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On Essences and Spaces - Behrens and Loos***O bîti i prostoru - Behrens i Loos*****Key words • Ključne riječi**

A. Loos, P. Behrens	A. Loos, P. Behrens
architectural language	arhitektonski jezik
architectural space	arhitektonski prostor
structure of the age	struktura epohe
theory of <i>Raumgestaltung</i>	teorija <i>Raumgestaltung</i>

Abstract • Sažetak

This paper elaborates the tentatively posed thesis of a specific reciprocity between the perceived structure of the age and adequately constructed physical framework as its necessary, natural setting. It examines how architectural space responded to distinctive readings of the same complex socio-historical condition in the period of transition from the 19th to 20th century. The thesis is developed on the architectural and theoretical work of the two famous contemporaries - Peter Behrens and Adolf Loos.

U članku se iznosi i elaborira teza svojevrsnog reciprociteta između očitane strukture vremena i primjereno formiranog fizičkog sklopa kao njezina nužnog, prirodnog okvira. Autorica ispituje kako arhitektonski prostor odgovara na specifične, različite interpretacije istih kompleksnih socijalno-povijesnih prilika na prijelazu iz XIX. u XX. st. Teza je razvijena na arhitektonskom i teorijskom opusu dvaju suvremenika - Petera Behrensa i Adolfa Loosa.

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"All art that is not against its time is for it. The true enemy of time is language. Language lives in harmonious union with the spirit in revolt against its own time. Out of this conspiracy art is achieved. In contrast, conformity in the complicity with its time robs language of its own vocabulary. Art can come only from denial, only from anguished protest, never from calm compliance. Art placed in the service of consoling man becomes a course unto his very death bed. True art reaches its fulfillment only through the hopeless."

(Karl Kraus, *Nachts*, 1918, quoted from W. Abeles Iggers, *Karl Kraus: A Viennese Critic of the Twentieth Century*, The Hague, 1967, p. 25.)

This is a story of essences and spaces. It is caught in the hypnotic interlacement of an incredible age, itself in turn trapped in the ruthless whirl of change. Painfully equilibrating on the frail thread that spanned the chain of catastrophes of the past and the siren songs of the future, the age formed that precarious threshold, that narrow, almost spectral gate, which - in its specific property of at once connecting and dividing - sublimated in its fragility all the distilled energies that poured from the neighboring sides. It belonged to one of those dense, pregnant moments of compressed possibilities and promises that preceded the very climax, but whose instantaneous, ecstatic reign was already spoiled by the anguished anticipation of inevitable disappointment, that comes as a necessary companion of every final resolution.

The tormented age, blinded by the accumulated layers of anxiety, but at the same time precisely because of them being destined to see, announced with unprecedented perspicuity all the cruellest questions that would be handed down as a burdensome heritage to the fresh, naive, pompous new century. The questions were outlined, the doubts pronounced, but the answers just vaguely suggested: the age left space for both difficult roads with thousands of winding paths of infinite trials and errors, and the ones of easy, consoling retreats. Witty enough, cloaked in its own ambiguity, and adorned with bitter-sweet irony so characteristic of all those who had marched the thorny road of history, the age assumed a character of the Delphic prophetess: it exposed the dichotomy, it revealed the rift, it hinted at possible directions. At times it even seemed that it formulated some kind of labyrinthine answer - but precisely that kind of answer that confuses more than it tells, obscures more than it reveals.

The message ultimately depended on individual interpretation, on one's own lucidity, patience and readiness to endure in analyzing, decomposing and recomposing its cryptic meanings. It demanded special talents of listening in order to hear, special sense of seeing in order to understand. No explanations were added: once the oracle had been uttered, the prophetess's voice rigidified into a lapidary text. Taking sides or choosing paths thus became a matter of personal choice, of responsible decision that assumed the dimensions of a moral act, since it connotated the loyalty and absolute devotion to the chosen direction. And remaining loyal to one's principle, to one's own precarious thread, believing in any constant at all while being suspended over the suicidal flux of uncertainties, required strengths of a giant (not of an *Übermensch*, however).

"Loyalty is lasting in that which is known to be ephemeral - since there can be no loyalty where one stands on the solid rock of language, of the solution. One may speak of an ethos of loyalty only where things die."¹

¹ M. Cacciari, 1933, p. 155.

This responsibility of choosing paths, of struggling to find one's place in the ephemeral fluid network, and then trying to last in one's own decision, was further burdened by yet another layer of moral dilemma. Kraus, inspired by his famous Delphic predecessor, but far less ambiguous in his own oracle, warned the players on time: it was not merely the matter of choosing any path out of the variety offered (and remaining faithful to it), but between the two very specific ones, where the one of "consoling man becomes the course unto his very death bed" and the other "reaches its fulfillment only through the hopeless." Not that he left much of a choice. But then, no one could even have said that the message was not clear. Or could one?

So much for the background of the story, let us introduce the characters. There are two main protagonists, quite peculiar ones. Structured as polar opposites, one being the very antipode of the other, they functioned in a funny way: where one would see fullness, the other would reveal void; where one would claim to have detected space, the other would see just a plane; where the first accepted his "historical duty" without much hesitation, the other kept endlessly rethinking and reexamining his own. It goes without saying that by this very definition - as I introduced them - they must have found themselves marching on paths headed to different directions. But things are not that easy, we should go deeper. Their discourse is, of course, more the one of exploded dialogues and fragmented fervent reproaches, often taking upon the risks of equivocation and misunderstanding. Couldn't we then ask if they spoke the same language at all? This question brings us surely one step closer to the essence of the problem, but things are, again, far more complicated.

Not only should we quite rightly pose the question of proper language, but besides the necessity of mastering one's own mother tongue to perfection, as well as learning couple of foreign ones (in order to avoid unnecessary mediation of a translator, or even worse, to try to communicate without translating at all), there was also the problem of proper seeing. And here I mean seeing as understanding, seeing as knowing, seeing as epistemological category. Was the obvious difference in my characters' perceiving of the world due to just different sets of lenses they used, which could, in that case, be easily removed, corrected, or even exchanged, so that they could finally see (understand) what the other was so persistently trying to explain? Or do we deal here with a far more serious issue of physical necessity of wearing glasses but refusing to do so out of pure aesthetic reasons, out of an inexplicable, outdated vanity? How else then to explain the fact that one always saw things precisely as they *were*, and the other only as they *seemed*? That one always managed to grasp the underlying structure, the scaffolding behind the conspicuously exposed "dream images," while his nearsighted colleague remained helplessly glued to the magnetic attractions of the narcissistic surface? Or, if defective eyesight was not the case, then maybe the mirror planes which, way back in their infancy so cruelly expelled them from the mythical primordial wholeness and enabled them to identify, construct and know themselves, were not of the same sort? One sort, straight and properly glazed, reflected the exact, limpid picture, regardless of shock and pain that seeing of one's own truth might eventually cause. The other, crooked

and distorted, pitied itself upon seeing the mutilated, fractured originals, decided to loosen its standards, and started reflecting only their projected, consoling expectations.

But, let us move forward with the story, the mirrors shall wait. Both of my main characters, both Peter Behrens and Adolf Loos, were readers themselves. Being contemporaries, they must have had their libraries filled with more or less the same body of literature, fed their minds on more or less the same cycle of references. Having them as front men, I should thus delve deeper and invite into the story the whole range of theoretical "back-stage players." But, if the theoretical filters through which Behrens and Loos perceived the complex problematic of their age were almost the same, why such radical differences, again? Well, it seems that it was not enough to collect the famous titles, or to surround oneself with their authors' talented students and collaborators as tokens of one's devotion and admiration, and as a kind of guarantee that one was thereby immediately within the beneficent spell of the preferred, proclaimed theory.² As we have already seen thus far, there were so many factors involved. First of all, one needed to know the language perfectly before even taking the difficult book in his hands; second, if there were any such indications, one should not resist wearing glasses, if that might help in deciphering the intricate signs; and third, since these were theoretical texts, welters of entangled, convoluted thoughts with no voices of their authors around to help stabilize the fleeting meanings, these ambiguous oracles demanded perpetual readings and rereadings, thinking and rethinking, since the seemingly innocent position of a single comma might have completely reverted the direction of the path. And ultimately, when any deeper analysis was practically unthinkable, it was still left upon one's own interpretation, instinct and sense to mold the final words and distill the final messages. No wonder then that the chances of misreading and misinterpreting abounded.

These themes of voice and text, readings and interpreting, seeing and understanding, building as knowing and letting others know, seasoned with subtle shifts as well as abrupt reversals, different explanations and eventual misreadings, will persistently follow my story, with surprising energy and endless promptness to be put in play.

Now, why essences in my title? Why spaces?

The epoch of final dissolution of "essences," when confronted with infinite possibilities and uncertainties of life, suddenly seemed to have required finite solutions. Subconsciously aware of being helplessly entangled in the Schoenbergian "death-dance of principles," it exerted the last desperate gestures of resistance and immersed fully and uncritically in the overwhelming nightmare of essences. Essence of time, essence of history, essence of art, essence of painting, essence of sculpture, essence of architectural creation, the truth of man, the laws of historical development, kernels, germinating seeds, evolution, genetics... these were the ruling concepts within which the epoch operated. The more the efforts to fix things in space and time proved to be in vain, the more adamant this quixotic search for eternal truths, universal laws and stable points became. Being hurt but incapable to detect who hit it, being attacked but unable to define by whom, the age

2 I refer here to Behrens's gathering of students of the famous contemporary theorists as his collaborators at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Düsseldorf, which he directed from 1903-1907, in particular to the art historian Wilhelm Niemeyer, who, as a student of August Schmarsow, must have been the direct link between Behrens's conception of space and Schmarsow's famous Theory of *Raumgestaltung*, which I shall discuss later. Niemeyer also testified to Behrens's interest in Alois Riegl. For further elaboration and discussion, see S. Anderson, 1981, pp. 56-60 and p. 78. My analysis of Peter Behrens is based primarily on Stanford Anderson's work on Behrens, as published in three essays in "Oppositions," 11, 21 and 23, as well as on Anderson's doctoral dissertation, *Peter Behrens and the New Architecture of Germany: 1900-1917* (Columbia University, 1968), to which I shall keep referring throughout this paper.

continued fighting the windmills with childish obstinacy, holding frantically the obsolete, anachronistic weapon of essences in hands. Weakened by progressive decaying of its own dilapidated body, registering the frightening symptoms but unable to grasp the causes, the age lost nerves and patience to investigate further the invisible and untouchable, mysterious structure from which it suffered. With surprising vigor for such an exhausted patient, and with hindered, pretended naiveté (since it could not possibly be the genuine one - once the enormity of such an approaching enemy had been felt, the uselessness of all the petty, insignificant trials must have been realized at once), the age continued with its pathetic play of permutations, reformulations and redefinitions of the already depleted essences.

Keeping itself busy with such trivial, rhetorical games, the age dissipated its last atoms of strength and found itself unable to step out of the hypnotic whirl of pseudo-essences that circulated nervously over and over again on the two-dimensional plane, trying - blinded with fear - to catch its own tail, instead of concentrating all the sparse remaining energies on the discovering of the hidden third dimension which might open the hidden door.

Jumping from the bewildered plane into the depths of an underlying multidimensional, multiform and multirelational spatial and temporal structure, was reserved only for those insightful ones who, like Alice in Wonderland, discovered that they can pass through the mirror of knowledge without necessarily breaking it. But, whereas Alice by crossing the crystalline border left the realm of reality and stepped into the virtual world of Wonderland, the new adventurers managed to rise from the flattened imagery of the calcified picture plane and immersed wholeheartedly into the floating, dynamic array of the, at least three-, if not four-dimensional new reality. Or, in other words, they succeeded in trading the old, limiting *problematic* for the new way of seeing, perceiving and knowing the world; they did that giant, almost impossible shift of seeing the same things differently, abandoned the useless surgeries on recalcitrant cataract for seeing with the *mind's* eye. By being inventive enough to look at Medusa's face indirectly, they not only escaped her pernicious gaze and saved themselves from being turned into stone, but acquired a whole new set of weapons and strategies that enabled them to attack the very Medusa herself, right in her dangerous, paralyzing, ideological head.

So, I am far from claiming that the problem of the essence of the time became an outdated issue, that the "truth" as such turned into a category rightly deserving to be disposed off once and for all; it just seemed that this essence assumed a completely new, almost unthinkable dimension: difficult spatial and temporal dimension which only the rare were willing to see. The essence of essence was, ultimately, that there was no "single essence capable of representing the world" any more, no absolute, universal truth whose positive, substantial, permanent value could be a priori defined and easily grasped. The essence was this newly intuited relativity, temporality and ephemerality; the real challenge was uncovering and mastering its infinitely perplexed laws. The positive thinking was traded for the negative one, addition for subtraction, identity for difference, *I* for *the other*, two-dimensional image for structure, plane for space.

Although the thick crust of ice was broken and the cracks allowed everybody to peep through, in order to get used to seeing the historical condition through the filters of the new *problematic*, the majority of established key-players, as well as the ambitious, hasty young ones, still preferred to look at Medusa's face frontally, deliberately exposing themselves to be turned into stone. It was so much easier to get mortified and put under the consoling spell of illusions, than to endure the painstaking destabilizing process of a multidimensional machine, of an eternal game of permutating sets of relations. Precisely this is what I meant by saying that one's choice to last in the ephemeral required the strengths of a giant, and assumed the scale of a moral act.

