Stanislaus von Moos
Le Corbusier and Loos

Translated from the German by Margaret Sobiesky

Stanislaus von Moos is Professor of Architecture at the Universität Zürich and author of *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis* published by the MIT Press.

1 (frontispiece). Adolf Loos, advertisement for Goldmann & Salatsch in the journal *Das Andere*, 1903

1. In 1925, the year of the international decorative arts exhibition in Paris, Le Corbusier published his *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, a book still referred to by Reyner Banham in 1960 as "a polemical work of only local interest" and which, symptomatically enough, was never translated into a foreign language.[1]

The thesis of the work (which was also documented in the exhibition's Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau) should be recognizable to anyone even a little familiar with Adolf Loos's work: applied art, or the artistic development of everyday objects, is an anachronism. And, further, anonymous, crafted, or industrially finished mass-produced products for daily use are replacing the traditional "arts décoratifs."

Le Corbusier presents the book as an exemplary selection of things "free from decoration," as an "apology for what is simply banal, indifferent, or void of *artistic intention*." The whole work is an invitation for the eyes and intellect to "take pleasure in the company of such things and perhaps to rebel against the flourish, the stain, the distracting din of colours and ornaments"; "to dismiss a whole mass of artefacts, some of which are not without merit[;] to pass over an activity that has sometimes been disinterested, sometimes idealistic." (Here Le Corbusier is probably referring to the work of his own forerunners, such as Ruskin, Galle, Prouve, Riemerschmid, Guimard, and Behrens.) The book is further an appeal to "disdain the work of so many schools, so many masters, so many pupils, and to think thus of them: 'they are as disagreeable as mosquitoes.'"[2]

The illustrations in the chapter from which those phrases come give an overview of what Le Corbusier proposes as a substitute for the applied arts, in the sense of material economy and functionally developed modern business culture: an American skyscraper, which in an emblematic way introduces the chapter; cars turbines, and an office ceiling lamp from a bank identified as the First National Company in Detroit; various cigarette cases, folders, bags, and leather accessories; a dentist's laboratory and office space in the City-National Bank in Tuscaloosa; men's shoes and spats, pipes and straw hats; file cabinets and chairs; carafes and glasses (which in 1921 began appearing in the still-life paintings of Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant); and finally an "Innovation" travel trunk, a bird cage, and a cabin from a luxury liner.

The individual chapters of *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* were published as articles in the magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau*, the "revue internationale de l'activité contemporaine" that Le Corbusier, Ozenfant, and Paul Dermée founded in 1920. It is interesting that the examples Le Corbusier uses to illustrate his text are also products found in the advertisement section of the magazine. In other words, the products that document the architect's story come for the most part from material circulated by the manufacturers with whom the magazine had advertising contracts. Le Corbusier — who, among those on the editorial board, was the one busy with the preparation and closing of advertising contracts[3] — tried to design these advertisements himself in order to even more precisely tune and relate the journalistic and advertising techniques for marketing a new life-style. So, for example, he published an entire series of advertisements for the travel trunk produced by the Innovation firm, in which each advertisement was introduced with a signed statement by the architect about the role of types and standards in modern industry. After its appearance in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, the Innovation series was published as an advertising brochure in a run of three thousand copies.[4]

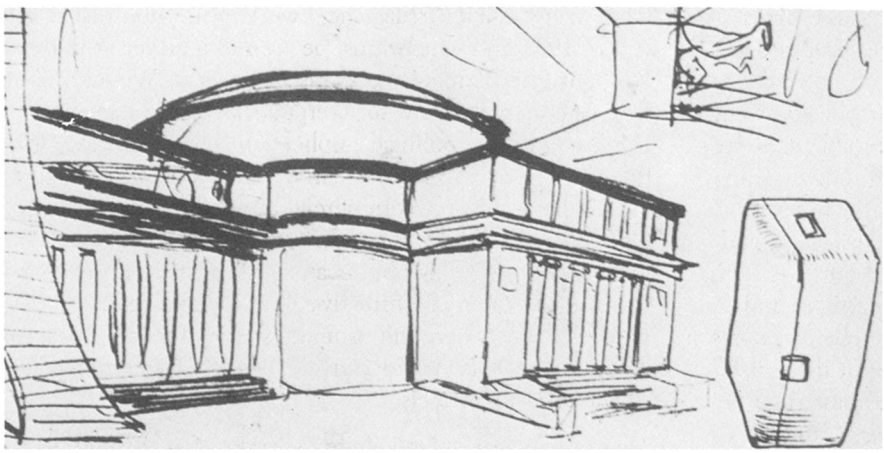
Briefly said, as a whole *L'Esprit Nouveau* can be viewed as an attempt by the industrial elite of France to understand the logic of their own industrial activity and to raise an awareness that "artistic design" is not needed for its products. In his article "Pédagogie," which was published at the end of 1923 and which must be seen as a criticism of the Bauhaus (the Bauhaus week was just over in Weimar), Le Corbusier explains how to interpret this design theory. (I won't go into the political implications of this ideology for the artistic avant-garde or for industry.) He develops a kind of Darwinian law for commercial and industrial image-types: he outlines the development of types ("standards") in the world of everyday objects as a process affected by the competition of private initiative in a way analogous to natural selection, where the strongest species survive. Then he describes what he considers as the "nature" of commercial and industrial products:

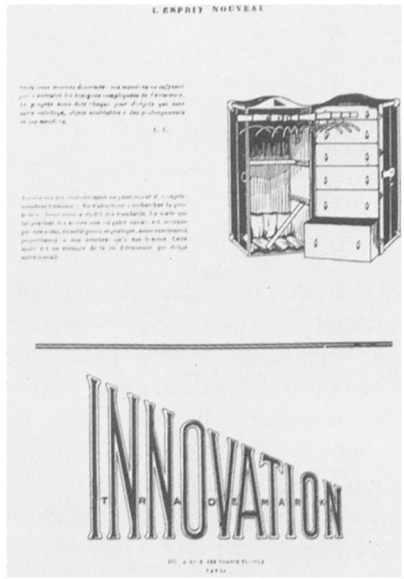
> The good product within industry is developed by the worker, through successive stages, through additions from acquired knowledge . . . and through fruitful experience. . . . The good product comes from this base, from which quality elements are brought to the top. Seen in this way, it is an illusion that the basis for a feeling for quality can come from and be absorbed from above, the good product, that is the "standard-type." The "standard-type" is the perfectly made product. . . . The "standard-type" is a result.[5]

In other words, and now I quote from Loos on the same problem, the necessity of artistic design in everyday objects, "Revolutions always come from below. And this 'below' is the workshop."[6]

