 and 'Objective Knowledge', p.125 Karl Popper)

16 (or manifest/latent)

17 K.Popper 'The Open Society and Its Enemies', p.17

18 'Concrete vs. Abstract'. There is also Deleuze and Guattari who

(in a Thousand Plateaus) as well as Popper comply that we have to move to a more abstract plane of consistency. Also read on Laws and Norms, Karl Popper in 'Objective Knowledge'



### The door in front of the wall - Plato's dilemma.<sup>19</sup>

### Architecture (2)

We have to place Popper's 'Open Society and its Enemies' in perspective (also) as it's written against the background of World War II.

He finds solace in analysing the Peloponnesian War (which took 27 years) and starts drawing lessons out of the encounter of Democratic Athens and the Tribal Spartans.

A paradox within the concept of the 'Open society' would be then that the Greeks had been building long walls for decades to protect their poor, democratic state. But these works were stopped as soon as Greece gained supremacy over the 'open seas'.<sup>20</sup>

Next the unimaginable happened.

The Oligarchs of Athens (the elites) started conspiring with rival Sparta which amounted in the fall of democratic Athens. '30 Tyrants' were installed and enforced law and order on the city, amongst them the 2 Major ones which were Plato's uncles from his mother's side.

Plato is the 'critical' figure here. While meaning good he made a fatal decision. In an effort to protect the people against themselves, reaching out for what they deserve he embraced the totalitarian regime. The happy dream of being United, Beauty, Perfection could thus begin.

The old Athens could at last turn away from human drifts, money grabbing and corruption...

Plato thus, cherishes the Myth of the Philosopher King. It's an ideology that build a reputation on Nature, Oneness, naïve Holism, Tribalism, Intuition, Eugenetics.<sup>21</sup>

### Small changes (from Plato to Hume)

### Bucks

'Because the sun comes up we have believes'.

'We pick up knowledge through our senses, perceptions, impressions; by association.'

What David Hume holds us for as the 'theory of induction', Popper plainly calls the 'bucket theory'; filling the bucket with impressions in a 'state of scizophrenia'<sup>22,23</sup>. But there is also a kernel of truth in it, utters Popper; 'gems' which he finds in the subjective mud of the bucket and which turns around Hume's 'once this constituent knowledge is in us there is no distance or exteriority anymore'.

<sup>19</sup> Kafka's short story 'Before the Wall' revisited (now taken literal); Doric in effect means Spartan  
Read also Hélène Cixous in 'Rethinking Architecture', Neil Leach p.303-307

<sup>20</sup> Long Walls, Karl Popper in 'The Open Society and Its Enemies' volume Plato p 178-179

<sup>21</sup> Karl Popper 'The Open Society and Its Enemies' p199

<sup>22</sup> James Bond movie

Under the gate of 'skyfall' M murmurs 'We are the bucket then'

<sup>23</sup> Schizophrenia : Because knowledge is first 'out there', next 'in us'; Popper ascribes this as 'the problem of causality'.

See Popper's critical reflections on 'Hume's problem' in Objective Knowledge p85-89

For Popper a theory of 'deduction' is then all about distance, about out there, no intermediacy but autonomy; does that make any practical sense ?

At some point Popper starts to hesitate when he goes on about language : 'there is so much of so little value in it' that it brings us home to R.Barthes' myths today.

Popper argues that he's not in the least interested in definitions or in linguistically analyses of words and concepts: 'However in connection of the word Certainty something has to be said...' Whereby a short story follows.<sup>24</sup>

'When I buy a book and get back 20 pence I'm quite certain that the two coins are no counterfeit - even when somebody asks, are you sure; I (double) check on a glance and say yes. My reasons, for that are complex, which have to do with context, with being not worried about inflation.'

So it appears that Popper's 'believes' are extended with practical insight. He feels safe, takes abstraction, stays optimistic in scientific progress, relies on common sense and stays wilfully ignorant in some sense about what Barthes tries to explain in 'Mythologies'.

Popper turns a blind eye indeed to situations as Argentina in the 90's and devaluation, or the global financial crisis of 1930 or 2007.

But the clue of the 20 p story is slipped in almost unnoticed as Popper relies once so often on the word 'not' next to 'certainty'.<sup>25</sup> What we, for Barthes account earlier on, understood as 'Because it is Not'; Popper will elsewhere work out as the theory of falsification' being an essential part of the theory of 'deduction'.