"My business is to pin down the age between the quotation marks!"³ -

- was the response of those who accepted the glove that the times threw in their faces. The others, the famous "great mystifiers,"⁴ even with this new "enemy" partially pinned down for them - the mighty structure as the essence of the new age being detected and partially explained - refused to acknowledge it in its entirety and complexity, and continued playing with the two-dimensional, tamed and domesticated casts of it. They even, with their indisputable creative strengths and excess of poetic inspiration that spilled over the mold of moral constraints, offered their skills in the service of depicting the new, frozen and flattened, and thus easily manageable images of that ever-changing, hundred-faced Medusa. Why to cope with the enormously complex dynamic-conflictual nature of the new modes of production, distribution, circulation and exchange, when they could just as well attack a single, isolated aspect of it (though, admittedly, just the effect and not the cause) - the industrialization only? Why to get perplexed and defeated by the suicidal, absurd labyrinth of the Metropolis, with its unknowable, fluid web of social relations, when they could easily continue painting the perfectly ordered and well-organized facades as its walls? Why to attack the whole perpetually mutable and dangerous Medusa at once, when they could, for that matter, comfortably handle one snake at a time, one out of those many that grew out of its head. Anyway, regardless of whether these nearsighted simplifications were conscious and deliberate, or due to the real incapacity to see even when being told exactly where to point their gazes to, some obviously failed to grasp the essence.

So much for the introduction of essences. And spaces?

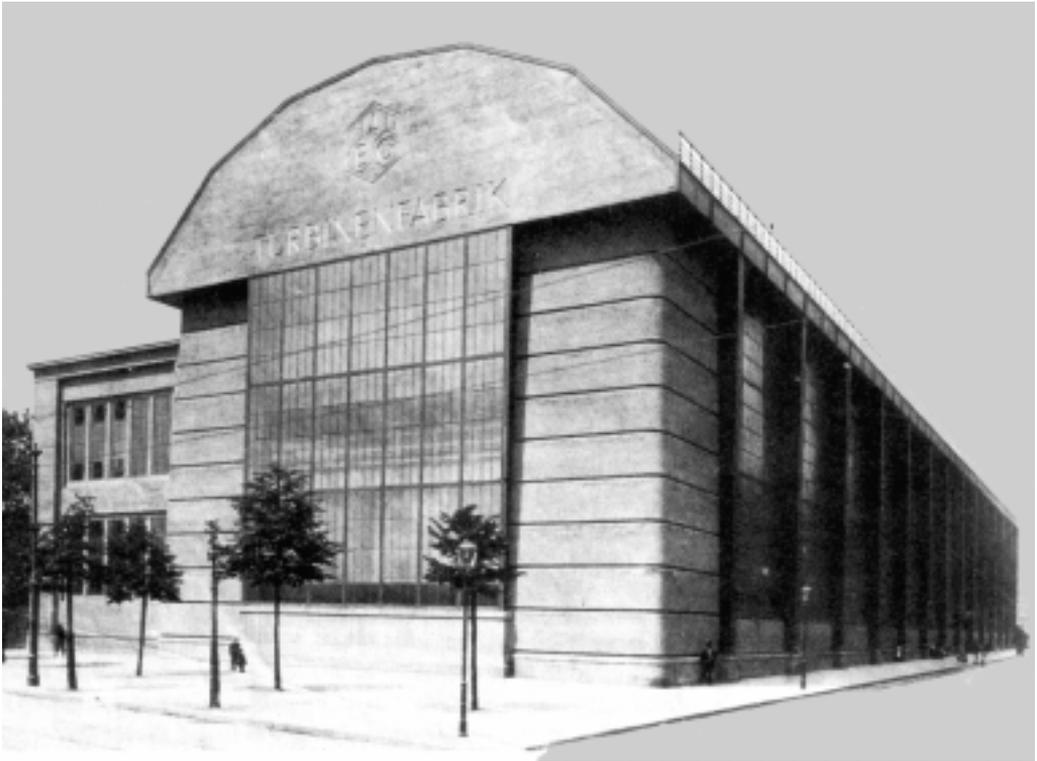
As we have already seen, in order to see the invisible essence, to perceive the shadows of the visible, it was necessary to jump from the plane and start feeling comfortable in space. Literally and symbolically. Symbolically - because the spatial model, although an imperfect one (since it lacks the temporal dimension), still seems to me to be the best possible model where we can imagine that this new logic of structure might unfold. And literally - because we are talking here about architects and spaces, after all. Real spaces, architectural spaces. But here again are we in danger of falling into a trap: there are spaces and *spaces*, we should be careful. How does this real architectural space relate to the symbolic one that I have just introduced? How does architectural space mirror and respond to the whole problematic exposed thus far on the level of essences? Is there any connection at all?

3 K. Kraus, quoted in H. Fischer (1944), *The Other Austria and Karl Kraus*, in H. Rehsich, ed. *Tyrannos: Four Centuries of Struggle Against Tyranny in Germany*, p. 314.

4 I refer here to the ideology of the *Deutscher Werkbund* and the *Wiener Werkstätte*, which, instead of giving maximum voice to inevitable differences, divisions and specializations (and thereby leading to progressive simplification and rationalization of the process of production), engaged in redeeming or "mystifying" the differences through pretended unities and syntheses, through the idea of "appearance" as a language of the pure aesthetic quality stamped into the substance of exchange relations - the logic which ultimately became anti-economic and "ornamental." For further elaboration see M. Cacciari, *Loasian Dialectics*, in M. Cacciari 1993, pp. 101-120.

At first it seemed to me that the very problematic of a, say, novel - the crucial questions that it posed, the truth that it challenged, the way the story was opened and the plot exposed - had very little or nothing to do with the novel's very style, with the beauty of its dialogues, with the adequate accelerating rhythm, the vividness of depicted characters, or the final outcome. It seemed to me that the layer of problems and truths that the novel addressed did not necessarily have to be in any way related to the layer of the very linguistic instruments, literary techniques and devices; that even if the general message of the novel was oversimplified and distorted, the whole piece could still be worth reading because of the impeccable style and overall perfection achieved on the autonomous level of the discipline. Or - to transpose myself from one medium to another - for a moment I thought that the rightly or wrongly perceived and exposed essence of the age did not necessarily preclude the very character of spaces; that being within one *problematic* on the level of essences, did not prevent one from seeing things differently on the level of spaces; that living in illusion in one sphere still allowed for achieving the reality in the other. In other words, and bearing in mind the specific antithetical characters of my original protagonists, I myself lived in the illusion that both of them had equal chances of being right, and wrong. For instance, if one understood properly the real essence of the historical condition, he might still fail in creating a real, full architectural space in which the life of his epoch might naturally unfold. And vice versa, if by some chance the slippery, fleeting essence of the age eluded the other (and remained represented in its flattened, planar, simplified form in his mind), he might just as well be able to compensate for this unrecognized (symbolical) third dimension by intuitively constructing a real, saturated architectural space, and thus, obliquely and indirectly, still approach the truth.

The more I worked on the problem, however (at least on the Behrens-Loos case), the more I became aware that such happy, accidental reversals were less than usual; the deeper my analysis progressed, the stronger was I pushed to change my own way of seeing the problem. It turned out to be that the right opening of the story, adequate exposition of the plot and insightful posing of right questions, precluded, governed and directed not only the very outcome, but also the right choice of instruments and tools: techniques, methods, styles, languages, words. Correctly defined essence permeated thoroughly all the other layers and instances, right down to the very sublimated result. So, either was one a double sinner (eventually a double loser), or a double just, there was no in between. There seemed to be no sudden, accidental "enlightenments" or the deliberate closing of one's eyes: once the logic of structure was recognized and internalized as one's way of thinking, there could possibly be no fleeing back into the mists of illusion, no reductions to the inadequate flatness of thought. The greatest effort was thus the very opening of the story, the quest for the evanescent essences, and eternal tireless running away from the frontal, hypnotic Medusa's gaze, capturing the oblique, indirect views in order to escape the threatening fate and dispel the dangers of paralyzing ideology. But, in order for the right question to be posed at all, there was this essential precondition of knowing the problematic thoroughly. Only from knowing one's



FG. 1. Peter Behrens with Karl Bernhard, *AEG Turbine Factory*, Berlin, 1908-1909

Source • **Izvor**
Frampton, K. (1985), *Modern Architecture - A Critical History*, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, p. 113.

SL. 1. Peter Behrens s Karlom Bernhardom, *Tvornica turbina AEG*, Berlin, 1908-1909.

material perfectly, from living it, from learning all its secrets and whims, and understanding all its languages and dialects, could one both ask right questions and hope to arrive at right answers. Only by knowing one's enemy in detail was it ultimately possible to exert any qualitative, essential changes, to transform it gently, from "within," thus avoiding the danger of destroying it or still more strengthening its power.

Precisely this mirroring of essences and spaces, the reciprocity between properly understood structure of the age and adequately constructed physical framework as its necessary, natural setting, (without eliminating the necessary intermediary level of transcoding between the two different modes of discourses), as well as the right choice of techniques, methods and tools thereby employed, is my primary interest in this paper.

Now that I have opened my story, roughly exposed my own plot, let me start searching for proofs.

Berlin, 1909. A shadow of what once used to be an individual is on its aimless, endless run through the fluid, senseless context of routes known as the Metropolis. A cast of once possessed original, a fractured shell whose interior deteriorated and vanished, freeing room for the onrushing assaults of suffocating anxieties, struggles to know this epitome of displacement as his new place, this locus of processivity and transformability as his new constant, this paradoxical, uncertain time as the only time in which he can exist. Although deeply anesthetized, some bleak vestiges of his endangered, degraded, and almost dissolved soul still seem to

vegetate, cautiously buried behind the frightening anonymity of exterior masks.⁵ These sick, admittedly, but still extant traces give hope for eventual recovery of the mortified soul, if only some promise of a fixed spot, of a real space impregnated with real values might still be found. Disillusioned, this human ruin, a man of his age, set out on a dubious, difficult search for the lost third dimension, ready to trade his present circus tent of spectacle for the vanished realm of touch, the surrounding sterile screens of text for the extinct concert-hall of voice.

Not that our typical neurasthenical metropolitan subject renounced his soul willingly. On the contrary, he knocked with Proustian persistence on many doors in pursuit of the lost concepts of time, value, space, center and identity. Most of them did open, but the real space with its precious suite already left the emptied voids of what was once known as interior. What remained was only the series of hollow facade-masks stretched over uniformed, standardized construction skeletons, testimonies of irrelevancies of historic styles, an arbitrary mixture of meaningless stylistic exhibits intended to satisfy the jaded appetites of the surfeited consumerist public. Engaged in the merry and amusing play, conspicuously signifying their own carnival-like irresponsibilities, it seems to me that they - by the very variety of their surface ornamentations and deliberate and obvious masking - already renounced every possibility to define, crystallize and represent any single truth, as if they felt and understood the unstable oscillation and fluctuation of the new times. Surprising and paradoxical as it may sound, it seems to me that this very playfulness and diversity, this recognized impossibility of existence of just one dominating style (and by that very fact also the implied, though probably unconscious critical detachment), makes these stylistic screens the peculiar distant predecessors of the later tragic-joyful games of Venturian decorative sheds, the early practicing of Barthes's "white writing." However, whereas Venturi's times, with its soul finally dissolved and buried safely for couple of times so that its every resurrection was highly doubtful, had no other choice but to accept these unsettling exterior games as its natural environment, our suffering, barely surviving soul from the beginning of the century was still unwilling to give up its quest and ultimate hopes of recovery. Having learned the lesson of hollowness from the historicistic facades and their younger Secessionist relatives, it went on looking for a more promising type of doors.

Proceeding with his risky journey through the fluid, arhythmically pulsating metropolitan labyrinth, its disenchanting subject, chased by his agonized soul, found himself running down the Berlichingenstrasse.⁶ Finally a hope! A giant gate! A possibility of leaving the present world of chaos and instability, a hint of interior. A prodigious hinge between the exterior space of purely mental, intellectual experience, of life of the nerves and visual bombardments of fleeting, ever-changing and ever-intensifying shocking images, and that *other* space - the space of interior, the realm of touch and voice, the space where the benumbed body might still be brought back to life. Awakened residues of safely deposited collective memories started to unfold: mighty pylons and dark, serene void - Gillyesque city gate, Schinkelesque promise of a spatial and temporal narrative; space of bodily experience, movement and drama; a sequence of sensations, a journey through

⁵ For the analysis of the acute symptoms of the deranged social condition, see G. Simmel, 1971.

⁶ *Berlichingenstrasse* is the street leading to the "temple facade" of the AEG Turbine Factory (Peter Behrens with Karl Bernhard, 1908-1909), and which - together with the *Huttenstrasse* - borders the Factory's street facades.

dark and light, a space where the revered old values of tradition, nation, and order still existed...