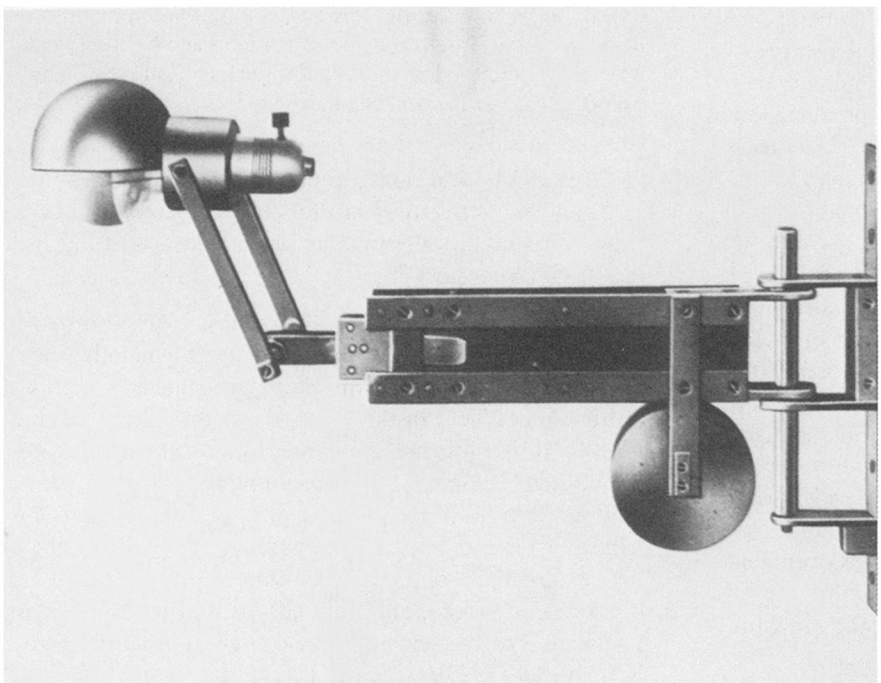
The thrust of Le Corbusier's argument is clear. "Formkurse" as taught in the Bauhaus, or, more generally, the building up of an ideal form-grammar applicable to all utility objects, goes in the wrong direction. The logic, the form of a utensil is not something that can be applied from the outside, but something, according to Le Corbusier, that develops from the necessity of an evolution, from the nature of the problem and the production process. I cite here the example of a corner reinforcement for a travel trunk in one of Le Corbusier's ads for the Innovation firm. Compare it to the "extendable electrical wall lamp" from K. J. Jucker (1923), which is an example of an "industrial design" whereby, in light of Le Corbusier's criticism of Bauhaus teaching methods, the form is not a result of an industrial revolution but rather of an a priori aesthetic decision.

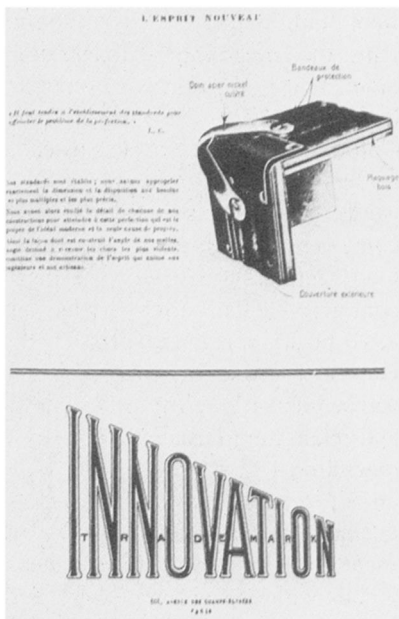
2. Loos, sketch of a project for the church commemorating Kaiser Franz Joseph's jubilee and of a trunk, 1899





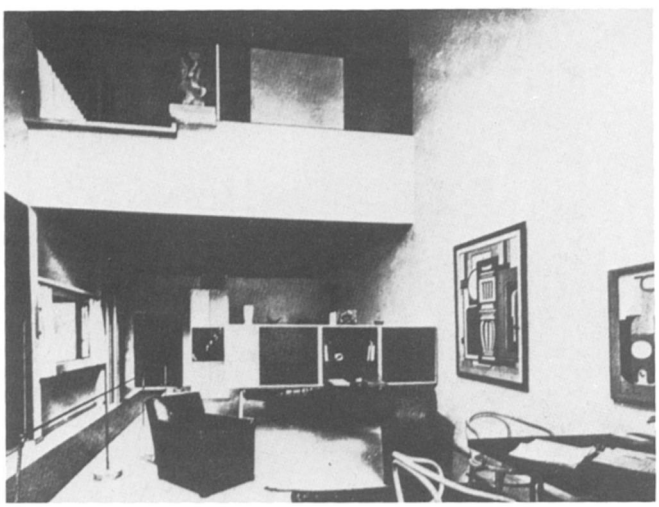
3. Le Corbusier, Innovation advertisement in *L'Esprit Nouveau*





4. Le Corbusier, Innovation advertisement in *L'Esprit Nouveau*

5. K. J. Jucker, extendable electric wall lamp, an apprentice project at the Bauhaus, 1923



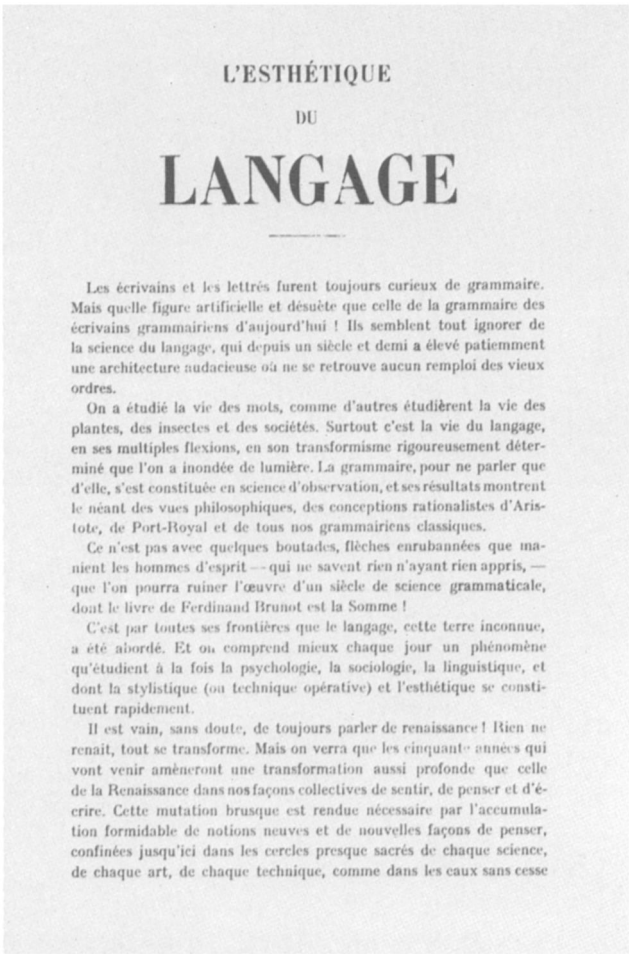
6. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau at the decorative arts exhibition in Paris, 1925