Or, what before stood as mythical, metaphysical (a speculative science...) hypothetical; now has to lean over to 'hypothetico-deduction' in Popper's terminology.

His story is about proofs and tools, mediates between 'clocks and clouds', is about elimination instead of illuminations; trial and error. It's 'small change' that makes the world go around.

Grasp therefore the evolution from 'concrete to abstract', while in effect the exclusion of bubbles (financial, real estate, software or internet) is not guaranteed.

24 Wordplay : what to make of 'Democritius' Popper's favorite reader

Karl Popper in 'Objective Knowledge' p78

25 Wordplay : Popper once so often articulates 'niche' as an aberration on Nietzsche ...?



SHOWROOM OF THE GOLDMAN & SALATSH  
MENSWEAR STORE VIENNA. ADOLF LOOS 1898

## Two Columns

What is puzzling Adolf Loos comes forward in two opposite pages (80-81) published in 'Spoken Into the Void'<sup>25</sup>, and which are offered as a prelude to 'the play'.

There is the lady in the museum who recognises styles at a glance: "This is Louis XVI; this is Rococo; this is Italian; this is Empire - But what is that?"

"This is English", the new director holds her for, not yet wanting to admit that it is Viennese ...

On the other page we witness the confrontation of the artist with a stonemason as a matter of 'who sees things best' and whereby Loos is appropriating Plato's rhetoric on Forms and Ideas.

We can pick up here (again<sup>26</sup>) with the story of the couch by means of which Plato expressed his poor appreciation for the arts: "First there is the idea, the concept; second the carpenter will translate as good and honest as is possible the idea into material; third comes the artist making a painting of that couch. In such manner the artist is already two steps removed from the original idea."

The problem for Loos is Form, Idea and what has become of it (over the ages). 'Styles, High Arts, Fashions as well as all these (German) words with capitals all lay a burden on freedom and creativity.

Loos confrontation with architecture is then truly Kafkaesque: 'How to find a way through', and the next best thing he can think of is that he will lecture about rules of style.

Kafka 'avant la lettre' is the play that Loos wrote in 1898 and that meddles with the 'shortage of space in a Viennese museum' which later will come round to Loos (now notorious) 'raumplan'. (But also) the title 'Spoken into the Void' sounds as an ordeal already. The series of essays (including 'the play') that Loos wrote in 1898 for the 'Neue Frei Presse' and 'Die Wage' remains for the two decades to come, unaccepted for publication in book form within German spoken territory.<sup>27</sup>

So suddenly it hit me. This text is going to be on Loos who will pick up the role of the (p)artisan of a modernism that had not announce itself in the 19th century.

In defence of his architecture we cannot be feeble in choosing our arguments. Homes, casa's, large walls ('die Mauer' in German as opposed to 'der Raum'), doors, columns (die Säule in German as opposed to Loos very name), It all fits.

We move critically along Hume and his 'dubious law' of causality...

Then, also Loos design of a Doric Column as a competition entry for the Chicago Tribune comes into perspective: as a manifesto versus the NY Empire State building?

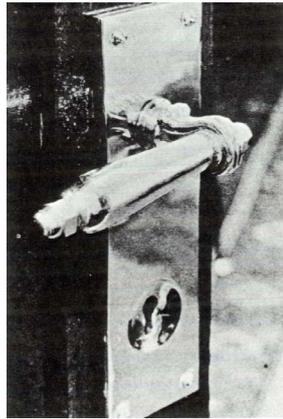
26 Spoken into the void, collected essays 1897-1900

27 see our text 'Aphasia and Atopia'

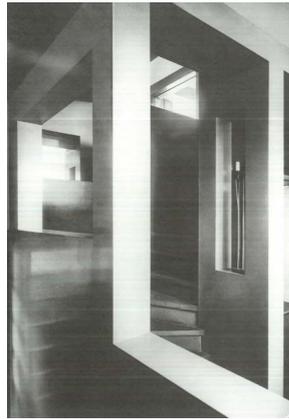
28 Only in France an early version of the book 'Spoken Into the Void' was released

The article 'Ornamentation and Crime', first appeared in the 'Frankfurter Zeitung' in 1908,

Noted by Walter Benjamin in Reflections p.240-...