A few steps forward and the first layer of hope was melted: what he perceived as a deep central void turned out to be a fully glazed, closed plane. But the promise was too enticing, he could not give up hoping. "So what if it is not a majestic gate to the other world? It might still be a temple!" The redoubling of his mind started again, the projection into the sacred interior ensued. But then again - he remembered - we were not supposed to physically enter the Greek temple, it was all about the exterior, a double barrier bracketed it off from the profane surrounding: a line of columns and a platform. Indeed, that was true. But still, at least the conjectures of the interior space were allowed. There was, namely, a real door and a real cella in which we knew god resided, so that our mind did not stop at the outside wall but protruded deeper in order to ask for consolation.⁷ And, on the other hand, maybe it was not a temple at all? Maybe it was a basilica, a cathedral? Tireless transposing of his mind was activated for the third time, a chain of memories put in play again: a perspective vista from the entrance right to the high altar in the choir, a calming dimension of depth dominating the entire interior space, a solemn procession progressing forward, the whole place reverberating with the authority of the divine...

One projection was surpassing the other as he was approaching the mysterious monument, the possibilities seemed to abound. "But where is the door after all? Where can we finally enter the promised interior? Which one of our conjectures would turn out to be true, so that we can either physically step in, or let our mind delve into it, as the ancient Greeks used to do?" All his efforts to detect the entrance, however, remained in vain. The base was continuous, the barrier total, no hints of interior given. The ultimate idea crossed his by now severely disquieted mind: Maybe the monument does not fall under the rubric of the temple or cathedral at all? Maybe the entrance is not on the side that seemed to be the front as he was approaching, maybe it is placed on the, so called, lateral facade? Switching his set of associations from the authority of God to the new but almost equally attractive - solid, stable and strong one that might derive from the model of the embassy, he started to contemplate the possible references. The guarantee of order, the equality of rights, the surviving, living culture, tradition and democracy.... Schinkel again crossed his mind: Altes Museum, the Greek stoa.... No, he would not complain about being consoled by such honorable concepts - he figured - as he absent-mindedly walked around the strange, disquieting, recessed, rounded corner.

The disappointment of not finding the entrance door, not even on the lateral facade, was unbearable. He kept going back and forth in utter resignation. No, there was absolutely no sign of entrance, no possibility of protruding the high, solid, continuous base. Could it be that this promising magical facade had no interior? That it was just a deceptive illusion impossible to penetrate despite all his repeated efforts? What was this building, anyway?

His gaze moved upwards and there he saw it - the familiar signet. So, it was a factory, the AEG Turbine Factory! This notion filled him with a new gush of excitement. It was thus not going back to the nostalgic, mythical times of temples and great cathedrals.

⁷ My reading of the Greek temple here is inspired by Quetglas's analysis of the elements and significations of the Doric temple, as elaborated in J. Quetglas, 1988, p. 125.

It was, on the contrary, the final achievement of the new *Kultur*, new *Fatherland*, based on work as the spiritual source of value, finally reestablished after the unpleasant, but luckily only brief and transitional phase of merciless *Zivilisation*.⁸ And this new cathedral of labor seemed to have overcome all the unbearable symptoms of alienation, division of labor, specialization - he figured - immediately charging the crystallized, frozen facade with the whole welter of values that his already partially lost memory had painfully brought into life as he was approaching this strange object of hope. The concepts of unity, fullness, synthesis, order, spirit, duty, value, reverberated loudly in his by now fully awakened soul.

"The humiliating exchange value is finally defeated, the new era of quality- and use-value is dawning! The fragmented, mechanized, alienated process where...

'...all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail'⁹ ...
... is finally behind us! From now on we are again all communally gathered around a single piece of work, our intelligence and skill brought together in producing the single mighty turbine as the hearth of the new society, a kernel capable of restoring the forgotten filial relations, a symbol of new basic social values.¹⁰

All these messages did our triggered metropolitan hero read from the majestic, weighty, corporeal, massive facade of gargantuan scale, which so unequivocally emitted clear signs of recovered unity and synthesis, order and wholeness of the new society. This highly controlled and well-ordered, peaceful image had nothing to do with the unsettling dispersed network of dematerialized membered structure of fragile and repetitive iron frameworks, which so truthfully represented the interlaced tissue of overdetermined and conflictual societal relations. On the contrary, it celebrated the triumph of eternal spiritual verities over disturbing chaotic relativity, of universal values over destabilizing ephemerality and temporality.

The dream was overwhelming indeed. But this disillusioned, nervous man of his age, whose body was starved by the continual diet based on pure visibility, purely mental, intellectual experience, optical illusions and fleeting, ungraspable images, learned his lesson of hollowness well. As doubting Thomas, he refused to believe until he himself could not bodily feel and touch this solemnly announced resurrected corporeality, put his hands on its supposedly sacred turbine-like altar. His faith in beautiful icons, from which never any consolation came, melted away long ago. For him, finding the new space meant entering into that space; finding the new center meant feeling his body in that very center. Painted promises remained empty promises. That is why he kept looking for the door.

From the front facade to the lateral one, and back, forth and back, again and again.... First in hasty, nervous scanning, then repeating the route slowly, cautiously, not to miss the eventual hidden slot... But, why I myself still continue calling this undifferentiated envelope the front and lateral facade, anyway? Let me consult the bibliography: "temple front," "show front of the entire factory complex," "the face that the AEG turned to the world, superseding the castellated gate" ... do we all tend to fall into Behrens's trap?¹¹ What makes a face a face, after all? Why do we

8 I refer here to Walter Rathenau's and Friedrich Naumann's specific interpretation of the actual socio-historical condition. For further discussion see M. Cacciari, *Merchants and Heroes in Cacciari*, 1993, pp. 42-55.

9 John Ruskin, *The Nature of Gothic*, in *The Stones of Venice*, 1853, p. 167.

10 I refer here to Gottfried Semper's transformational morphology of architecture, which, as one of its four basic elements, comprised the hearth as the basic social prerequisite for architecture, as its necessary and inevitable social nucleus. See G. Semper, 1860-63.

11 S. Anderson, 1981, pp. 58-62.

call a front facade of a building a front facade? Are not the eyes and the mouth necessary constitutive features of a face? Just as the entrance is of a front facade? Turning the face to the world means communicating with the world: presenting yourself to it but also letting it come to you; it means seeing the world, understanding it, internalizing. Now, not that the so-called AEG "front" facade did not have the eyes, on the contrary, it had a Cyclopean, giant one. Wasn't it, however, blind? I will take care of this eye later. But, the facade definitely lacked the mouth. It was mute, it could not talk, it had been robbed of its language, constrained to forever communicate by way of pantomime, of autistic gesture-talk, of depleted symbols-signs. A deceptive semiotics, however, not yet the one of elaborated "complex mechanisms" of the Neue Sachlichkeit, but more the one in which even its own author tended to get lost.¹² And the facade, lacking the mouth, could not eat either, it could not internalize the world. Does it mean that it was dead inside? Hollowed out, pure void?

Again this gush of precipitating questions, too many at a time. I might easily get carried away and lost. I should withdraw and proceed slowly.

What if this is a mere theatrical stage set, after all? (I resisted the topical model long enough, now I really need it.) A strange one, admittedly, for there is no actual stage in front of it, no place for actors, just a shallow, planar scenery raised on a majestic podium. Now, as we look closer at the facade in front of us, this might just as well be true: the tilted, inclined glass planes that suggest the feeling of depth, skillful foreshortenings, exaggerated trabeation, artificial play of shadows and light, perpetual ambiguities between structure and infill - all seems to talk about effects, impressions, appearances. Doesn't this remind us of the famous masters of theatrical illusions and their magnificent cardboard "canvases," carefully rendered so as to suggest deep space by elaborated perspectival games and convincing distortions? Where the things are not as they seem: where the columns are flattened, modeled of shadows, incapable of accepting any weight; where windows are painted, opaque indeed, and fake their own transparency; where the doors are depicted and can never, not even in theory, let us get inside. Only the actors, in their constant transitions between the world of imagination and that of reality, in their repeated crossings of the magical border, know the secret of the door. Because, one of those many depicted, usually the most inconspicuous one, must be the real door, after all. In order to let the actors step out on the stage and narrate their fictitious story, on the real stage, in front of the virtual scene. So, only the actors know. Only those who practice and live the illusion are aware of the game; the audience, set back at a secure distance, still enjoys the pleasures of being lulled into the orchestrated imitation of life.

In the meantime, while I was attempting to theorize the pleasures and dangers of living on the verge of reality and dream, my restless, wandering subject realized that if this huge, impenetrable box was really a box (with something he expected to be the real space inside), it must necessarily have other two sides as well. So he turned around the corner, and the next one again, then he went shortly along a strange, unappealing, disquieting appendix, stripped of all emphatic attributes, a strange image that shattered

¹² I refer here to the possibilities of different, and eventually wrong readings of the structural roles of the concrete corners and the central glass plane on the AEG "front" facade. However, to be precise, Behrens's decision to use concrete as an infill material that would not possess the load-bearing appearance, and his treatment of the mullions and glass so as to suggest their bearing function, was conscious and deliberate, in spite of all the ambiguities that it might provoke. For further explanation see S. Anderson, 1981, pp. 62-63.

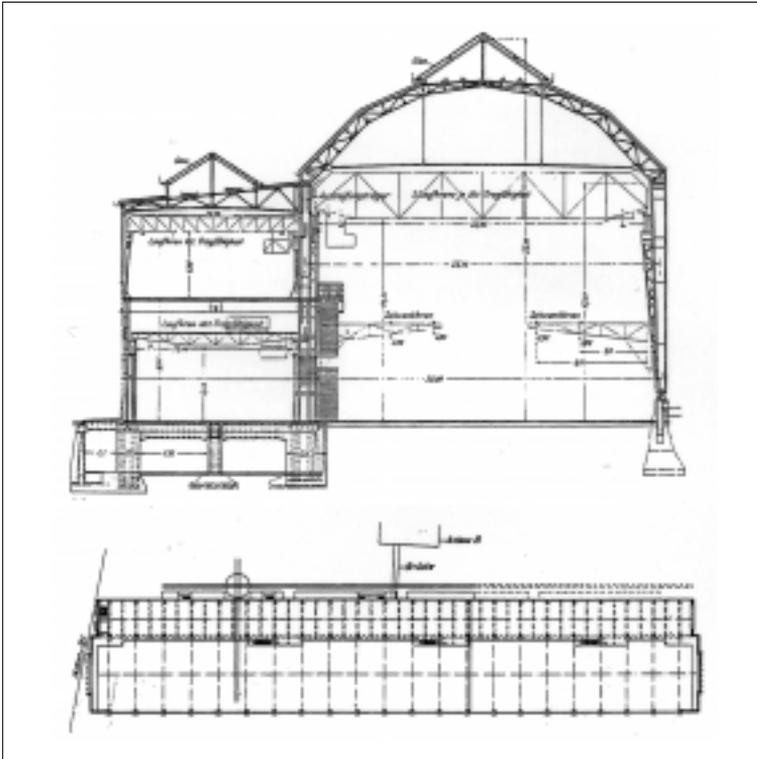


FIG. 2. Peter Behrens with Karl Bernhard, AEG Turbine Factory, Berlin, 1908-1909, section and plan

Source - Izvor Anderson, S. (1981), *Modern Architecture and Industry: Peter Behrens and the AEG Factories*, "Oppositions", No. 23, Winter:58-59.

SL. 2. Peter Behrens s Karlom Bernhardom, *Tvornica turbina AEG*, Berlin, 1908-1909., presjek i tlocrt

his hopes a bit, but he proceeded nevertheless. And then he discovered it! As we might have expected from our theater experience - a small, modest, almost hidden, inconspicuous door. In utter discrepancy with the monumental introduction. The tension in him arose: should he open it and risk to know the building's truth? Or would it be wiser to remain outside, staring at the consoling, majestic scenery, believing that the nice promises might turn out to be real?

The curiosity was stronger, or rather, his soul needed the real value, his body the real space. So he had no choice. He opened the door and stepped in.

Upon entering the factory - very few stories have happy endings - instead of finding one, he lost one. Or to be precise, he lost the one he was promised to find. Entering off axis, almost accidentally, at a strange angle, missing thereby all the logical points where one would expect the entrance to such a solemnly announced monument might be, prevented him from evoking any of the elaborated chains of references in advance. The fact of not having any sign of entrance prior to the actual protruding of the enclosure prevented him from redoubling and projecting of his mind inside, from imagining deep axes or short lateral ones, from "seeing" deep halls, precious little cellas or emphylades of regular, equal rooms, where each of these schemes might be charged with its own set of messages and meanings. Consequently, the pleasure of confirming one's expectations upon entering, or the joy and excitement of being surprised by the unexpected, was denied him.

The role of the space itself, as an entity of its own, with its own laws and rules, was thus from the very beginning disturbingly shattered.

The confusion initiated by such an abrupt, accidental, sudden slipping in was by no means appeased by what he found inside. Obvious mess stemming from the provisional addition of the lateral, secondary space, barely hidden behind the line of auxiliary stairs, revealed awkward junctures and unresolved spatial imbalances. The intricate game of symmetries and asymmetries, once so masterfully directed by Schinkel (to whose authority the whole generation - including Behrens himself - referred), here obviously escaped control. It was almost impossible to grasp even the geometrical, mathematical center of that space, not even to mention the sensory one, the one that the body itself could sense and feel, precisely the one that we set out to find. There was, of course, no cella, with its jealously kept values, no emphyade of rooms telling the stories of democracy and equality, no basilica-like hall either, with its straight perspectival vistas and processional movement along the deep axis to the high altar from which the supreme divinity reigned. Altar...? Now he remembered! But the turbine-like shrine, the supposed hearth of the new *Kultur* and the kernel of the communal, united, recuperated work, exploded into thousand pieces, together with our subject's dreams of unalienated labor. There was no single turbine inside, from which the new warmth (lighted on old, handicraft values) was to emanate, and around which the workers were supposed to gather as bees around the fertile queen-bee (what the octagonal, bee-hive like AEG signet might also have attempted to suggest). All he saw was just the well-known, endless multiplication of disintegrated, exploded parts, infinite series of "points of the pins" and the "heads of the nails," the same old repetitiveness of highly specialized, soulless and mindless mechanical movements arranged in a sterile rhythmical choreography of Kracauerian mass-ornaments.