In the terminology of dadaism, the corner reinforcement could be described as an industrial "ready-made," and in fact Le Corbusier's businesslike culture consisted in those years of these kinds of "ready-mades." For confirmation, it is enough to recall the interior of the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau. The furnishings are to a large degree composed of anonymous manufactured products, for example, from manufacturers chosen by the architect from an assortment of firms like Innovation or Roneo — firms well known to the reader of *L'Esprit Nouveau* from the advertisements.[7] In this context the bentwood chairs from the traditional Thonet series are significant. Loos himself, as was clear since the Museum Café (1899), also swore by bentwood chairs; he even concluded once that he and Le Corbusier had the same taste, although he could not resist adding that Le Corbusier unfortunately chose the wrong Thonet model for his "Intérieurs."[8] (He might have been right, because the chair in the right foreground of the well-known interior photograph is probably the most uncomfortable product from the whole Thonet series.)

There is no mention of an attempt to subject architecture, wall decoration, and interior design to a unifying formal concept — such as in Gerrit Rietveld's Schroeder house from the same period. Basically, with his prototypical dwelling Le Corbusier must have had in mind something quite similar to Loos, who was obsessed with the bourgeois house from the era around 1800 (the advertisements of Goldmann & Salatsch in *Das Andere* can serve as illustrations):

> In those days one decorated his home the way one outfits himself today. We buy our shoes from the shoemaker, coat, pants, and waistcoat from the tailor, collars and cuffs from the shirtmaker, hats from the hatter, and walking stick from the turner. None of them knows any of the others, and yet everything matches quite nicely.[9]

The arguments in *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* tie themselves back to Loos point for point. To find all the analogies would be a meaningless Sisyphian exercise. One can just pick a starting point, for example, Le Corbusier's admiration for English men's tailoring and for the functional aesthetic of the American big city and working world.[10] Loos's exclamation from 1898, "The English, the engi-



L'ESTHÉTIQUE
DU
LANGAGE

Les écrivains et les lettrés furent toujours curieux de grammaire. Mais quelle figure artificielle et désuète que celle de la grammaire des écrivains grammairiens d'aujourd'hui ! Ils semblent tout ignorer de la science du langage, qui depuis un siècle et demi a élevé patiemment une architecture audacieuse où ne se retrouve aucun remploi des vieux ordres.

On a étudié la vie des mots, comme d'autres étudièrent la vie des plantes, des insectes et des sociétés. Surtout c'est la vie du langage, en ses multiples flexions, en son transformisme rigoureusement déterminé que l'on a inondée de lumière. La grammaire, pour ne parler que d'elle, s'est constituée en science d'observation, et ses résultats montrent le néant des vues philosophiques, des conceptions rationalistes d'Aristote, de Port-Royal et de tous nos grammairiens classiques.

Ce n'est pas avec quelques boutades, flèches enrubannées que manient les hommes d'esprit — qui ne savent rien n'ayant rien appris, — que l'on pourra ruiner l'œuvre d'un siècle de science grammaticale, dont le livre de Ferdinand Brunot est la Somme !

C'est par toutes ses frontières que le langage, cette terre inconnue, a été abordé. Et on comprend mieux chaque jour un phénomène qu'étudient à la fois la psychologie, la sociologie, la linguistique, et dont la stylistique (ou technique opérative) et l'esthétique se constituent rapidement.

Il est vain, sans doute, de toujours parler de renaissance ! Rien ne renaît, tout se transforme. Mais on verra que les cinquante années qui vont venir amèneront une transformation aussi profonde que celle de la Renaissance dans nos façons collectives de sentir, de penser et d'écrire. Cette mutation brusque est rendue nécessaire par l'accumulation formidable de notions neuves et de nouvelles façons de penser, confinées jusqu'ici dans les cercles presque sacrés de chaque science, de chaque art, de chaque technique, comme dans les eaux sans cesse

7. Page layout from *L'Esprit Nouveau*

TAFELBILD,
ARCHITEKTUR UND
„GESAMTKUNSTWERK"

Damit wird auch die Rolle des vielumstrittenen Tafelbildes bzw. des für sich stehenden optischen Gebildes (wie das Buch ein selbständiges Gebilde ist, welches unabhängig von Natur oder Architektur seine Existenzberechtigung hat) auf die richtige Bahn gebracht. Solange nämlich der Mensch, im Besitze seines Sinnenvermögens, optische Erlebnisse verlangt, wird die Gestaltung farbiger Harmonien — man könnte sagen: aus Lebenserhaltungsgründen — nicht ausschaltbar sein. Noch vor kurzem war man allerdings anderer Ansicht. Man behauptete, daß das Tafelbild dem Untergange geweiht sei, da es sich in der Anarchie des subjektiven Sehens auflöse; denn unsere Zeit mit ihren Bestrebungen nach kollektivem Denken und Handeln fordert objektive Gestaltungsgesetze. In der Forderung nach kollektiver Gestaltung wurde das Bedürfnis nach farbigen Harmonien anerkannt, mit der besonderen Anwendung, daß der Maler nur die Aufgabe haben sollte, mit seinen Kenntnissen der Farbe die Absichten des Architekten zu unterstreichen.

Diese gegenüber der isolierten l'art pour l'art-Malerei krasse Forderung war nur eine Reaktionserscheinung, die rasch abgelöst wurde von einer allgemeineren und uns gültiger erscheinenden Überlegung: daß keine Materie, kein Arbeitsgebiet von der Eigenart anderer Materien, anderer Gebiete her beurteilt werden kann und daß die Malerei bzw. die optische Gestaltung überhaupt ihre von allen anderen unabhängigen Spezial-Gesetze und Aufgaben hat.