ADOLF LOOS. DOOR HANDLE  
MANZ BOOKSTORE VIENNA 1920



ADOLF LOOS  
MOLLER HOUSE VIENNA 1928

### The functionalist's dilemma

I don't want to press (it) too hard, but reading Loos' critics is like talking to the Museum Officials. They somehow, somewhere are misguided. Because they did not read 'the play' of course, they themselves have become the actors in it.

In Adorno's case: the card of functionalism is pulled. The focus comes then to lie on the fact that modern architects resist imagination, because architecture is more of an applied art that operates within a context and has to carry a social responsibility. In comparison the Arts stand above that, are autonomous and are the product of a creative genius .... Godlike.<sup>29,30</sup>

Adorno gives a brief insight therefore in the 'Arts and Crafts movement' as it appeared to Loos.

The dilemma exists in that Loos is not willing to give up so easily the autonomy of architecture in the face 20th century 'Neue Sachlichkeit'. As said what he resists is the degeneration, the perversion of idea, form into styles, likes, fashions - into cyclic timely creatures again.

Loos is prepared therefore to settle with a lesser god. Despite the manifesto for a brave new world; pieces are written out of these Slave names he carries : being lost, austere, Slavonic. Questions rise how to treat then 'Spoken into the Void'. Maybe I read it as Barthes 'Myths today', with a declension around every corner; or as a Kafkaesque keyhole roman<sup>31</sup>?

And so the succubus grows.

### Mannerist, manifest or manipulated

Colin Rowe shows little interest in Loos. In a few references made in his book 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa' he sets Loos away with what one can only understand as a tautology.<sup>32</sup>

'Loos fanatical attacks upon decoration can from a point be considered as showing already mannerist tendencies, but allowing for the elimination of extraneous detail!'<sup>33</sup>

What can't be missed is the intricate psycho-analytical terminology that Rowe maintains - trying to make a distinction between what is 'manifest' and what is 'latently' present in Loos application of form.

29 'On Functionalism & Sachlichkeit' T.Adorno's critique, published in Neil Leach's 'Rethinking Architecture', p.10

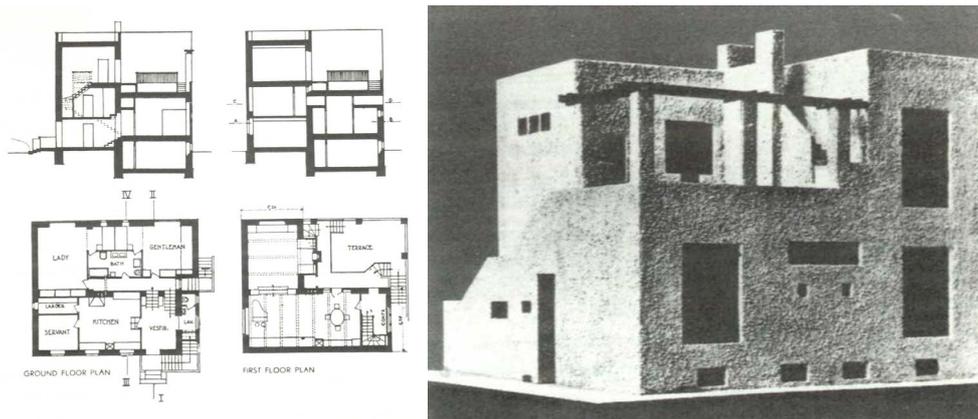
30 'High Arts and Labelled' : critique by Adolf Loos in Mark Wigley's 'White Walls, Designer Dresses', p.72

31 'Key hole roman' - the geometer 'K' arrives with a lot of expectations, he engages with Frieda but then the mood changes and chances turn against him - and he ends more or less hiding in the closet of the maid Pepi, disappearing in the wall of the Lord's Inn. 'The castle 'Franz Kafka, Dutch version

32 C.Rowe is more in favour of Le Corbusier's work

33 Colin Rowe, The Mathematics of The Ideal Villa p40

Elisions' is Kenneth Frampton's word, in 'Modern Architecture a Critical History' p94 (Mannerism and Elitist...)