One layer of hope was vanishing after another. And the walls? The enclosure? What happened to the solid mass and proud monumentality of the majestic, gigantic exterior walls? The materials inside were the same, and yet at once so different. Their emphatic corporeality and weightiness that bespoke an ordered society and resurrected wholeness melted away and dematerialized into a dispersed network, into a transparent membered iron structure that so poignantly mirrored the chaotic truth he wanted to escape from. The truth of an endless, overdetermined structure of social relations and conflicts, of a highly integrated system of small individual pieces, each of whom had his own, very specific and very specialized role in the functioning of the whole. And yet, each of whom was, in turn, so frighteningly exchangeable.

It turned out to be that the crystalline, "clear" and comprehensible exterior surface was the theatrical, feigned, opaque one (so much for the clarity of Behrens's Darmstadt crystal), whereas the complicated, dispersed and just seemingly misty and chaotic network of open-web columns and exposed iron frameworks reappropriated the stolen transparency and clarity. Why stolen? Well, was not this organic, membered structure the real truth, the real language of iron and glass, deliberately masked into a pretended "truth" of weightiness and corporeality? The tectonic twisted into stereotomy?¹³ The same as the truth of the dispersed social network was

13 On the polarity of Tektonik and Stereotomie see Gottfried Semper, 1860-63.

glossed over into a pretended synthesis, signifying the supposedly newly acquired unity, spirit and order? Did not the materials suffer the same manipulation as the very social structure?

Double twist then, double game, double lie. The story of mirroring of essences and spaces, essences and instruments, languages, methods and tools, begins.

Thus we have a single wall with two faces. Or a stage set and props - a positive and a negative? Or a single mirror with two different surfaces? But before sliding into the secrets opened by the splitting of this curious, particular wall, before investigating the duality of its faces and taking care of the split personality of its author, let us go back to our little story within the story for a while.

So, like the actors before him, our hero discovered the secret of the door. Entering the factory - eating from the tree of knowledge (though being aware of the risks) - expelled him from his precarious temporary paradise constructed of hopes. By trespassing the border, by protruding the wall, he approached the stage set from behind and revealed the secret of a magician's tricks. And then he joined the actors. Not the Brechtian troupe, however. These actors were far from being a bunch of unskilled amateurs who by overacting tended to denaturalize the narrative flow; these were of the old school and learned their roles well. Although practicing their theatrical life daily and thus knowing the falsity of the game, it seemed as if they let themselves get carried away by the idealized life they set out to depict. In order to convince the audience, they decided to convince themselves first; in order to give the best performance, they started to believe in dreams. And besides, they seemed to like the very play: the plot was clear, the characters typical and predictable, and the narrative - telling the story of society - tended to flow so smoothly. They would readily trade it for their lives off-stage. So why to dispel the magic, and reject its soothing, consoling effects?

The actors here, however, in this AEG Turbine Theater, were the workers themselves. And as I said, they knew their job well: by practicing the process, by living its logic, by getting reified themselves, they not only swallowed the raw, undigested truth, but got to know it well, *from within*. Literally, from the interior. And yet they accepted the Lukácsian/Behrensian "novel." Yet they fell for the fable of exterior. Yet they wished to believe that it might be possible to live in a realist painting. But, wait, was Behrens's painting, like Lukácsian novel, really a realist one? Was it really meant to be "about the world as he found it," or about the world he set out to depict? Or, to be more precise, about the world he was commissioned to depict?¹⁴ And didn't Behrens, by exercising Lukács's mistake, fall still deeper into its trap by confusing the distant, utopian, eventually redeeming potentials of Lukácsian aesthetics with presumably immediate, actual, real salvaging effects of his own? Be it realist or not, the workers were ultimately denied access to this majestic painting exhibited on the factory's facade, since it turned out to be absolutely impossible to ascend the high continuous base. So they realized the impossibility of living in a picture plane. And yet they kept staring at it. Frontally, to let themselves be hypnotized by its ideological tale. And every time when the interior would exert its disturbing antidote effects, the workers would just step out and get their new injection of instant spiritual food.

¹⁴ I refer here to Behrens's putting of his professional skills in the service of Walter Rathenau's interpretation of actual socio-historical condition (in the projects he did for the AEG), or, more generally, putting himself (even though resignedly and against his own convictions) into the service of "higher," "loftier" goals that the "age" required from its artists. Behrens also claimed to recognize the intrinsic match of a 'pure' *Sachlichkeit*, of a technically reckoned world, with the historic condition of modern society. He observed this more pessimistically than Lessing. It was a world of calculation, devoid of sentiments that were central to earlier stages of human destiny, and thus Behrens accepted this world only resignedly. Yet there was still a creative role for the great artist, for it was he who not only intuited this historical condition but had to discover forms that would convey, as great art is presumed always to have done, the historic forces that control our destiny. (S. Anderson, *Sachlichkeit and Modernity, or Realist Architecture*, p. 343.)

But, having already remarked that this weird theater did not have the actual stage in front of the celebrated monumental stage set, I wonder if the model of theater still holds. Didn't it turn out that the whole dream-machine functioned more as a painting? Yes, but.... In search for an adequate model, I addressed myself to history again. Behrens, supposedly acting under Schinkel's noble auspices.... he must have remembered! Panorama painting! A slightly reworked one, but still some basic features are here: the dimensions of the screen are overwhelming, the canvas is raised on a podium which serves as a dropped middle ground and brackets it off from the context, the viewers are kept at a distance, left to observe the depicted image of the very same reality they find themselves in. Much as was the case with the famous stage backdrop that opening night of the *Schauspielhaus* in May 1821. The same technique of seeing, the same reciprocal views, the same game with reality and representation.¹⁵ Only the motives seem to be different: whereas Schinkel strove to make his spectators understand the city, to instruct them how to see, and to clarify and explain the reality from which they observed, Behrens seemed to engage in obscuring it, manipulating, and depicting the "redesigned" representations of it, illusions in which the distressed spectators might easily be launched. Especially when they didn't seem to exert any signs of resistance.

But again, the endless game of associations has carried me too far, dragged me completely to the outer side of the curious, double-faced wall that we detected while ago, making me temporarily neglect its inherent, particular duality. I should be more careful, since there can be no simple, one-at-a-time treating of such an intricate conflict of opposites, no simple operation of addition of the two torn-apart halves.

So we have this single wall with two faces. Or a single mirror with two different surfaces? Interior and exterior one. Mirrors.... that might be the clue. But remember here the specific mirrors from my introduction. One sort - the interior one - was straight and properly glazed, reflecting only the facts that it saw, created for those willing to know themselves, or for those who did not have any other choice. The other was distorted and crooked; its maker pitied himself upon the fragmented, sick original - the fractured and degraded society - which was to recognize itself in it and discover the shameful truth. So he reworked it: he took the materials he had within reach - iron and glass (he too was a man of his age, after all), and cloaked them in the mask of massive, solid planes and weighty, compact surfaces, against their own nature, properties and will. (He was told, or at least imagined to have heard that it was allowed, or even necessary to do so, and still remain on the right track.)¹⁶ This mirror, in its Lacanian duty to make everyone who reflects himself in it know and identify himself, started to emit only expectations, consolations, desired images, the beautified *other*, and thus transformed itself into a prosthetic, orthopedic device. A device placed in the service of consoling man - already a "course unto his very death bed," as Kraus would remind us. A distorted mirror, opaque mirror, painted mirror.... A mirror at all? Or a retouched panorama painting?

Now, could it be that both sorts of these mirrors were produced by the same man? A man himself torned in halves? A split personality? No, not indeed. There were two men involved, Beh-

¹⁵ At the opening performance of the Schinkel's Schauspielhaus in May 1821, the stage backdrop was painted by Gropius, depicting the Schauspielhaus itself as seen from the Museum Insel. See Barry Bergdoll, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel*, 1982, in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, vol. 3, Adolf Placzek, ed., New York, pp. 684-685.

¹⁶ I refer here to Behrens's interpretation of the ambiguous Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*, in particular to Behrens's conviction that *Kunstwollen* accounted for the artist's control of the creative process even against the practical dictates of the problem, and his understanding that the ruling imperatives of the "spirit of the times" and the "spirit of the people" (as the collective, teleological wills), might be fulfilled even in battle against function, material and technique of the times. See S. Anderson, 1981, pp. 56-57 and p. 78.

rens and Bernhard, artist and engineer.¹⁷ Two visions of truth, two different languages, could we even say two different walls?

And here I must call for help my other main protagonist - Loos, who has by now patiently followed the story, waiting for his act to come, preparing his charming, witty commentaries and insightful remarks. Let me give him briefly the word.

"Art comes from know-how, Kunst from Können. But as for those dilettantes who from their comfortable studios want to prescribe and trace out for the artist, for the man who produces, just what he should do, let them keep to their field - that of graphic art."¹⁸

And the men who produced - the engineers - in Loos's view followed the logic of the ancient Greeks, who...

"... only worked practically; without thinking of beauty, without wishing to satisfy an aesthetic need. And when finally an object was so practical that it was impossible to make it more practical, then they called it beautiful."¹⁹

As for the others, Loos would state:

"But it is a terrible thing when an architectural drawing, itself [...] a graphic work of art, is built in stone, steel, and glass, for there are truly graphic artists amongst the architects."²⁰

So we have here, as Loos would suggest, a dilettante - a graphic artist, and a real "artist" - the engineer, the man who produces and knows the know-how of his technique. Indeed, the complex duality of the AEG wall - the fact that the wall was not a simple whole consisting of two complementary parts (a positive and a negative, the stage set and the props) - was not achieved thanks to one man's (either Behrens's or Bernhard's) awareness of the difficult game of opposites as the inherent logic of the system in which no single truth could exist on its own any more, as a positive and substantial value in itself. This new game, where both opposites, both inside and outside, were equally true, where the existence of any truth at all was still possible precisely because of the presence (and through the limits) of the *other*, the difficult game which no single third term or any simple formula might resolve, was to be recognized and played as a one-man-game only by Loos himself. The AEG-wall-game was, on the contrary, a two-man-game; a game of two single, separate and in no way related "truths." Or to be precise, it was rather a clash between two single, different "truths," each meant to be true in itself and by itself, and yet where one claimed to be more so than the other. Precisely the one (Behrens's one) which, in the end, turned out to be less true, the ultimate non-truth, an illusion, a lie.

Ultimately, what I would suggest, is that, if we follow the rule of the difficult game of opposites as established and defined by Loos, none of these two "truths" - regardless of one-of-them's actual closeness to the engineering, *sachlich* sincerity (and by that very fact, admittedly, at once made more real than the other), could in its autonomy and self-sufficiency be true, precisely because not having acknowledged and embraced the existence of the other truth. But, to go even further, in this case (the AEG-wall-case), the proper dialectics (Loosian dialectics) was prevented to be established at all, since the game had started from inadequately, not to say falsely (at least on the part of one of them) constructed opposites. Consequently, even with our greatest efforts to try to explain this game as a dialectical one, it will forever stay an artificial, accidental, false dialectics; the one forever constrained to limp on one side, or to, ultimately, loose

¹⁷ Karl Bernhard, the engineer, was Behrens's collaborator on the Turbine Factory, whose knowledge and skills were absolutely needed to compensate for Behrens's own lack of formal schooling in architecture and engineering. See S. Anderson, 1981, pp. 61-62.

¹⁸ Adolf Loos, 1921, *Glas und Ton* (1898).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ A. Loos, 1962, *Architektur* (1910).

completely its potential to move, and stiffen into a crystallized but unbalanced, contrived and impossible, artificial composite.

If Behrens were to finish the AEG wall in its entirety (that is, both of its sides) by himself, the wall would automatically lose this accidentally and unwillingly achieved duality and would turn into one single "non-truth," a depicted illusion on both of its sides. The interior would turn into exterior again. Much as was the case in the Mannheim exhibition hall, where Behrens was (supposedly) interested in creating a space. Interior space. Interior which, at the end, turned out to be exterior, as a glove turned inside out - exterior within the exterior. Where the space shrank into a plane, melted into an endless game of surfaces. We will enter the Mannheim hall in a moment, let us just conclude with the factory. By letting the interior walls of the AEG Turbine Factory unconcealed, by letting Bernhard try to suggest his own vision of truth, Behrens only showed his utter disinterest in even attempting (even in his own, specific, painterly way) to create the factory's interior. He showed that he ultimately did not care. All he seemed to be interested in was the huge, appealing exterior canvas. Because, if he didn't care either for the logic of the entrance, or for the interior walls' make-up, if he didn't even attempt to resolve the problem of the spatial imbalance between the main and the lateral volume, and the awkward play of symmetries and asymmetries thus provoked (and here I mean both in the inside and on the outside), how could we argue that he cared about the interior space at all? Was space really an important protagonist in Behrens? Yes, I admit, there was a space inside, there is always some kind of space as soon as there is "inside" - but this was a trapped space, a space devoid of properties, a space that was caught inside when the box was about to be closed, ultimately a non-space, a nothingness, a void.