Die Lebensauffassung der vorigen Generation lautete: Der Mensch hat sein Alltagsleben zu leben und in seinen Mußestunden darf er sich mit den Fänomenen „künstlerischer" Gestaltung, mit ihren „durchgeistigten" Werken beschäftigen. Diese Auffassung führte im Laufe der Zeit zu unhaltbaren Zuständen. So z. B. in der Malerei: statt eine Arbeit nach ihrem Ausdrucksgesetz, nach ihrem Verwurzeltsein mit dem Leben einer Kollektivität zu werten,

14

8. Page layout from the *Bauhausbücher*

neers are our Greeks,"[11] could have served as a motto for *Vers une architecture*. Le Corbusier's interest in leatherware, boxes, and undecorated but costly cigarette cases — a category of luxury consumer items — matches the focus of Loos's admiration at the Austrian pavilion at the world's fair in Chicago.[12] What the Bauhaus was for Le Corbusier, the Vienna Werkstätte was for Loos: a well-intentioned but mistaken effort to bring "art" into industry.[13]

Or one can compare the typography of the first issue of Loos's *Das Andere* (1903) with that of *L'Esprit Nouveau*. In both the whole is conventional, the graphic axis is symmetrical, and the typeface is Times Roman. In both the product is presented as a distillation of the centuries-old experience of printing books, as opposed to the artistic composition of the *Ver Sacrum* on the one hand and the *Bauhausbücher* on the other.[14]

Finally, there is, perhaps an isolated case in the history of the classical moderns, the business pragmatism with which *L'Esprit Nouveau* coordinated an idealistic cultural form with commercial advertising. What the cultural infantry of the "new spirit" in the Voisin or Delage automobile or in the built-in furniture from Innovation or Roneo was for the Parisian avant-garde magazine, so the men's suits from Goldmann & Salatsch or the golf equipment from the sport and game warehouse Wilhelm Pohl were for the Viennese *Das Andere*. In the first issue of *Das Andere*, Loos marked the following "for attention": "The firms that are praised in this magazine have paid nothing and do not have to pay anything." One will look in vain in *L'Esprit Nouveau* for the self-irony that inspired Loos to urge, "To prevent abuse, everyone is asked to seize those with demands for money or favors and turn them over to the authorities."[15] No reader will have missed how the adver-

9. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, Villa Fallet, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1905–6

tisements in Loos's magazine coincide with his crusade to raise tastes.

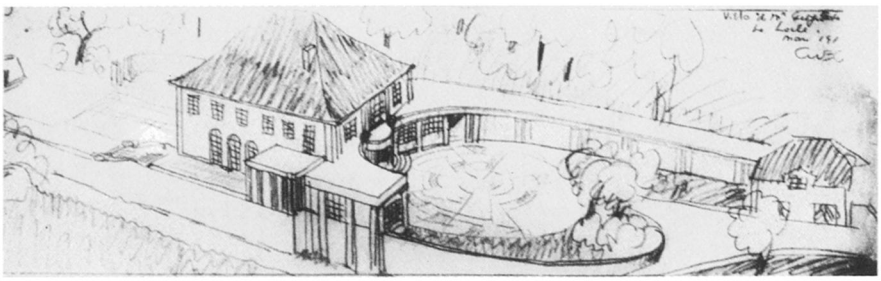
2. Keeping in mind the similarities between the interests of Loos and *Das Andere*, on one side, and Le Corbusier and *L'Esprit Nouveau*, on the other, it seems logical to conclude that Loos delivered the ammunition for the slightly younger man's cultural-political crusade. Presumably he himself saw it this way when he remarked that what little was good about Le Corbusier was stolen from Adolf Loos.[16] This judgment is not completely without foundation. Indeed, when Loos's article "Ornament et crime" was published in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, it was accompanied by an editorial foreword acknowledging Loos as a "predecessor":

> A. Loos is one of the predecessors of the new spirit. Around 1900, when the enthusiasm for Jugendstil was high, in the time of excessive decor, the tumultuous invasion of art in each area of life, Loos began . . . his crusade against the redundancy of these tendencies.
>
> As one of the first to have foreseen the importance of industry and the significance of this for aesthetics, he began with proclamations of certain truths which still seem to us today as revolutionary or as a paradox.[17]

Hardly ten years after this editorial *chapeau*, Le Corbusier sets forth the "Loos case" still more succinctly: "Loos swept under our feet, it was a Homeric cleaning up — precise, philosophical, and logical. Through this Loos has influenced our architectural fate."[18]

How can Le Corbusier's enthusiasm for the ideas of the Viennese architect be explained? Apparently he recognized in Loos a kindred spirit. But one must not be led astray by the introduction in *L'Esprit Nouveau*. To attribute to this "influence" Le Corbusier's personal conflict with the arts-and-crafts reform of Jugendstil and the Vienna Werkstätte would be to neglect his own design development. The conflict probably developed without the influence of Loos.

In November 1908, twelve years before the establishment of *L'Esprit Nouveau* and nine years before his final move to Paris, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret wrote a letter from Paris to his teacher Charles L'Eplattenier in La Chaux-de-Fonds. He announced, "Today the childish dreams are finished, these dreams of quick success, such as one or two German Schools have reached: Vienna, Darmstadt." One has to know precisely what role Darmstadt, and that means Joseph Olbrich, played in the instruction at the art academy in La Chaux-de-Fonds to guess the importance of this break, which was at this point expressed only in words. (And one must know that Olbrich was the personification of precisely the artistic reform Loos was questioning so radically.) Jeanneret's first work as an architect — one thinks of the Villa Fallet in La Chaux-de-Fonds — stands completely in the spell of the Ruskinian tradition. And in 1908–10 his friends from the "cours supérieur de décoration" at the art academy, under the supervision of L'Eplattenier, made decorations for the city crematorium that directly connected with the Ernst-Ludwig house on the



10. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, Villa Favre-Jacot, Le Locle, 1912, sketch

Mathildenhohe in Darmstadt. From the perspective of Paris Jeanneret found all this unbearable:

> This is too easy, and I want to struggle with the truth myself. . . . In my opinion, I say: all this small success is starting too early; the collapse stands before the door. One does not build on sand.[19]

It is true that for this purpose Jeanneret had spent the winter of 1907–8 in Vienna with his friend Léon Perrin. But there is, however surprising it may seem, not a single indication that he knew the name Loos at the time, not even from hearsay.[20] Only in 1913 did Jeanneret first seem to notice the author of "Ornament and Crime."