LOOS VILLA PROJECT FOR THE VENICE LIDO 1923

With a same disavowal, one can read with Adorno that Adolf Loos is 'against erotic signs'; to give vent in turn of Kenneth Frampton's observation of 'tortuous manipulations of inner organisations to make things fit within these *unadorned* prisms of his (fig. the Steiner House).<sup>34</sup>

Adorno echoes 'innervate'<sup>35</sup> while Alan Colquhoun figures Loos' architecture out as 'subjecting, Platonic form to empirical accident'. At least, somewhere along the road Loos can appeal to the invention of the split-level to reach this goal.<sup>36</sup>

It's the moment where to lean back and think of 'Sachertorte' instead. It is by all means possible to see something in an Austrian connection and call upon austerity.<sup>37,38</sup>

## Hume

In any case, the brief encounter of Colin Rowe with Loos work is interesting because Rowe brings up Hume's theory of Induction, being synonymous for the Empirical method or indeed Mannerism.

Rowe's effort is to inscribe architecture with a somewhat more humane, subjective, romantic look on things as opposed to the Renaissancean, if not Neo-Classical preoccupation with the High Arts.

Next Rowe thinks that 'Handicraft' and 'Mannerism' make a logical connection that appeals to the work of Loos. At once he could step over the English Arts and Crafts Movement which is Adolf Loos favourite pitch and avoid at the same time of being drawn into the muddle of the Wiener Secession...

34 Frampton p94 Modern Architecture, a Critical History

35 Aldo Rossi : 'Loos' texts irritate.' His introduction to 'Spoken into the Void', p.VIII

36 Kenneth Frampton p93 'Modern Architecture, A Critical History'

37 More on the Manifest/ Latent deal : Loos' celebrated kitchen as the sworn enemy of the Viennese kitch, in Neal Leach 'Rethinking Architecture', p.9 Section on Adorno

38 'Unadorned prism, Unheimliche in-between door' and other curious word combinations.



LOOS STEINER HOUSE VIENNA 1910

## England !

But, as Colin Rowe is persistent to advance the Hume's stand;

"The awareness of beauty is in the minds which inflicted 18 century Romanticism to come about with articulations on individualism, subjectivity as a matter of the appreciation of the arts. The whole aesthetics of the 18th century is a matter of the eye therefore.

All of this turns, from the 19th century onwards, where things become more codified, rules are deduced and a move to realism becomes to surface out of the subjective muddle."<sup>39</sup>

The plot is being set of a monumental misreading of facts, or at least tendencies, whereby instead of opening the door to the 20th century (which Loos more than any architect would have deserved) is closed on him leaving him astray in the 19th century.

It's not just that Rowe is ignorant of the critique that Karl Popper has formulated on Hume. He to easily forgets that both Loos and Popper are Austrians 'despite' the fact that the latter moved to the UK. This is the more a mystery because Rowe is frequently regarded as the Popperian in charge on the architectural front.

It all comes down to the Austrian perception of freedom, liberalism at the brink of the 20th century: how to handle terminology as rationality, subjectivity. The Inductive method of acquiring knowledge that Hume stands for, which then Popper plainly calls the Bucket theory is where 'subjectivity meets rationality'.<sup>40</sup>

Knowledge enters into our mind through the senses and such banishes in no way Plato's conception of things. For Popper, the Empirical method (as Hume's Induction is also called and on which articulations are laid for more than aesthetic, stylistic reasons) is the main target to wrench away from. Popper indeed associates Empiricism with totalitarian regimes, (French) revolution - all in one bucket.

The only answer is deduction, acquiring objective, autonomous knowledge. Arguable, that is what the Austrians with Loos as a leading figure within architectural theory began to put forward as what is known today as the Neue Sachlichkeit.

'Spoken into the Void', what does it mean exactly?

In no way Loos can be simply dismissed as a Mannerist.

Key in coming to a better understanding of the architecture of Loos lies in this 'dispute' between Rowe and Popper.

39 Mannerism and Modern Architecture  
in 'The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays' Colin Rowe p37

40 From Plato to Hume; 'Solve the paradoxes'  
Objective knowledge Karl Popper p94-95 & p106-107  
'Think rational, be objective' and other non-linearities



SACHERTORTE

To link liberalism, individualism with the naïve holism of the bucket theory is a heresy in Popper's ear. Freedom is entirely a product of our interaction with the anterior, with a man-made world. It lies in the making of tools (functionalism) and a fundamental belief in scientific progress.<sup>41</sup>

For historical reasons Popper will always link subjectivity with rationality; or the psyche with the labyrinth of the mind. It lies on the lips of Loos : Rather than something concrete as Nature, he is looking for abstraction.<sup>42</sup> It becomes the problem of what is more real : what matters.