So why didn't Bernhard, the engineer, create the space? (if the truth was - as Loos claimed, and as we seem to claim - mostly on his side), one might ask. Well, I would respond, precisely because Bernhard was an engineer and not an architect. He spoke his language well, mastered his own tools, knew the know-how of techniques and the secrets of materials, and in his own realm always achieved the truth. But nobody taught him that famous spatial language. Just the same as no one taught Behrens that unique, special and difficult language. Or maybe he refused to learn. Or maybe he was unable to learn. Anyway, whatever the case might be, what we were ultimately left with, was the engineer's language on the one side, and the one of the painter on the other.²¹ The one honest and real as it only might be, the other resounding with restrained, geometricized, ordered fantasy. And, consequently, we did not get the space. We still lacked the architect.

So, following his own tragic destiny, in his endless search for space imbued with value, in order to finally recover the partially deadened body and the endangered, degraded soul, our wandering Odysseus found himself on the outer side of the wall once again, this time projected into Behrens's shallow "parallel layer" of illusion, world of retouched panorama paintings and opaque, distorted mirrors, again left to vegetate on the calorie-low diet of optical impressions, pure visibility and fleeting, unpalpable images. Next time, after he collects the feeble strengths to set out on the road again, he should know better on which door to knock.

²¹ I refer here to Behrens's original education as a painter that he received at the Munich Academy.

But, in my maybe all too hasty negation, or, let us say at least, doubting of the existence of space in Peter Behrens's built work, I can already hear voices reminding me of the crucial role that August Schmarsow's Theory of *Raumgestaltung*, of creation or forming of space, exerted on Behrens's conception of architecture. Thus Stanford Anderson writes:

"Relying on the insights of the art historian August Schmarsow, Behrens argued that architecture was the art of defining space, which he proposed to achieve with sparse geometrical forms, while allowing sculpture, the art of volume or spatial occupation, to provide its plastic counterpart."²²

"In his Düsseldorf period, Behrens was concerned with a formal distinction between spatial definition and the occupation of space. The culmination of this concern was the exhibition hall of Mannheim, an abstract stereometric space defined by immaterial planes and complemented by plastic sculptures."²³

It is important to bear in mind that we deal here, for now, with Behrens's interpretation of Schmarsow, not yet with Schmarsow's own thoughts and ideas. What Behrens read in Schmarsow thus seemed to have reduced architecture's task on defining of space, or limiting of space (or capturing of space, as I would even dare to add), by means of "sparse geometrical forms" and "immaterial planes." Emphasis (on the part of architecture) was thus put on these wondrous, immaterial, two-dimensional "planar surfaces," panelization and enclosures, in other words, on the very walls, while all the privileges of occupying, inhabiting and enjoying the space were reserved for the very "plastic sculptures." Sculpture was defined as "the art of volume," meant to provide "counterpart" to architecture, what, in a way, automatically seemed to deny architecture its own capacity of dealing with the concepts of volume and space, defining its essence as the art of two-dimensional plane, as the art of the wall; the art of the enclosing forms, rather than the art of the space that it enclosed. Sculpture, on the contrary, was assigned the task of creating, generating, and emanating space, and was seen, in its inherent three-dimensionality and corporeality, as the "antipode to the newly mastered abstract space," as an anchorage of space - an assumption that ultimately lead Behrens to conclude that in his Mannheim exhibition hall "the disposition of the space would depend upon the sculptures."²⁴

Now, was that really what Schmarsow wrote and meant? Did not space in Schmarsow, as an entity of its own, have a far more important role? And was not architecture, as *Raumgestalterin* (the creatress of space), with or without the help of sculptures, meant to be perfectly capable of creating space all by herself? Or, if not all by herself, then whose help did it really need? And what was the actual role that Schmarsow assigned to sculptures and painting, after all?

We read further, this time a passage on Schmarsow:

"He suggested that architecture is not achieved through a mere assembly of tectonic components or through material calculation; instead, argued Schmarsow, architecture is essentially *Raumgestaltung*, the forming of space, a manifestation and integration of endemic cultural energies. Schmarsow further distinguished architectural space from both painterly and sculptural space. The essence of painting is the optical tension between the three-dimensional representation and the two-dimensional surface, whereas that of sculpture is its three-dimensional disposition in circumfluent space, space that induces movement around it."²⁵

That certainly is what Schmarsow wrote on the essence of painting and sculpture. But there must have been more on the very

22 S. Anderson, 1977, p. 56.

23 S. Anderson, 1981, p. 53.

24 S. Anderson, *Theory and Teaching of Architecture, The Düsseldorf Period: 1903-1907*, chapter four of the doctoral dissertation, S. Anderson, 1968, pp. 154-155.

25 K. M. Hays, 1988, p. 241, based on S. Anderson, 1968.

essence of architecture. Didn't his very inaugural lecture at Leipzig in 1893 bear the title "The Essence of Architectural Creation"? The definition that architecture was, as the forming of space, "the manifestation and integration of endemic cultural energies" does not seem to me to reveal precisely enough what Schmarsow wanted to tell us about the architectural space. But, before moving closer to Schmarsow and his conception of architectural space, I just want to make one more remark. There are two architectural examples usually presented to illustrate and testify to Behrens's acceptance of Schmarsow's theory of space: the Obenauer House at Saarbrücken, 1905, where "the difficult, steeply sloped site... becomes a positive source of energy..., forcing movement orthogonally through a series of stairs and terraces," and the famous exhibition hall of Mannheim, with its planar, immaterial, mathematically divided surfaces, space-filling Maillol's sculptures and monochromatic Haller's painting.²⁶ I shall keep coming back to them, as we move through Schmarsow's ideas and thoughts.

Since Schmarsow's theory of space relates both to the past and the future of my story, and forms that finely structured theoretical net that underlies the whole plot, I would ask you to bear it constantly in the near distance; to filter through it both past events and those yet to come; to both remember through it and project new readings through it ahead. Theory of *Raumgestaltung* will form a sort of central, referential point, a zero-point of an imaginary coordinate system, a point where all the coordinates meet, and yet from which they, at the same time, start to diverge. Behrens, namely, embraced this new theory wholeheartedly, preached it and proclaimed it, having Niemeyer, Schmarsow's student, as a clear token of his subscription and assent. And yet he, I would claim, never really succeeded in practicing it. Loos, on the other hand, never called himself upon it, never affirmed its influence in public, and still he was the one who actually built it, and whose thoughts sometimes sounded as its clear and faithful reverberations.²⁷ So we have Schmarsow as a theoretical middle point, or a kind of central vertical axis, and Behrens and Loos on the opposite sides of it, on the two diverging coordinates. Plus and minus pole thus, and yet again: double plus and minus pole - one on the axis of their aspirations and promises, and the other on the axis of the real, built spaces. If we add here still another, fourth, temporal axis of the past and the future of Odysseus's journey in his search for space, we are left here with a complicated, spatio-temporal coordinate system, with Schmarsow, as I already suggested, as its zero-point, in which all these paths intersect.

And let me finally give Schmarsow the word.

"The intuited form of space, which surrounds us wherever we may be and which we then always erect around ourselves and consider more necessary than the form of our own body, consists of the residues of sensory experience to which the muscular sensations of our body, the sensitivity of our skin, and the structure of our own body all contribute. As soon as we have learned to experience ourselves and ourselves alone as the center of this space, whose coordinates intersect in us, we have found this precious kernel, the initial capital investment so to speak, on which architectural creation is based - even if for the moment it seems no more impressive than a lucky penny. Once the ever-active imagination takes hold of this germ and develops it according to the laws of the directional axes inherent in even the smallest nucleus of every spatial idea, the grain of mustard seed grows into a tree and an entire world surrounds us. Our sense of space [*Raumgefühl*] and spatial imagination [*Raumphantasie*] press toward spatial

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

²⁷ Although it is highly probable, almost evident, that Loos reacted to Schmarsow's theory, which, in turn, as Gravagnuolo writes, was a reverberation of the long debate on the concept of *Einfüllung* that spanned the whole field of German art and architecture at the end of the 19th century (beginning with the arguments of Robert Vischer, Theodor Lipps and Heinrich Wölfflin), Loos, to my knowledge, nowhere in his writings openly acknowledged his indebtedness to Schmarsow. See B. Gravagnuolo, 1982, pp. 49-51. For the discussion of the empathy theory, see M. W. Schwarzer, 1991, pp. 50-61.

creation [*Raumgestaltung*]; they seek their satisfaction in art. We call this art architecture; in plain words, it is the creatress of space [*Raumgestalterin*].²⁸

"The axial system of coordinates compellingly predefines the natural law that regulates creation. That law necessarily and immediately manifests itself in the important fact that spatial creation never detaches itself from the subject but always implies a relationship with the observer and creator. Every spatial creation is first and foremost the enclosing of the subject; and thus architecture as a human art differs fundamentally from all endeavors in the applied art."²⁹

"We all carry the dominant coordinate of the axial system within ourselves in the vertical line that runs from head to toe.... This means that as long as we desire an enclosure for ourselves, the meridian of our body need not be visibly defined; we ourselves, in person, are its visual manifestation. As the creatress of space, architecture creates, in a way no other art can, enclosures for us in which the vertical axis is not physically present but remains empty. It operates only ideally and is defined as the place of the subject. For this reason, such interior spaces remain the principal element far into the evolution of architecture as an art. The spatial construct is, so to speak, an emanation of the human being present, a projection from within the subject, irrespective of whether we physically place ourselves inside the space or mentally project ourselves into it...."³⁰

"Although we may look at an enclosed building from the outside, we can gain an understanding of the laws of its formation only by understanding its spatial formation from within. [...] It is an act of free aesthetic contemplation when, with the aid of our imagination, we transport ourselves from the exterior that we see before us into the center of the interior space; when, by inquiring into its axial system, we strive to open up remote organism to the analogous feeling within ourselves. As long as we are unable to carry out this redoubling of our consciousness and are unable to complement the outside vantage-point with an interior view, the building remains for us a mere crystallization - like a rocky outcrop that rises before us - whether we view it frontally or from the other side, or even from above."³¹

Let me interrupt Schmarsow's long monologue to underline some crucial points exposed thus far. So, in order to have a space, it was necessary to have a full, living human subject. A corporeal, sentient human being, not the flattened Simmelian bundle of nerves. Whereas the latter, the very incarnation of pure intellect and mentality, could visually and mathematically easily calculate the geometrical center of some abstract, static and geometrical, Behrensian space, to him - as we may suppose - the "real," phenomenological center of the "real," Schmarsowian (or, as I would immediately add, Loosian) space would always tend to elude. In order for the real space to exist, we had to have a real, preserved individual, whose body - together with all the extant senses - could still *feel* and *experience* the very center of such a dense, saturated space. Because, space in Schmarsow was the "emanation of the human subject being present, a projection from within the subject," an "extension" of the human body and projection of its desires and needs. Architecture, accordingly, became the "enlargement of bodily feelings into spatial feelings [*Raumkörper von aussen*]," in other words, an exterior body of the individual itself.³² As much as such real, vital space needed its human "kernel" to be brought to life, so in turn this precious sentient "life-giving" core could not possibly survive outside of its sacred, protective precinct. Both were thus inextricably connected, and yet both seriously endangered, since the times and the Metropolis worked consistently against them. The same as, for Schmarsow, the inner realm of the senses, or touch region [*Tastregion*], constituted the site of bodily values [*Körperwerte*], as opposed to the outer realm, or sight region [*Sehregion*], which was to widen the perceptive sphere into a series of flat visual impressions, so this archaic, almost palpable interior - the empire of touch and voice - symbolized the very sublimated *other* of the outer metropolitan spectacle of flattened, fleeting visual effects.³³

28 A. Schmarsow, 1994, pp. 287-288.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 288.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 293.

32 A. Schmarsow, 1903, p. 107. See also M. Schwarzer, 1991, pp. 54-55.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Space for Schmarsow was thus primarily the interior space.

"One wins a completely false impression, if the superiority of the inside as the only means of measure is not recognized or also only veiled."³⁴

Interior spaces were the testing stones of the artistic impulse [*Prüfstein des Kunstwollens*]...

"the principal element far into the evolution of architecture as an art."³⁵

And if in Schmarsow everything was about the interior, about the enclosing of the "vertical axis" of the human subject, about the wrapping and dressing of one's own body, we can immediately start to question the validity of Obenauer House at Saarbrücken as the optimal example of the incarnated Schmarsow's theory. Though it is true that Schmarsow did put special emphasis on the movement through space - on the elaborated choreography of space created to provoke series of different sensations and feelings, as in a kind of temporal narrative or drama - these rhythmic patterns of movement unfolded always through internal spaces, enclosed inner rooms, passages and indoor courtyards. Transitional areas between such spaces, ways of linking and combining of their different spatial features, the positions of entrances and various types of other spatial openings, thus became points of utmost importance, thresholds where the play of spatial expectations - affirmations or eventual surprises - took place.³⁶ The emphasis, however, was not on picturesqueness, on visual impressions, exterior attractions or absolute control of the sight; moving through distinctive spaces became more like changing of one's clothes according to different feelings and moods, devoid of any narcissistic residues, or any wishes to visually seduce. Visual effects were traded for comfort; the visual put in the service of the tactile.