The first traces of Loos can be found in the article "Le Renouveau dans l'architecture" in the *Revue mensuelle de l'oeuvre*, the organ of the western Swiss section of the Swiss Werkbund, published in Lausanne.[21] The following passage speaks for itself: "Did we become barbarians again, after twenty centuries of culture? Have we involved ourselves again in the manic habit of tattooing?" At the end, Jeanneret quotes the following passage, but without naming the source:

> May I take you to the shores of a mountain lake? The sky is blue, the water is green, and everything is at peace. The mountains and the clouds are reflected in the lake, as are the houses, farms and chapels. They stand there as if they had never been built by human hands. They look as if they have come from God's own workshop, just like the mountains and the trees, the clouds and the blue sky. And everything radiates beauty and quiet. . . .[22]

Why this copious quotation from Loos? Here Loos develops a theme that Jeanneret knew from Alexandre Cingria-Vaneyre's book *Les Entretiens de la Villa du Rouet* (1908). Key examples should be enough to show the similarities. In Cingria's sensitive book, structured as a dialogue, is a plea for the cultural autonomy of the French-speaking western part of Switzerland. The book postulates the Mediterranean character of the "Romandie" and demands a "de-Germanizing": "Our classical spirit, in fact, cannot evolve other than in a Greco-Latin formula."[23] It is certainly no incidental detail that Jeanneret concentrated on the writings of this western Swiss *postiljon* while in Neu-Babelsberg, working in Peter Behrens's office. Indeed Behrens, paradoxically enough, provides the decisive condition for Jeanneret's later architectural efforts to "de-Germanize" his Juraish fatherland and bring it back to a "formule gréco-latine."[24]

The Cingria book also contains the following passage:

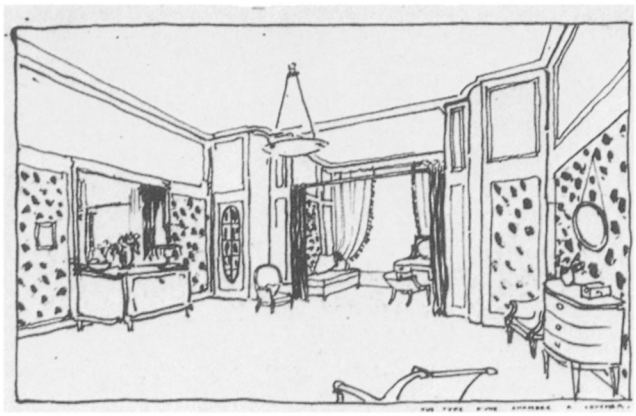
> The mountain calls to her sides regular and calm architectures, which rest there from the interior disorders at her bases. And that is why the Alpine valleys should become decorated with long colonnades, tranquil and forceful peaks, bas-reliefs contoured in the rock, with a geometric and grandiose calculation.[25]

Jeanneret's villas for factory owners in the Jura — such as the Villa Favre-Jacot in Le Locle (1913–14) — reflect this program in all its details. With this background it seems almost inevitable that Jeanneret became interested in Loos's writings on the Alpine building culture. Probably it escaped him therefore that Loos had in mind something very different from the classicism of Behrens that the young Swiss practiced at the time.

Yet, on a closer look, Loos steered himself against precisely the Werkbund reforms Jeanneret would so gladly embrace. There is more to the passage from Loos's "Architektur" than Jeanneret quoted:

> What is the discord, that like an unnecessary scream shatters the quiet? Right at the centre of the farmers' houses, which were not built by them, but by God, stands a villa. Is it the product of a good or of a bad architect? I do not know. All I know is that beauty, peace and quiet have been dispelled.[26]

Jeanneret's furniture and interior designs of 1912–14 document in an important way his aversion to Jugendstil and the Secession, an aversion that is once again of German influence. The key here is not Loos but Paul Mebes, whose picture book *Um 1800* (1908) led a whole generation of designers out of the dead-end of Jugendstil. Jeanneret's designs are, in any case, directly connected to the style of Louis XVI and the Directoire, in that he made pure copies of old furniture or attempted to style their classical forms with a sense of the highest sobriety. Arthur Rüegg rightly makes a comparison between the collabora-



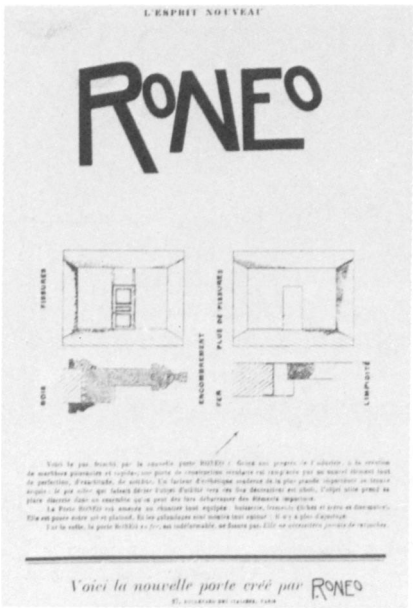
11. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, Villa Schwob, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1916, study for bedroom

12. Adolf Loos, Strasser house, Vienna, 1918–19, dining room

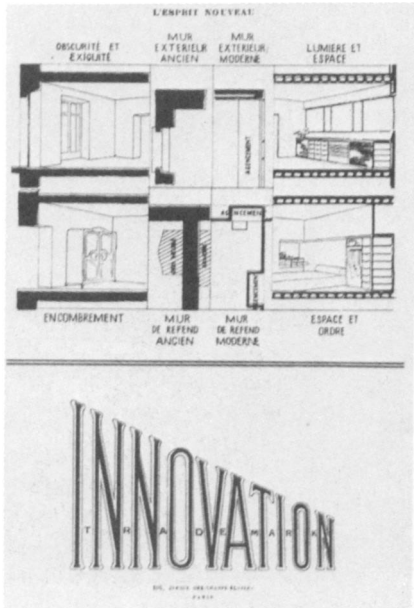
tion of the Jurassian with the furniture maker Egger and the relationship between Adolf Loos and his proverbial furniture maker Veillich.[27] One example is a sketch of the bedroom of Villa Schwob in La Chaux-de-Fonds (1916), which calls to mind the dining room of Loos's Strasser house (1918–19). I do not want to assert that Jeanneret held at this time the same ideas about house interiors as Loos; Loos, in fact, would probably have distrusted Jeanneret's furniture of this period, variations on Biedermeier or Directoire pieces, as a "fallback to old-style pastiche."[28] What I would like to show with this comparison is that before the First World War both Jeanneret and Loos had distanced themselves from the Jugendstil interiors, and in this lies one of the conditions for the surprising convergence of their ideas that surfaced later in *L'Esprit Nouveau*.