### Defy, Demystify, Style

It is, so it seems, a simple truth; Loos has developed a grunge against everything that comes from the outside or of another age.

There are the Viennese mansions that he enters when frequenting upper society circles, all being stuffed with Empirical Style, Oriental Style, which makes him ventilate that 'Ornamentalism is a Crime...' No wonder that, Rowe's claim of Mannerism or Empiricism lies already in shackles there.

But also.

Trauma

Visiting the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893) as a younger man he suffered a trauma that haunted him for years. It's where he dropped out of the role (he had allotted to himself) of what he would later call the 'secession of the unfaithful brotherhood' and what stands for a hybrid 'artist-architect' persona in whose eyes everything had to look stylish and fashionable. Having arrived at the German cum Austrian pavilion the impact must have been devastating. It was an eclectic bombardment that reduced the notion of a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' to 'Shams'.

P (artisan)

The only thing that could save the day was a small section on leather<sup>43</sup> and silverware on which Loos projected his hopes and fears. Eventually his visit to the world-exhibition amounted in a collection of steaming essays 'Spoken into the Void'; columns which he delivered five years later.

Telling are such phrases as :

'The architect is a stone layer that studied Latin';

and in a piece to the address of Otto Wagner: 'There cannot be a lion-head sitting in every room.'<sup>44</sup>

41 Science: the growth of knowledge through criticism and inventiveness  
in 'Objective Knowledge' p84 Karl Popper

42 Difference and sameness: Popper's ralley in 'Objective Knowledge'  
'The evolutionary three grows toward differentness; the tree of knowledge grows toward sameness  
p262 in objective knowledge

43 fine leather wallets, 'Spoken Into the Void' p7-9

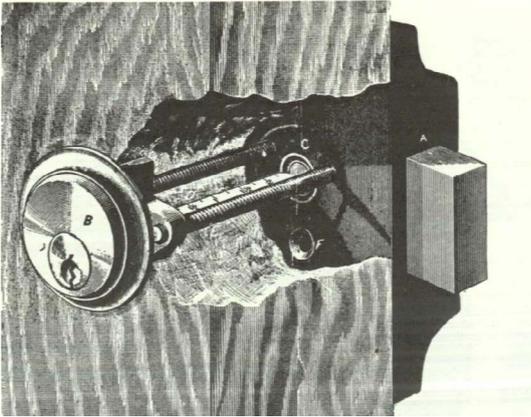
44 'Spoken Into the Void' p23, pXI



THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION  
CHICAGO 1893



OTTO WAGNER BEDROOM  
PUBLISHED IN SPOKEN IN THE VOID



YALE LOCK INDEPENDENT



BARBER CHAIR 1894



BARBER CHAIR 1934

## Lock

In Siegfried Giedion's 'Mechanization takes Command' (1948), Adolf Loos is notoriously absent. In the book's index, references move from 'lock' to 'Louis'.<sup>45</sup> Tactically or coincidentally Lewis Mumford praises on the subsequent back-flap Giedion's thoroughness 'to bring up' the Yale lock as a matter of concern for architects.

So it happens in the book that Giedion draws a straight line between the French revolution and 20th century modernity; between Empire style and Functionality whereby motion or movement is key.<sup>46</sup>

Provocatively he, without ever naming A.Loos infamous slogan 'Ornament is a Crime', pursues the 19th century 'mechanization of adornment' as a central topic in the book. Wilfully Giedion competes with Loos theoretical insights, line over line he overrides them.

Notable are quotes as : 'It's exactly mass production that enlarged adornment to undreamed proportions.', or 'It's mass production that introduced the Lion of Belfort in every home', and 'home becomes a collage of things'.<sup>47</sup>

From the 20th century onward, the focus shifts accordingly to Giedion, from the masses to technology in relation to the body, ergonomics, functionality. Celebrated are the moving parts of the barber's chair for instance.

And Giedion chooses his illustrations well.

'Psyche' which is slang for the Empire sofa is found remodeled in Le Corbusier's 'chaise-longue'.<sup>48</sup>

The 'Crimson's curtain', which was called this way because it served as the only separation between male and female sections on a streamliner, evolved to the convertible seat to bed compartments in the Pioneer, the Pullman Palace sleeping car, pulled by a train.<sup>49</sup>

With a same display of furniture, playing on the same kitchens<sup>50</sup> bathrooms (as used in Spoken into the Void); Giedion sets out to lock Adolf Loos the artisanal architect par excellence, in the 19th century.