So, since the...

"movement orthogonally through a series of stairs and terraces"³⁷...

... through the difficult, steeply sloped site in the case of Obenauer house might provoke only a series of different - although undoubtedly exciting and picturesque - visual effects, without, however, giving us in any moment a feeling of being enclosed and protected, I wonder if this example corroborates at best the logic of Schmarsow's peculiar spatial theory. And if we remember Behrens's infatuation with the enticing, but deceptive exterior visual effects and his utter disinterest in dealing with the problems of the interior in the case of the AEG Turbine Factory, the reasons why to start doubting his supposedly correct reading of Schmarsow start to pile up.

But let us not resist any longer the call of the unforeseen seductions of the mysterious "immaterial planes," and finally accept the invitation for the unique exhibition of "essences." Let us enter the "essentialized," abstract space of Mannheim exhibition room, hoping that the sophisticated dance of the refined, subdued ornament that emanated from its walls would reveal the secret of the interior. By being able to compare in the very same hall, at the very same moment, the exhibited essences of the three interrelated and so masterfully arranged and complemented media - architecture, sculpture and painting - we should finally be able to grasp their convoluted truths. And yet again - Schmarsowian and Behrensian truths, I would suggest, for we shall look in vain for

34 A. Schmarsow, 1905, p. 12.

35 A. Schmarsow, 1994, p. 289.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 188.

37 K. M. Hays, 1988, pp. 241-242.



FG. 3. Peter Behrens, *Obenauer House*, Saarbrücken, 1905

Source • **Izvor**
Windsor, A. (1985), *Peter Behrens - Architekt und Designer*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, pp. 68-69.

SL. 3. Peter Behrens, *Kuća Obenauer*, Saarbrücken, 1905.

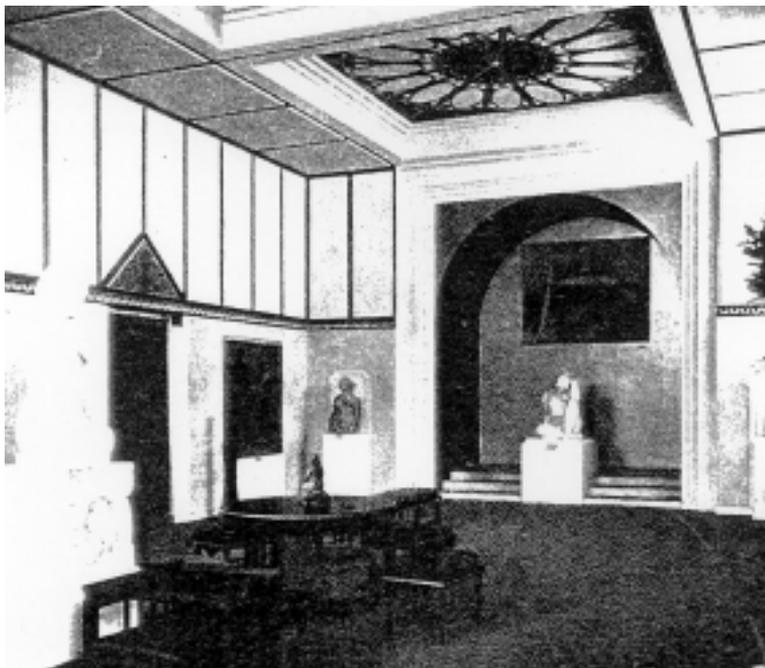


FG. 4. Peter Behrens,
Exhibition Room,
International Art Exhibit,
Mannheim, 1907

Source • **Izvor**

Windsor, A. (1985), *Peter Behrens - Architekt und Designer*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, p. 79.

SL. 4. Peter Behrens,
Izložbena dvorana,
Međunarodna umjetnička
izložba, Mannheim, 1907.



their absolute agreement. Instead of the perfect match, what awaits rather, is an endless game of inversions. We shall get caught in a tireless exchange of presences and representations, of images and things; defeated by the unusual collapse of languages, the plunder of words, and the confusing, destructive noise of overlapping voices in the unique - "stereometric" and "abstract" - Behrensian Tower of Babel. Whence all the translators fled, and where all the dictionaries got lost.

Schmarsow, as we by now already know, in his attempt to base all artistic creation on the feelings of the body, differentiated between the arts of painting and sculpture, and the peculiar art of space. While painting and sculpture were concerned with representing the body, space - although it could be represented in painting and in relief - could only be created and experienced in architecture.³⁸ In other words, while painting and sculpture dealt with *representation*, architecture revealed its truth as immediate *presence*, as a tangible form that resulted directly from the body's interaction with the world. Consequently, there was nothing in it that should ask for contemplation or "reading," recognizing or deciphering; the only way we could appreciate this peculiar art was through the full, concrete, real sensory experience that unfolded in time, and where the sense of sight was accompanied by the pristine, archaic and almost anachronistic suite of the rest of the senses.

And yet, the very moment we crossed the threshold of the supposedly (if Schmarsowian) full, three-dimensional Mannheim interior, we stepped into the domain of the two-dimensional text; presence shrank into representation, sensory experience into sterile reading. Schmarsow's third dimension curiously melted away, and the precariously constructed box disintegrated into mere

³⁸ For further discussion see M. Schwarzer, 1991, p. 54.

layering of surfaces descriptive of the space that they enclosed. Behrens's earnest efforts to *create* an abstract, stereometric space ended in *depicting* its very "abstractness," in signifying its regularity and strict geometry by "painting" them on the walls. His skillful game of precise articulating lines that differentiated regular planes, or, as Wöllfin named it, "the eurythmy of lines and planes" led Niemeyer conclude:

"The spatial structure of Behrens is based on the principle of the absolute clarification of spatial form to mathematical precision."³⁹

However, this static, rigid, crystallized, frozen space (as opposed to Schmarsow's dynamic, animated, "warm," and protective one), was "clarified" not through its own specific, spatial language - as Schmarsow would expect - but through the mathematical precision of the decoration of its walls. The newly established "clarity" required to be read from the depicted ornaments, and visually decoded as such; it was thus more of a text, a supplement, a sign, a message added with utmost care on the otherwise neutral, and therefore - for Behrens - mute and inarticulate surfaces. And this unique sort of "applied mathematics," practiced by Behrens under Lauweriks' blessings, this translating of the...

"abstract mathematical systems into material construction as directly as possible,"⁴⁰

without any transcoding between the two media whatsoever, robbed even the mighty mathematics of its own, "sachlich," scientific and rational roots, and pushed it into the sphere of the mystical, transforming it thereby into mere, unintelligible decoration and ornament. (How Behrens treated the "transcoded" mathematics - the real rationality and *Sachlichkeit* - we already had the opportunity to see in the above elaborated Bernhard case.) Instead of "absolute clarification," what we faced here was rather "mystified clarification," or "obscured clarification," or maybe even "absolute mystification." But the game of mystification of languages just begins.

In Behrens's poetic hands, mathematics and geometry thus calcified into ornament. As if these rigid, regular, abstract decorative forms were just another, strict version of their nervous Secessionist relatives; as if Van de Velde's erotic, sinuous lines (as well as Behrens's own, for that matter), suddenly decided to become straight, without losing, however, their inherent urge to uncritically cover all the surfaces within reach. Although the content of the message changed, the technique remained the same; Behrens seemed to have continued operating within the sphere of graphic art. The space was represented in two dimensions, treated metaphorically - in allusive forms, and ultimately reduced to an image of itself. A new, regular and geometrical image telling the story of a new, "abstract" space, the same as the "painted" facade of the AEG Turbine Factory narrated the fairy tale of a new, ordered society.

Whereas in Saarbrücken Behrens played on the card of movement in order to testify to his belonging to the theory of *Raumgestaltung* (although he thereby forgot that the spaces should be enclosed), in the Mannheim hall he concentrated on the enclosed space, and yet forgot about the movement. There was absolutely no temporal duration required to "experience" this interior (if experience might still be the right word at all). The space revealed itself more as an axiom, an equation, a simple sign or

³⁹ See S. Anderson, *Theory and Teaching of Architecture, The Düsseldorf Period: 1903-1907*, chapter four of the doctoral dissertation, S. Anderson, 1968, p. 162.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148. On the collaboration between Behrens and the Dutch geometer J. L. M. Lauweriks, whom Behrens brought to his *Kunstgewerbeschule* in Düsseldorf in 1904, see pages 144-153.

formula crystallized in its eternal form, which asked for no more than a static visual appreciation. The very moment we entered it, the message was transmitted - we read it from the walls. And yet, the very moment we entered it, we felt as if being outside of it again: the interior became still another rhetorical exterior. The same abstract visual laws, the same aggressive, flattened signs, the same epitome of calculability and measure. It was the space of Metropolis, dragged into the box. But of course, a masked Metropolis, as everything in Behrens, or better yet - repainted, regularized, redesigned one, with no inherent instability and uncertainty allowed. Exterior within the box thus, exterior that sterilely kept reproducing itself. No wonder that the only center we could find was the geometrical, mathematical one; the senses here got mortified again. The space floated, it did not have weight, it lost its third dimension. The interior was a container, a graphic skeleton of space, loquacious walls surrounding the trapped space, killed space, the void. The realm of visibility, the empire of text; where even the voice that accidentally strayed inside tended to lose its stabilizing effects through the endless overlapping of echoes that reverberated helplessly through the empty hole.

The observer here was the intruder: the "full-bodied, classicizing"⁴¹ Maillol's sculptures took over his place - what brings us to the "essence" of sculptures. Yes, it is true that the sculptures were for Schmarsow the "art of volume" or "space filling art," but not necessarily - at least how I understood it - in the sense that they should fill, or give meaning to the overall architectural space around them. On the contrary, they themselves were three-dimensional, they themselves were volume, they filled the space that they themselves occupied, and in that sense - it seems to me - were they meant to be the "space filling art." Because, the real architectural space was supposed to be "filled" - as Schmarsow himself told us - with the "*corporeal, sentient human beings*;" in fact, it was only from the real human beings that the space, as their "external body," could emanate at all.⁴² The space...

"operates ideally and is defined as the place of the subject;... as long as we desire an enclosure for ourselves, the meridian of our body need not be visibly defined; we ourselves, in person, are its visual manifestation."⁴³

So, the sculptures, as the *other* meridian of some *other* "bodies" are absolutely unnecessary for the existence of architectural space, as long as the real human beings are at its center. We might even say that the sculptures, with their own distinctive "vertical axes," compete with their human originals, play the either-or game, and yet are always - in Schmarsow at least - destined to lose the race. Since it is only the real, living human being that could succeed in "instilling new life into the work of art."⁴⁴

For Schmarsow, therefore, if there was no real individual, there could possibly be no real architectural space either, and vice versa; and just because there was still a chance for one of them, the other might also have hoped to survive. No wonder then that Behrens, in his "abstract" space, in his "absence-of-space," where no full human being could possibly survive, insisted so much on the sculptures' own plasticity and corporeality, and on their "insistent sense of occupation of space."⁴⁵ Because it was sculptures here that gave meaning to the "space," the "space" revolved around them, they were its anchorage and core. "Dead" core, however, from which only the "dead" space might emanate. Sculp-

41 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

42 A. Schmarsow, 1994, p. 291.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

45 S. Anderson, 1968, p. 158.

tures in Behrens, as I would suggest, represented - in their "full-bodied, classicizing" forms - the "idealized" humans, robbing the almost already non-existent, dissolved and decayed originals of their own, inherent rights. They were the new virtual subjects for the new virtual space; the "essentialized" actors in the new "essentialized" environment.

So, what we were ultimately left with in the Mannheim exhibition room was a killed space, flattened and dissolved human subjects with their almost irrecoverably deadened senses, sculptures that replaced the "less perfect" originals, and plenty of graphic art. Space was obviously - do we even need to repeat? - not an important protagonist here; Behrens kept persistently assigning it some irrelevant, marginal roles in his plays. And among the depicted, conspicuous messages and self-defining signs yelling from his painted walls, Schmarsow's own prescription that...

"architecture as a human art differs fundamentally from all endeavors in the applied art"...

tended to get lost.⁴⁶ Neither did Behrens seem to care much for the following advice:

"Space must be filled with a life of its own if it is to satisfy us and make us happy. The projection of the three-dimensional spatial intuition that originates fully developed in the human mind thus acquires another dowry on its way into being - namely, a natural tendency to spring to life, the instinct to develop and isolate itself as a self-contained system."⁴⁷

Space as a "self-contained system" "filled with a life of its own," as an enclosure endowed with an "inward structure," and not a "mere expanse of the walls"⁴⁸ - doesn't this at once relegate all considerations of the facade and its ornament, of the very walls and their elaborated details, to some marginal, secondary, if not completely irrelevant position? Doesn't space in Schmarsow "spring to life" as the "three-dimensional spatial intuition.... fully developed in the human mind," and manifest itself in the relationship of its own dimensions and proportions, regardless of the quality of enclosures, continuing its life as a living amalgamation of human impulses created perceptually by its creator and its users? And, in the end, what made Behrens so adamantly stick to the rigid and strict, abstract forms, as possible proofs of his own devotion to Schmarsow's spatial philosophy, when he could have read the very same lines that we do now:

"A pure and rigid form would in the long run prove unbearably oppressive as the everyday setting for human life, even allowing for the marked human preference for regularity and rule."⁴⁹

Or even further:

"The more all articulated forms and tectonic parts deviate from abstract regularity in their basic form (as dictated by their function within the whole), and the more they approach sculptural form, the more they are animated and saturated with the human sensation of force."⁵⁰

Be those enclosing forms regular and abstract, or irregular and sculptural, it ultimately did not matter. All that mattered in Schmarsow - as he kept repeating over and over again - was this hardly graspable and notoriously elusive concept of space. And the same as the ornamentation and decoration of the surrounding walls as added signs and texts, or additional explanations and supplements, became superfluous once the things had been already said in that peculiar spatial language, so the very materials of these enclosures followed closely their destiny.