3. Few quotations from Loos about Le Corbusier are known. The following anecdote recorded by Alfred Roth is thereby all the more illustrative. "Tell me something young man," Loos asked the young Swiss worker from Le Corbusier's atelier during a conversation that Henry Kulka had arranged in Loos's last year in Paris, "what does Le Corbusier make his doors from these days?" Roth answered, "From three-ply plywood, of course." Loos reacted, "That is indeed an enormous improvement. . . . A few years ago he still demanded in his articles and books that henceforth doors had to be made from iron and tin, and as a series in the factory."[29] Loos obviously is referring to the Roneo doors, which like the Innovation trunks were featured in a series of advertisements in *L'Esprit Nouveau*.[30]

This anecdote touches precisely on the point where Le Corbusier goes further than Loos. For Loos, the mason who learned Latin, Le Corbusier's "appel aux industriels," tries to put industrial methods into the construction process, which is in itself the giving up of architecture. The idea of dividing the living and sleeping rooms according to the guidelines of the International Sleeping Car Company and of furnishing these with office furniture must have seemed to Loos just as absurd as doors fabricated from metal, as indeed they were in the Villa La Roche (1922) — despite Roth's surprised response that his boss naturally used triple-ply plywood doors. (Loos very likely had forgot-



13. Le Corbusier, Roneo advertisement in *L'Esprit Nouveau*

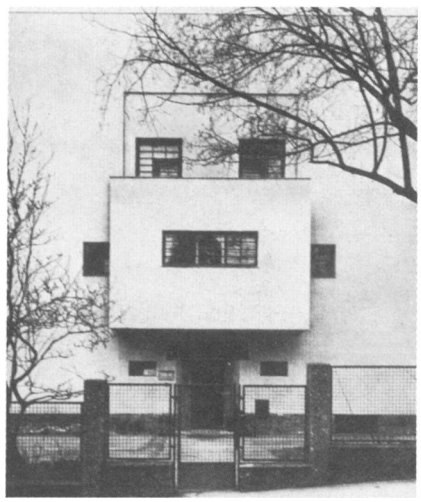


14. Le Corbusier, Innovation advertisement in *L'Esprit Nouveau*

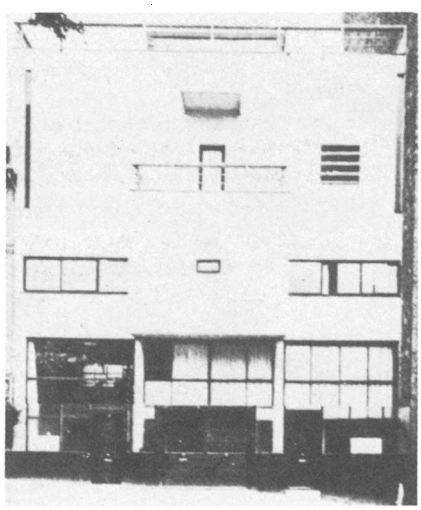
ten that his earlier Viennese office possessed a brilliant red metal door; this detail was still striking enough to inspire the architect Gustav Schleicher, who visited him there in 1912, to the following reference to an "esprit nouveau avant la lettre": "That was for me the new spirit.")[31]

"Is it not the very foundation itself of contemporary architecture," Le Corbusier exclaimed in connection with his proposed application of industrial methods and materials in building. He added, "Transfer into the infinitely bigger domain of architecture the experiences of Innovation and other producers following 'le meme but.'"[32] The differences between, for example, the Moller house in Vienna by Loos (1928) and the Maison Planeix in Paris by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret (1927) are immediately clear, and they evidently have something to do with the industrial methods that Le Corbusier wished to introduce in the building — in other words, with the architectonic images of industrial manufacturing. These images — the machine-fabricated glass façade of the ground floor, the very thin supports, the strip window — were unthinkable for Loos. Only one component of the modern reinforced-concrete construction finds its way into Loos's vocabulary, and it appeared in 1910 in the Sche house: the flat roof.

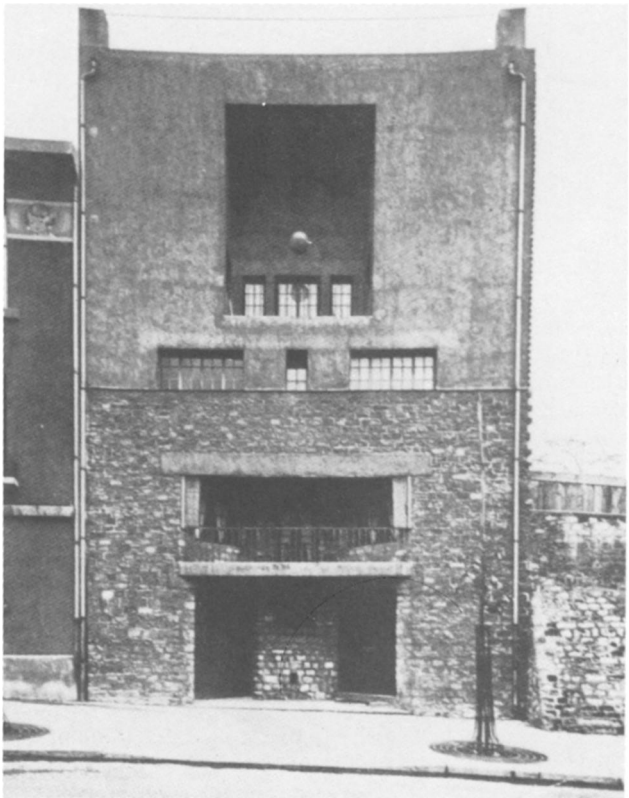
These two façades make a particularly clear case for the differences between the architects because they are analogously composed. In both there is a clear accentuation of the middle axis (which pertains only to the entrance of the Loos house), and in both the central axis has a cantilevered section with a sort of loggia directly overhead. In the Moller house the loggia is only suggested, in contrast to



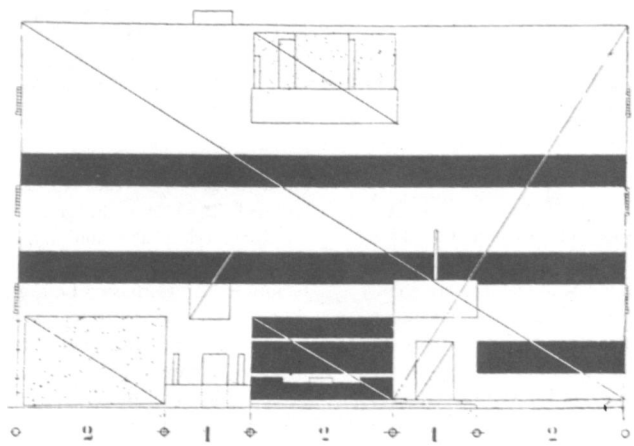
15. Adolf Loos, Moller house, Vienna, 1928, façade



16. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Maison Planeix, Paris, 1927, façade



17. Adolf Loos, Tzara house, Paris, 1926–27, façade



18. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Villa Stein, Garches, 1927, façade study

the house of Tristan Tzara (1926–27), in all respects the most grandiose house by Loos. The front façade of the Villa Stein in Garches, with its noticeable Benedictine loggia, should also be included in the comparison.[33]