45 'Mechanization takes command' p740

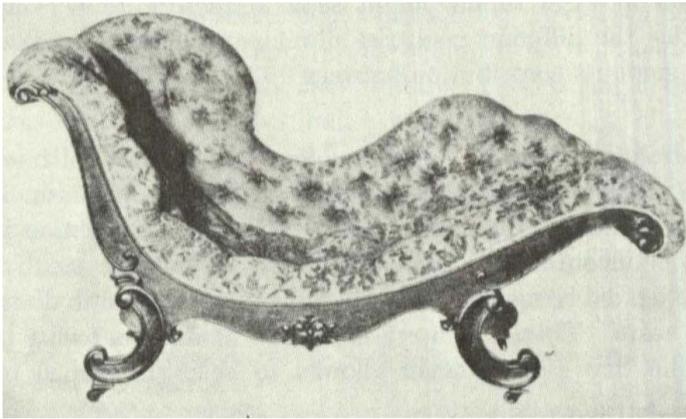
46 S.Giedion. Despite the overwhelming references to the Empire style; the affiliation to Hume and Mannerism is quite 'strange' to Giedion. Empire style and Napoleonism in Mechanization takes command' p 329-335

47 S.Giedion. p345 'the mechanization of adornment' p 501-503

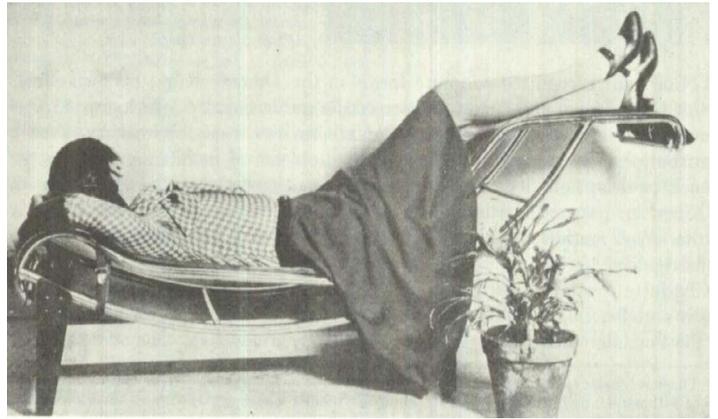
48 S.Giedion. p 501-503

49 S.Giedion p 459

50 Read also Adorno: 'Loos famous kitchens put against Viennese kitch'. in Rethinking Architecture, Neil Leach p.9



THE PSYCHE VIRGINIA 1830



CHAISE-LONGUE. CHARLOTTE PERRIAND AND LE CORBUSIER



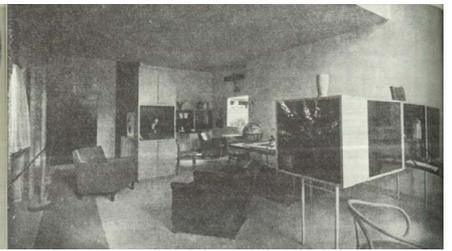
LOOS MUSEUM CAFE CHAIR  
HANS MAYR IN RESTAURANT INTERIOR.  
PUBLISHED IN 'SPOKEN INTO THE VOID'



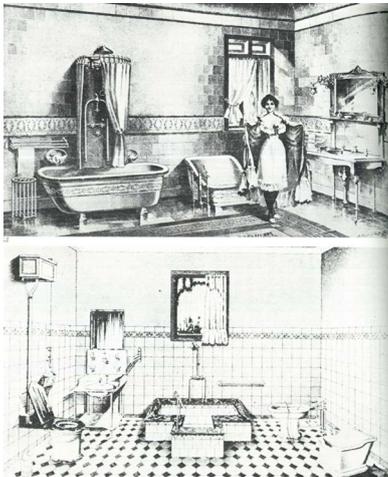
THONET CHAIR DESIGNED BY  
A.LOOS FOR MUSEUM CAFE  
PUBLISHED IN 'SPOKEN INTO  
THE VOID'