46 A. Schmarsow, 1994, p. 288.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 292.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 294.

"The moment we see this visual appreciation as the truly essential moment.... then the technical structure and all the expenditure of massive material are reduced to secondary importance; they become means to an aesthetic end.... Thus the whole weight of the material, its welter of forms multiplied over many centuries, might be put aside for a moment at least. The architectural creation would thus stand before the mental eye, still with its varied forms intact, yet pure and accessible to the question that we pose."⁵¹

It was thus this unique and particular "mental eye" that was responsible for proper reading and understanding of space. It was the special "sense of space" and "spatial imagination," along with the knowledge of the difficult spatial language, that were inevitable preconditions for communicating in this three-dimensional, reborn medium. The same as it was necessary to start looking at the calcified, impenetrable and just seemingly unavoidable *problematic* of the age with the mind's eye in order to finally see it, understand it, and eventually change it, so here, in order to build the Schmarsowian space, it was necessary to acquire this new way of *spatial thinking*. And it is precisely this ability of seeing things in three dimensions that I find missing in Behrens, both on the level of essences and the level of spaces. Could it be that he was, as Schmarsow put it, "spatially blind?"⁵² And if he was, then what language did he speak? A rhetorical question, I know, since the answer has been already proposed, but let us still slow down and analyze it a bit. And besides, we haven't yet discussed the "essence" of painting anyway.

For Schmarsow, let us remind ourselves, the art of painting was a representational one: it had every right to depict and represent the imaginary, deep, fictional space; what is more, suggesting such painterly, virtual space was its inherent and fundamental feature. Its essence was thus clearly defined as the optical tension between the three-dimensional representation and the two-dimensional surface. Behrens, however, in his own blind quest for essences, in his own devoted search for "abstract structure" in the arts of painting and sculpture - to complement his supposedly already established "abstract structuring of space"⁵³ - pronounced the new "essence" of painting by exhibiting the work of Hermann Haller,

"whose monochromy flattens the space of representation and complements the general abstraction of the architectural surfaces."⁵⁴

By forcing the painting to signify just the very two-dimensionality of its scaffolding - the planarity of the canvas - both in its content and in the rendering of it, Behrens (through Haller), transformed the painting into a mere sign of itself, a depleted symbol left without the inherited, once possessed words. By making it renounce its own intrinsic right to represent deep space and to exercise freely its "painterly thought," he robbed it of its language, leaving it to helplessly mimic its impoverished, mute message, its ultimate, new, nude "truth." It seems as if Behrens this time remembered better the following Maurice Denis's words, than the ones of Schmarsow:

"Remember that a picture - before it is a battle horse, a nude woman, or some story or other - is essentially a flat surface covered with colors assembled in certain order."

And yet he forgot Riegl's warning that we do, indeed, see a battle horse in a picture, while it is only through an artificial intellectual effort, after a process of decoding, that we can see it as a mere patch of color, the shading of which suggests volume, and the whole thing resembling the appearance of a battle horse.⁵⁵ For

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

53 S. Anderson, 1968, p. 160.

54 K. M. Hays, 1988, p. 242.

55 For further discussion on Riegl's conception of painterly space, see H. Zerner, 1976, pp. 177-188.

Riegl, therefore, as for Schmarsow too, it was absolutely wrong to restrict painting to mere assembling of colors and lines, to the sterile game of configurations, depriving it thereby of its intrinsic right to represent deep space.

Be it one way or another, Behrens, having robbed painting of its century-long language, got in possession of the precious tools - the invaluable pictorial devices: foreshortenings, perspectives, shadings, colors, contours and lines. So what did he do with them? (Another rhetorical question, I guess.) He "applied" them on architecture. The same as he already did with mathematics and geometry, the same as he kept doing with history and building tradition all the time. Applying and distorting. Without proper transcoding, and therefore - I would even add - without proper understanding either. It seems to me as if he - while following Denis's precepts for defining the essence of his flattened paintings - accepted and applied Riegl's theory of painting (and Schmarsow's own, for that matter), but, paradoxically, on the huge, appealing architectural canvas, instead of the usual painterly one. On the one of gargantuan scale, big enough for his *Übermensch* appetites. It is here that he would start to create his fictional, imaginary spaces; to paint the redesigned third dimensions instead of letting the real ones appear. Representation instead of presence; images instead of things. And yet - stolen representation, since the painting was left nude in its two-dimensionality and mute in an unwilling silence to *present* its newly realized truth. No wonder that he insisted so much on architectural walls' planarity: the wall became a canvas, a flattened background prepared to be covered with colors and lines, a neutral surface on which to deposit one's dreams. The carrier of drawings, the narrator of tales - it spread the rumors of a non-existent rationality, of an analogous, parallel world.

Whereas in the Mannheim exhibition room the fictive abstract rationality was to be painted on the carefully prepared, neutral white surface devoid of any properties of its own, in the case of the AEG Turbine Factory Behrens had a much more difficult task. There he was constrained to paint with the far more limited palette: with two colors only - the one of iron, and the one of glass. And neither of them seemed to him particularly attractive. But then, he remembered, things were not that bad: he was allowed to broaden that sober, poor and unappealing palette by adding thousands of imaginary nuances, thousands of forgotten tones. He could dismiss the original words, step out of the limits of their restricted vocabulary, and start inventing new ones. He could, ultimately, work completely against their authentic meanings, and give his poetic creativity free reign, as long as these majestic, though strange and hardly intelligible words continued murmuring the "truths" of the dominating historical forces. So he did not even bother learning the peculiar, complicated languages of his newly acquired "colors and lines," of his newly gained "paint," in order to uncover their own complex syntax that would allow him to stay within the logic of the discourse. In the age of dominators, he forgot about the humbleness of a student; in the times of hasty moves, he did not have patience to listen and learn. And so he did not hear these words either:

56 A. Loos, 1962, *Architektur* (1910), pp. 302-318.

57 A. Loos, 1982, *The Principle of Cladding* (1898).

58 A. Loos, 1982, *Building Materials* (1898).

59 Let me refer here briefly back to the stated problem of the possibility of different interpretations of the structureless concrete corner infills and the "load-bearing" central glass plane on the "front" facade of the Factory. As Anderson concludes, the ambiguities are too obvious to encourage the belief that Behrens was unaware of the ambiguities he had established. Anderson further proposes that the inherent ambiguities of the factory and its inversion of classical form are consistent with Behrens's will to mark his *resigned* endorsement of industrial civilization, what would, in other words, categorize such conscious inversions as a kind of critical detachment from the Rathenau's program. Although Behrens accepted the inevitable historical destiny resignedly, it seems to me that - once he had recognized his own particular historical duty - he set out to accomplish it quite seriously and devotedly. So, I would not doubt his earnest intention to express the essence of the dominating powers; I would not categorize such confusions as critical jokes or anecdotes, no matter how likely this might at first seem. What I would suggest, rather, is that all the confusions, or better, deliberate ambiguities, stem from his conscious rejection to master the properties and vocabulary of materials that he dealt with, as well as from his misinterpreted Rieglian "will" to play the game *against* the rules and laws of the game. Because, although Bernhard (who knew the techniques and "secrets" of materials) warned him about the possible dangers, and was displeased that concrete was used against its "nature," Behrens refused to listen, and asserted his own "creative" and obstinate will. And I cannot but refer here once again to Loos's insightful thoughts concerning the learning of the languages of materials. For elaboration of Anderson's standpoints, see S. Anderson, 1981, p. 65.

"I have not fulfilled my duty as an artist by creating freely and giving free reign to my fantasy... No. Instead I tip-toed into workshops like the man in the blue apron. And I begged him: Let me into your secrets!"⁵⁶

"Every material possesses a formal language which belongs to it alone and no material can take on the forms proper to another. As these forms develop out of each individual material's potential for application and from the building procedures proper to it, they have grown up with and through the material. No material permits any intrusion on its repertoire of forms. Anyone who still dares to make such an intrusion is branded by the world as a forger. Art has nothing to do with forgery, with the lie!"⁵⁷

The architect is "king" in the realm of materials not because he can transform them at will or reassemble them in any context (design them), but because he knows the language of each perfectly, and thus knows the limits of each.⁵⁸ But Behrens was not a "king" any more; he was, as we know, rather an *Übermensch*, so he thought that he didn't have to learn languages. He thought that he could just as well steal them - as he did with painting in the Mannheim exhibition room, or invent them - as he was going to do in the AEG case. The game of robbery and substitution, of presences and representations, of transparency and mystification, continued. And since Behrens did not want to learn the real properties of his new materials - iron and glass - (he did not like them anyway), he did not grasp the real transparency of glass either. His was more of an opaque glass, robbed of its own intrinsic qualities and loaded in turn with new significations. A neutral support for geometry, a bearer of new meanings, a sign of the new times. A Venturian sign, a citizen of the painted *Plakatwelt*, and yet - the outcast from it, since it forgot its own irrelevancy and started preaching the illusions of one-and-only truth. Although Behrens celebrated glass and extolled it as such - as the advertisement for the new *Kultur* based on labor as the new spiritual value - he did not let it speak by itself. As if he was afraid that the glass might reveal the real truth, as if he was aware that the glass knew too much. So he was neither after finding its real essence - doesn't this sound already familiar? - nor after mastering its own language, and still less was he interested in learning about the enormous powers and disastrous dangers of transparency. Instead, he painted it: he painted with glass, he painted on glass, painted its supposed strengths, while keeping the dangers under "heroic" control. Ultimately he disabled it, mutilated it, blinded it. That is why I said that the Cyclopean eye of the AEG "temple facade" was blind. One could not really see through Behrensian windows in order to discover the truth of the interior; giant as they were, the windows did not let the curious glances protrude their thick theatrical make-up. And even if they suddenly willfully decided to forget their theatrical roles, to gain back their stolen transparency and start hinting at the shameful truth, Behrens prevented them from doing so by raising them on the tall majestic podium which not even the most curious glances might ever surmount. But we already know this story quite well.⁵⁹

So, let us thus leave the infinite illusions of Behrens's picture plane and get back to the reality of space; let us depart from the deceptive realm of flattened representations and immerse into the complexity of presence. Let us go back to my initial tentative assumption of eventual mirroring of *essences* and *spaces*; of the parallel between *spatial thinking* and seeing with the *mind's eye* on the level of essences, and the same complex process on the level of spaces.

If the essence of the age revealed itself in an enormously complicated spatio-temporal model of perpetually mutable, conflictual, multiform and multirelational, overdetermined structure, so its spatial counterpart in the domain of the real, built spaces, could not have been an easy and simple, planar and depicted model either. It is precisely this suffering and enduring the changes of the dynamic and dangerous structure, accepting the challenge of the suicidal game of multiple equations with multiple unknowns while trying at the same time to understand its infinitely perplexed logic and ever-changing, ever-transgressing rules, that would make Wittgenstein state:

"I can play according to certain rules with the pawns on my chessboard. But I could also imagine a game in which I play with the rules themselves: then the rules of chess are the pawns of my game and the rules of the game are, for example, the laws of logic."⁶⁰

And, as we may expect, this same painfully difficult theoretical and logical spatio-temporal game was recognized and transcoded to the level of the built world, but only by those patient and insightful players who could bear mastering its complex rules, by those who were not - as Schmarsow already suggested - "spatially blind."

"I really would have had something to show which is the disposition of the rooms for living in space, rather than on a plane - floor by floor - as has been done up to now. Through this invention, I could save mankind much labour and time in evolution. For this is the great revolution in architecture: the freeing of plan in space!... The only great revolution in the field of architecture is the solution of the plan in space.... As man will one day succeed in playing chess on a three-dimensional board, so too other architects will solve the problem of the three-dimensional plan."⁶¹

So Loos established a new game. Following Schmarsow's directions, he set out to define its precise syntax and grammar, to distill its elaborated laws and rules, hoping in vain that the others would follow. But the chess in space turned out to be too difficult an enterprise, and only the rare were willing to try to take part in it, the same as only the rare were able to accept the reality of the times in all its synchronic complexity. Because, only the very few were willing to try to change their perceptual apparatuses in order to give themselves a chance to participate in such demanding new games at all. Regardless of the others, however, Loos patiently practiced his enchantedly embraced spatial mental tool. Echoing Schmarsow's words, he would state:

"... the architect thinks first of the effect he wishes to achieve, then he constructs the image of the space he will create in his mind's eye. The effect is the sensation that the space produces in the spectator, which may be fear and fright, as in a prison; compassion, as in a funerary ornament, a sense of warmth, as in his own house; forgetfulness, as in a tavern. The effect is achieved by means of material and form."⁶²

"In this way I have taught my pupils to think in three dimensions, to think in the cube."⁶³

And this is how Schoenberg would describe Loos's efforts to stay within the logic of the discourse:

"... when I see one of Loos's works I am aware of a difference right away: here as in the work of a great sculptor, I see a non-composite, immediate, three-dimensional conception.... Here everything is thought-out, imagined, composed and moulded in space as if all the structures were transparent; as if the eye of the spirit were confronted by space in all its parts and as a totality simultaneously."⁶⁴

If language is constitutive of thought, if language precludes the way one thinks and perceives the world, and if this unique spatial

60 L. Wittgenstein, quoted in F. Waismann, 1977, *Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis*, Oxford.

61 A. Loos, 1929. Loos gave an account of the conception of the *Raumplan*, after being disappointed by his failure to secure a commission in the building exhibition in Stuttgart in 1929. Quoted from Y. Safran, *Adolf Loos: The Archimedean Point*, p. 28.