If asked what binds both architects within the international scene of the New Building around 1925 and what separates them, I would say that the common factor is their "classicism," or, less superficially, the rational discipline in the maintenance of architectonic form. I am aware that rationality in architecture is a concept that from the beginning creates two fundamentally different series of thought. While fixed on the different basic postulates of a rational architecture, both architects seemed to grasp in a brave and at the same time classical sense purified formal synthesis. For neither is it a question of "either-or": either the rationalism that concentrates itself empirically, positivistically, as the functionally oriented maintenance of ends and means, on the necessity of the use (for Loos on the interior and the *Raumplan*; for Le Corbusier on the object-types and the *plan libre*); or the rationalism that orients itself idealistically and formalistically on the platonic solids — cube, cone, sphere — and that posits the axis and the *tracés régulateurs* as the means of formation. It is not about the alternatives: either Darwin or Schinkel (for Loos), either Viollet-le-Duc or Ledoux (for Le Corbusier). Both see the task of the architect as putting the two divergent traditions of architectonic rationalism (the "paradox of reason," to quote Alan Colquhoun)[34] into architectonic images that present themselves as if they have the right to eternity.

It is a question of how well Loos's *Raumplan*, which was realized in an exemplary way in the Ruter house in Vienna (1922), was known by Le Corbusier. Or better, to what extent was Loos necessary as a stimulus for Le Corbusier's "free" planned succession of spaces, laterally connected with one another, in his villas from 1922 to 1927?[35]

It is important that the *Raumplan* of Loos and the *plan libre* of Le Corbusier, although both clearly (and probably still independently) carry the mark of the English country house, are not developed in the Moller house and the Maison Planeix as picturesque building volumes. In both the domestic functions unfold themselves through what Le

Corbusier would call the dictated *promenades architecturales* within the framework of rigorously defined cubic envelopes. The coordination of interior space and exterior form is in both projects a kind of didactical tendency: architecture is understood as the formulation of a porous internal spatial development through an architectonic composition in the sense of classical monumentality.

The differences can be reduced to two key points: Le Corbusier's (utopian) trust in industry; and his view that architecture, in contrast to the fabrication of goods for everyday use, is one of the areas of art. This conviction perhaps played a role in Le Corbusier's decision to publish only Loos's "Ornament et crime" in *L'Esprit Nouveau* and not, as was previewed in one editorial, "Architecture et le style moderne," in which Loos emphatically declares that there are but few architectural matters that have anything to do with art.[36] Le Corbusier rejected decoration in the arts and crafts and, like Loos, placed the functional objects in an area outside the domain of art where the law of a technical commercial evolution reigns. But in contrast to Loos, he never doubted that architecture has, above all, to be art: "We are told that decoration is necessary to our existence. Let us correct that: art is necessary to us; that is to say, a disinterested passion that exalts us." He adds, "So, to see things clearly, it is sufficient to separate the satisfaction of disinterested emotion from that of utilitarian need."[37] And he concludes, "To provoke elevated sensations is the prerogative of proportion, which is sensed as mathematic; it is afforded most particularly by architecture, painting, and sculpture."[38] Architecture is and thus remains in the eyes of Le Corbusier a domain of art. For Loos, however, "Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art! The tomb and the monument. All the rest, everything that has a purpose must be shut outside the realm of art."[39]

It is debatable whether the pathos with which Le Corbusier postulated architecture as art was the weak or the strong side of his theory. In trying to overcome architectural and technical problems of industrialization, aesthetics, and mass culture, his theory entangled him in the contradictions of the modern movement. But the theory also enabled him to make these problems visible in the form of architectural metaphors of an industrial reality.

Notes

1. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Architectural Press, 1960), p. 248. An English translation of *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1925) has been published to mark the centenary of Le Corbusier's birth: *The Decorative Art of Today*, trans. James Dunnett (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). The English edition retains the original page layouts. In my monograph *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979; originally published as *Le Corbusier: Elemente einer Synthese* [Stuttgart: Huber, 1968]), I sketched out the relationship between Le Corbusier and Loos for the first time; see esp. pp. 55–56, 81, 86, and passim.

2. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, p. 84.

3. For more information about Le Corbusier's function as advertising soliciter for the magazine, see Stanislaus von Moos, "Standard und Elite: Le Corbusier, die Industrie und der Esprit Nouveau," in Tilman Buddensieg and Henning Rogge, *Die nützliche künste* (Berlin, 1981), pp. 306–23, esp. pp. 311ff.

4. Innovation advertisements appeared in the following numbers of *L'Esprit Nouveau*: 11, 12, 18–28. Explicit reference to Innovation products is made in the copy of numbers 21 and 24. The contract signed on 21 September between *L'Esprit Nouveau* and the firm states specifically that the editors are committed to a prominent story in return for the advertisement series published in the subsequent twelve numbers as well as the production of a separate reprint, "de manière à constituer un catalogue complet des agencements, Innovation" (Archives Fondation Le Corbusier). Innovation also had a stake in the interior furnishing of the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau of 1925, as had all other advertisers in the magazine (for example, the firm of Roneo). Concerning the collaboration of *L'Esprit Nouveau* with Innovation, see Luisa Martina Colli, *Arte, artigianato e tecnica nella poetica di Le Corbusier* (Bari, 1982), pp. 47ff.; Gladys C. Fabre, "L'Esprit moderne dans la peinture figurative: De l'iconographie moderniste au modernisme de conception," in *Léger et l'esprit moderne* (Paris 1982), pp. 81–143, esp. p. 108.

5. *L'Esprit Nouveau* 19 (1923): n.p. See also, Le Corbusier, *Decorative Art of Today*, pp. 85ff.

6. Adolf Loos, "Schulausstellung der kunstgewerbeschule," *Die Zeit* (30 October 1897); reprinted in Loos, *Ins Leere gesprochen* (Vienna, 1981), pp. 23–26; English translation, "School Exhibition of the School of Decorative Arts," in Loos, *Spoken into the Void: Collected Essays 1897–1900* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 88–89; here p. 89.

7. For the furnishings of the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau, see also Arthur Rüegg, "Anmerkungen zum 'Equipment de l'habitation' und zur 'Polychromie intérieure' bei Le Corbusier," *Le Corbusier: La ricerca paziente* (Lugano, 1980), pp. 151–62, and Arthur Rüegg, "Vom Intérieur zum Equipment: Ausstellungsbeiträge von Le Corbusier 1925–35," *Archithese* 1 (1983): 9–15. Loos was well informed about the difficulties Le Corbusier had with the furnishings of the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau, being the Paris representative of the Vereingten UP-Werke of Brünn, which at that time executed some of Le Corbusier's commissions. See Bernhard Rukschcio and Roland Schachel,

Adolf Loos: Leben und Werk (Salzburg, 1982), p. 308, n. 954.