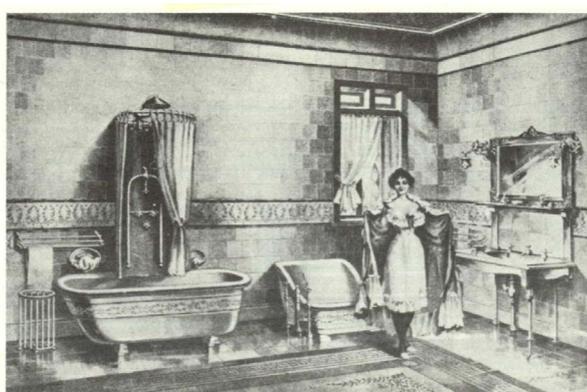
SERIES THONET CHAIRS WITHOUT LOOS DESIGN  
IN GIEDION'S 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'



LE CORBUSIER PAVILION DE L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU  
PARIS 1925. INTERIOR WITH THONET CHAIRS  
PUBLISHED IN GIEDION'S 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'

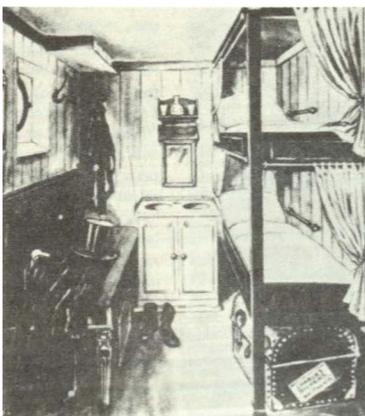


ENGLISH BATHROOM & VIENNESE BATHROOM  
PUBLISHED IN 'SPOKEN INTO THE VOID'

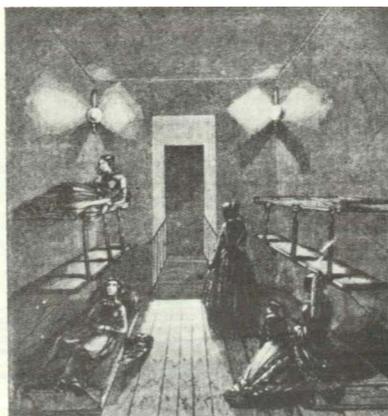


477. English Bathroom, 1901. Emerging from its nomadic and semi-nomadic phases, the bathroom has become a permanent part of the well-to-do English household. It is a large, windowed room, on which luxury is not spared. One such bathroom usually served the entire household. It is conceived as a room with furniture, not as a mere annex to the bedroom. (W. E. Mason, Catalogue)

ENGLISH BATHROOM  
PUBLISHED IN 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'



CRIMSON'S CURTAIN  
PUBLISHED IN 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'



CRIMSON'S CURTAIN  
PUBLISHED IN 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'



SLEEPING CAR. PULLMAN ROOMETTE 1937



Wrestling, as Roland Barthes observes in 'Mythologies', is not about fair play, since similar to theatre, fairness is a role. What is essential though in wrestling is 'payment'. 'It's a play to make the bastard pay'. Being fought in open air, a reason why wrestling is called palaestra in Latin; two pallid, pale figures collapse in the flesh.

There is always the archetype, being a recognisable leader, confronting the bastard who is a more animate figure being performed by different or plural characters. ('Harlequin, Pantaloon, Doctor, Orsano, Thauvin, Rein-ières, Mazaud, Littré' - all being names with a literary potential.)

As a rule, the fight will always end in what the spectators came to see : the grandiloquent kick of the vanquished. As Barthes manages to attribute a number of philosophical insights to wrestling, the emptying out of interiority; the exhaustion of content by form; man's suffering represented without intelligible cause - there, in these very words lie this Kafkaesque fate : the predestined loss.

Indeed when Loos designs the Chicago Tribune, a Doric column<sup>51</sup>, (in his words) sober and ugly, 'needless' to say he has the NY Empire State building in mind. Two massive columns interact, two pale figures form an arch.<sup>52</sup>

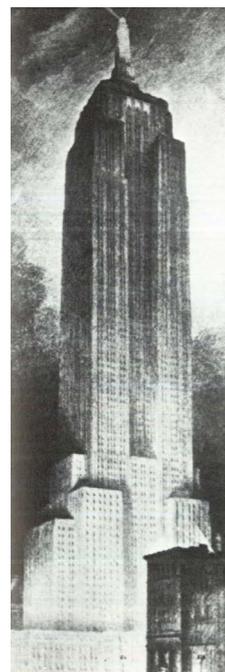
51 Architecture Anagrams in Diana Agrest's 'Architecture from Without' p82  
Doric & Spartan, the oldest of Greek columns

52 Related thoughts ...

Reading with J.Derrida on double sessions, double columns, double articulations you find him slipping away in the Jewish mystique of the Kaballa. I can't follow him there, I take it for Agnostics within Christian religion. In Dutch/Flemish tongue we did inherit though the word 'kabaal' which means making noise, maybe the background noise of the crowd that fills up the palaestra.