62 A. Loos, 1962, *Das Prinzip der Bekleidung* (1898), pp. 105-112.

63 A. Loos, 1962, *Meine Bauerschule* (1913), pp. 322-325.

64 A. Schoenberg, *Adolf Loos, zum 60. Geburtstag, am 10. Dezember 1930*.

FG. 5. a Adolf Loos, *Müller House*: view of garden facade, Prague, 1929

Source • **Izvor**
Gravagnuolo, B. (1982), *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, p. 201

SL. 5. a Adolf Loos, *Kuća Müller*: vrtno pročelje, Prag, 1929.

FG. 5. b Adolf Loos, *Müller House*: interior view

Source • **Izvor**
Gravagnuolo, B. (1982), *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, p. 203

SL. 5. b Adolf Loos, *Kuća Müller*: interijer

FG. 5. c Adolf Loos, *Müller House*: interior view

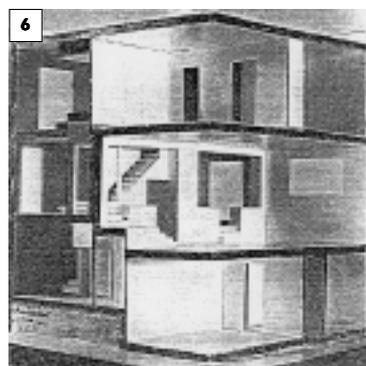
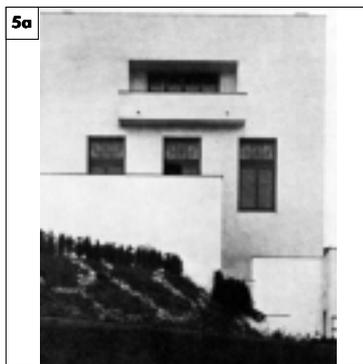
Source • **Izvor**
Max Risselada, *Documentation of 16 Houses*, in: *Raumplan versus Plan libre: Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, 1919-1930*, (edited by Max Risselada), New York, Rizzoli, 1988:92

SL. 5. c Adolf Loos, *Kuća Müller*: interijer

FG. 6. Adolf Loos, *Cube House*: photograph of opened model, 1929

Source • **Izvor**
Safran, Y., *Adolf Loos: The Archimedean Point*, in: *The Architecture of Adolf Loos, An Arts Council Exhibition*, pp. 26-35.

SL. 6. Adolf Loos, *Kubična kuća*: fotografija otvorenog modela, 1929.



language was recognized by Loos as the only way of thinking that enabled seeing and understanding the reality, and staying within its sober realm instead of being projected into a Behrensian painted, beautified, redesigned imitation of it, then the limpid transparency of such a precious tool should be jealously cherished and still further purified by freeing it tirelessly from all "extraneous mixtures," from all pictorial characteristics which might obscure its clear spatial logic. Only by staying within the strict syntax and grammar of this recognized powerful linguistic tool, by respecting the precise rules of its rigorous game, by refusing to borrow drawn metaphors that might eventually spoil its perfect autonomy, could one avoid the danger of sliding to another language, to another medium, or eventually to another reality - to the shallow, painted "parallel layer" of the AEG Turbine Factory's curious wall.

But, whereas in that ethereal, deceptive layer (which veiled, obscured and mystified all the necessary dissonances of reality by uniting them in impossible syntheses), only the depleted, hollow traces of individuals might have been projected, Loos realized (maybe with Schmarsow whispering the secret in his ear) that in order to preserve the individual, it was imperative to build him a space; in order to recover his mortified body and almost dissolved soul it was necessary to give him the interior. It was Loos who attempted to bring back order

"into the world which the man who does not want to be himself leaves in the hands of the architect."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Else Laske-Schüler, 1930, in *Adolf Loos: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag*, Vienna.

But the truth of the interior - Loos was aware - could still exist only if being limited by the *other* truth, the one of the exterior; the value of the concrete could still have sense only if conditioned by the presence of the *other*, of the abstract. No positive, substantial values as such could be granted any more: in the age of relations, things started to be defined only through differences, meanings derived only from *the other*.

"The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead, all its richness must be manifest in the interior."⁶⁶

Dwelling in Loos thus became an act of resistance, a sign of permanence in the unsettling flux of the time, a gesture of subsisting in the age of nihilism. It is on this door that our Odysseus should have knocked in order to find the surviving space along with all its lost values. Jealously guarding its precious pulsating kernel on one of its sides, the wall - the limit - continued its silent discourse with the abstract space-time laws on the other; while taking greatest care of the place of the interior, it acknowledged the non-place of the exterior. Just because both truths were accepted, both were destined to survive. And this was the real Loosian dialectics. A fully developed one-man-game, not any more the Behrensian-Bernhardian contrived, unwilling embrace of inadequate, imbalanced opposites.

"During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature, but by historical circumstances as well."⁶⁷

But obviously, as it seems to me and as I have tried to suggest in this paper, not even belonging to the same historical circumstance could have guaranteed either the uniqueness in "the manner in which human sense perception was organized," or the agreement in which "medium should it be accomplished." It ultimately, deep-down, still depended on one's own decision, on one's willingness to see properly, on one's efforts to understand, and to give oneself a chance to learn. Because, as Benjamin later in the text says:

"Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception - or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building..."⁶⁸

It seems to me that these lines summarize and provide the answers for the whole exposed problematic, although maybe not in the sense Benjamin himself would expect. Namely, whereas Loos, by mastering his difficult dialectics, by acknowledging equally both the truth of the interior and the one of the exterior, preserved both touch and sight, both place and displacement, both the human individual in the fullness of his senses, and the very metropolitan incarnation of mentality and intellect, Behrens accomplished neither of the two. Whereas Loos recognized the right, complicated and difficult spatial medium in which the human sense perception could unfold in all its intertwining richness (comprising the basic duality of touch and sight), and where the ambiguous and elusive structure of "truth" might ultimately be understood, Behrens flattened them all in one impossible, simplified and ultimately fictitious "third term." In Loos, thus, the artistic act revealed inevitably an *otherness*, a conflict, but it did not set out to resolve it, nor to give consolation for it. On the contrary, it defined the space in which such conflict could emerge

⁶⁶ A. Loos, 1931, *Heimatskunst* (1914).

⁶⁷ W. Benjamin, 1968.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

in all its tones, in its most complex and at the same time most comprehensible forms. And thus it surpassed all conciliatory "styles," and reached "its fulfillment only through the hopeless." Behrens, on the other hand, lost both real touch and real sight, where both of them constituted the real, complex, conflictual truth. In his hands they both melted away, evaporated in ethereal dreams. All what remained - and what he certainly expected from his benevolent spectators to do - was this "attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building." The deeper such concentration was, the easier they flew and remained helplessly glued to the famous building's magical and deceptive ideological face. The real touch would probably ruin the game and make them wake from the dream; the same as the authentic sight would shatter their comfortable complacency and hinted at possible lies. Therefore, there was no touch in Behrens, and even the remaining sight was deranged. No touch, no voice, no space. Especially no space, with its difficult but rewarding language, and its analytical, lucid thought. All in all, it was just a painting. A consoling painting, a surrealist painting, not the realist one any more. A commissioned painting, what is more, with its content prescribed. A painting put in the service of consoling man - "a course unto his own death bed," that is. I do not know whether he was trying at all (he was, in the end, a painter), but he might have just as well kept reading and rereading Schmarsow's lines for hundred times, and still be unable to learn. Maybe he was spatially blind, after all?

In 1948, writing about his disappointment as a teacher, Schoenberg mentioned his attempts in vain to teach his pupils some discoveries in the field of multiple counterpoint.

"This experience taught me a lesson. Secret science is not what an alchemist would have refused to teach you; it is a science which cannot be taught at all. It is inborn or it is not there.

This is also the reason why Thomas Mann's Adrian Leverkühn does not know the essentials of composing with twelve tones. All he knows has been told him by Mr. Adorno, who knows only the little I was able to tell my pupils. The real fact will probably remain secret science until there is one who inherits it by virtue of an unsolicited gift."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See Y. Safran, *Adolf Loos: The Archimedean Point*, p. 33.

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FG. 7. Peter Behrens with Karl Bernhard, *AEG Turbine Factory*, Berlin, 1908-1909

Source • **Izvor**
Frampton, K. (1985), *Modern Architecture - A Critical History*, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, p. 113.

SL. 7. Peter Behrens s Karlom Bernhardom, *Tvornica turbina AEG*, Berlin, 1908-1909.



Sažetak • Summary

O biti i prostoru - Behrens i Loos

Promišljanje i preispitivanje uloge arhitekture, analiza njenih snaga, mogućnosti i granica, te traganje za identitetom, pozicioniranjem i poslanjem u datom povijesnom trenutku, nezaobilazna je i kontinuirana preokupacija discipline koja pretendira na epistemološki status. Pojedine točke na povijesnoj koordinati, međutim - plodnosna mjesta pragova i tranzicija - otvaraju posebno indikativne kuteve gledanja i instruktivne perspektive. Jedna takva pukotina najavila se na prijelazu XIX. u XX. stoljeće: povijesni moment otkrio se u beskrajno kompleksnom modelu konfliktne, polimorfne, predterminirane, mutirajuće prostorno-vremenske strukture. Epoha upletena u schönbergovski "smrtni ples principa" navijestila je svoju bit u nemogućnosti postojanja jedne jedinstvene biti kao apsolutne, fiksne i univerzalne kategorije, te se predstavila u svoj svojoj zahtjevnoj nestabilnosti, temporalnosti, efemeralnosti i relativitetu.

Napor otkrivanja pravila i zakonitosti novonaslućene dinamične multidimenzionalne strukture i paralelnog formiranja novih okvira gledanja i novih koncepata razmišljanja, u tom trenutku istiskuje anakronistične pokušaje simplificiranog, plošnog reprezentiranja pojedinačnih, izoliranih i "pripitomljenih" aspekata kompleksnog povijesnog trenutka. Prostorni model nameće se pritom kao optimalni teoretski model za promišljanje zamršene strukture epohe, te istodobno sugerira medij arhitekture kao prirodno ponuđeni okvir za njegovo adekvatno predstavljanje i ispitivanje. Kako arhitektonski prostor odgovara na izazov simboličkog prostora? Kako fizički, izgrađeni okvir reflektira i utjelovljuje otkrivenu problematiku vremena? - pitanja su analizirana na arhitektonskom i teoretskom opusu Petera Behrensa i Adolfa Loosa. Kao teoretska potka analize, kao svojevrsna ishodišna točka koordinatnog sustava u kojoj se sve koordinate istodobno susreću ali i iz koje se radikalno razilaze, korištena je teorija prostora Augusta Schmarsowa - *Theorie der Raumgestaltung* - na koju se oba autora, direktno ili indirektno, referiraju.

Analiza predlaže neočekivani preokret: dok se Behrens direktno poziva na Schmarsow-ovu filozofiju prostora, njegovo je djelo ne uspijeva prakticirati. Loos, pak, bez otvorenog priznavanja nove prostorne teorije, suvereno je i kontinuirano utjelovljuje i gradi. Behrens, po vokaciji slikar, propovijedajući prostor, ostaje fiksiran na arhitektonsku fasadu kao na novootkriveno, primamljivo i sugestivno gigantsko ideološko platno. Stavljajući svoje nesumnjive kreativne potencijale u službu predstavljanja brzopleto očitanih i plošno protumačenih "dominantnih povijesnih sila", Behrens s neskrivenim entuzijazmom pristupa arhitekturi kao ideološkom aparatu i prakticira je kao instrument "produkcije značenja", kao medij re-representacije: medij prepisivanja i subjektivnog oslikavanja zatečenog kaotičnog svijeta, podajući mu pritom svojim *Übermensch* snagama varljivi površinski efekt stabilnosti, smisla, jedinstvenosti i reda. Loos, arhitekt *par excellence*, vraća nasilno "spljoštenom" mediju uskraćenu treću dimenziju: retoričkoj re-representaciji plohe suprotstavlja prezentnost razvijenog prostornog modela; limitirajuća pitanje forme i stila relativizira globalnim promišljanjem arhitektonske prakse. Loos u arhitektonskom sklopu utjelovljuje komplicirani teoretski model strukture epohe, i na taj način rehabilitira arhitekturu kao instrument instruktivnog, trodimenzionalnog gledanja i percipiranja, i prefokusiranog, inkluzivnog razmišljanja i razumijevanja.

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