Wrestling, making the arch between two pallid figures, alludes to that concrete cosmic tent that Popper was referring to. In further descriptions on an Open Society, one can switch from 'grandiloquent and loud' to Popper's 'between clocks and clouds'.

Kabaal translates in English into Hubbub - we can link it with Popper's plea for many permeable, soap bubbles, plural instead of the single, double, or triple ones.



EMPIRE STATE BUILDING  
DRAWING BY HUGH FERRIS 1929



CHICAGO TRIBUNE COMPETITION 1924  
PROJECT BY ADOLF LOOS

## The Scala Theatre in Vienna

revisited

Before it became inscribed into architecture, Loos' raumplan takes shape in a Kafkaesque play that he wrote in 1898, and that meddles with the shortage of space in a Viennese museum.<sup>53</sup>

At the hand of what is already there - the Viennese Secession and the English Arts and Craft movement; Loos folds the one over the other, in the hope to find something new. Void : one can witness in the whereabouts of the museum people in the chaotic dialogues performed, how in nucleus, pieces fall together of the raumplan.

'The shortage of space in the museum is due to the interaction between public and private affairs.

The play takes off at some stage where the new director Mr. Hofrat has to deal with low and high culture; 'Carpenters and museum officials', while he is confronted also with the zealous 'Arts and Crafts' association, that occupy all the spaces for their annual Christmas Exhibition.

The museum as market place.

The Arts and Crafts association is mainly concerned to sell amongst its members the abundant museum collection; embroideries, ceramics, furniture, Egyptian relics which otherwise would rot away in the storage houses. We are never in the clear thereby about their good intentions. Is the Winter Exhibition set up for preserving the most original and finest pieces or is it plain import and export business, a hidden carrousel of selling things, that counts.

The mood changes when the new director, Mr Hofrat decides that : 'If goods have to be sold, it could be a means to an end'.<sup>54</sup>

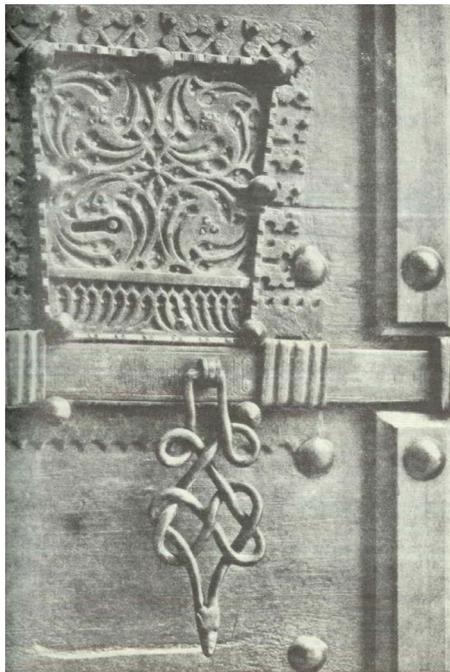
His plan is bewildering. At the risk of compromising the fame of the museum (himself becoming a 'hof-rat'), he orders a simple carpenter to make a good copy of an original English Arts and Crafts piece in the hope to present it as an original Viennese variant.

The result is that the beginning director earns only distrust from both parties, the carpenters and museum officials, rather than that they see the opportunity of showing something new. Where the 'society' is concerned they only see their business racketeered.

While the suspense is on, the play proceeds in a more verbal way with short dialogues, exclamation points. It becomes a fight between old and new customs, whereby the stress lies on who is going to be thrown OUT.

53 'Spoken Into the Void' p.114-119

54 'not plain commerce but worse, old furniture is shipped from one to another museum by the officials during opening hours.'



LATE GOTHIC LOCK SWITZERLAND  
PUBLISHED IN 'MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND'



ILLUSTRATION 'THE CASTLE'  
FRANZ KAFKA  
(DAS SCHLOSS' WHAT LITERALLY  
TRANSLATES AS 'LOCK')