8. Adolf Loos in his memoirs about the carpenter Veillich, "Joseph Veillich," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (21 March 1929).

9. Adolf Loos, "Intérieurs," *Neue Freie Presse* (5 June 1898); reprinted in Loos, *Ins Leere gesprochen*, pp. 68–74; English translation, "Interiors: A Prelude," in *Spoken into the Void*, pp. 19–21; here p. 19.

10. Le Corbusier did not actually visit the U.S. until 1935, but Loos could look back on his own American experiences. Still it is American architecture and American industrial forms that provide, from the start, the examples for the renewal strived for by Le Corbusier in *L'Esprit Nouveau*. For the Americanism in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, see Thilo Hilpert, *Die Funktionelle Stadt: Le Corbusiers Stadtvision — Bedingungen, Motive, Hintergründe* (Braunschaeig: Viewig, 1978), and Stanislaus von Moos, "Urbanism and Transcultural Exchanges, 1910–1935: A Survey," in *Le Corbusier Archive*, vol. 10, ed. H. Allen Brooks (New York: Garland, 1983).

11. Adolf Loos, "Glass und Ton," *Neue Freie Presse* (26 June 1898); reprinted in Loos, *Ins Leere gesprochen*, pp. 88–93; English translation, "Glass and Clay," in *Spoken into the Void*, pp. 35–37; here p. 35.

12. See Adolf Loos, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1962), p. 15ff.

13. See n. 5 above. Loos's criticism of the design schools, the Vienna Werkstätte and the Werkbund, can be found continuously in his writings. The first consistent text about his conflict with the Secession was "Die Geschichte eines armen reichen Mannes" (1900); the best known and most influential was of course "Ornament und Verbrechen" (1906).

14. For Loos's idea about typography, see his "Buchdrucker," *Neue Freie Presse* (23 October 1898), reprinted in Loos, *Ins Leere gesprochen*, pp. 168ff.; and the postscript from 1931, "Von de Konstruktivisten bis zur Wiener Werkstätte eine front," ibid., pp. 206ff. English translation of "Buchdrucher," "Printers," in *Spoken into the Void*, pp. 83–85. Concerning Le Corbusier's angry rejection of, for example, Josef Albers's Bauhaus typography, see Fabre, "L'Esprit moderne dans la peinture figurative," p. 113, illus. 113.

15. Adolf Loos, *Das Andere* 1 (1903): 11.

16. Alfred Roth, *Begegnung mit Pionieren* (Basel, 1973), pp. 197ff.

17. Le Corbusier, *L'Esprit Nouveau* 2 (1921): 159. "Ornament et crime" is a reprint of the translation of "Ornament und Verbrechen" initiated by Georges Besson and printed in June 1913 in *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*; see Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 182. Not by accident Le Corbusier dated Loos's famous article around 1912; see *The Decorative Art of Today*, p. 134. For the specific conditions of the relationship between Le Corbusier, Ozenfant, and Loos, see Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, pp. 239ff., and Elsie Altmann-Loos, *Adolf Loos: Der Mench* (Vienna, 1968), p. 123. Ozenfant and Jeanneret documented their "communion d'idées" with Loos and their "lively respect" for him with a dedication in their joint work *Après le Cubisme* (Paris, 1918) (I owe this reference to Arthur Rüegg). The dedication is printed in Hans Bolleger, *Katalog 7: Documentation Kunst und Literatur des 20. Jahrunderts* (Zurich, 1980), p. 25. See also n. 36 below.

18. From Le Corbusier's article about "Ornament und Verbrechen," which was published in 1930 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; here quoted according to Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 278. For other direct references to Loos, see Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, pp. 85, 134ff.

19. Letter from Le Corbusier, 22 November 1908; printed in Jean Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même* (Geneva: Editions Rousseau, 1970), pp. 34–36. Hardly investigated is the influence of Olbrich on the Ecole d'Art La Chaux-de-Fonds. Some indications can be found in Stanislaus von Moos, "Kloster, Atelier und Tempel: Anmerkungen zu Charles Edouard Jeanneret," *Archithese* 2 (1983): 44–48.

20. Roth, *Begegnung mit Pionieren*, p. 207, posits a meeting between Jeanneret and Loos in the winter 1907–8; but in fact Loos lived in a Viennese environment that Jeanneret hardly knew. It is striking that Loos was never mentioned in the *Etude sur le mouvement d'art en Allemagne* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1912), although Jeanneret had been to Vienna a second time in 1911.

21. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, "Le Renouveau dans l'architecture," in *L'Oeuvre: Organe officiel de la Fédération des Architects Suisses et de l'Association Suisse romande de l'Art et de l'Industrie* 2 (1914): 36ff.

22. Adolf Loos, "L'architecture et le style moderne," in *Cahiers d'aujourd'hui* 2 (1912): 829ff.; originally published as "Architektur," *Sämtliche Schriften* 1, pp. 302–18. This article was republished under the title "Art et architecture" in *Action: Cahiers de philosophie et d'art* (October 1920); which is one reason why this text, even though announced, never appeared in *L'Esprit Nouveau*. The translation here and below, by Wilfried Wang, is from *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, exhibition catalogue (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1985), p. 104. See n. 36 below and also Colli, *Arte, artigianato e tecnica nella poetica di Le Corbusier*, p. 123, who briefly reviews Jeanneret's article "Le Renouveau dans l'architecture," although without identifying Loos's quotation.

23. For Jeanneret's reaction to Cingria's thoughts (he added extensive observations to this book), see Paul V. Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier* (New York: Garland, 1977), pp. 83–91.

24. For the villas for factory owners built in the years 1912–14 in La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle by Jeanneret, see von Moos, *Elements of a Synthesis*, pp. 12–20, and Jacques Gubler, "Die Kinder von Jeanneret," *Archithese* 2 (1982): 33–38.

25. Jeanneret added in the margin that earlier, maybe in Spring 1910, he had expressed similar thoughts during a trip in the mountains. See Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier*, p. 86.

26. Loos, "Architektur."

27. See Arthur Rüegg, "Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, architecte conseil pour toutes les questions de décoration intérieure," *Archithese* 2 (1983): 39–43.

28. Adolf Loos, "Wohnungsmoden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (12 August 1907); quoted according to Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 110.

29. Roth, *Begegnung mit Pionieren*, pp. 197ff. For Loos's Paris years, see n. 17 above.

30. Roneo advertisements were published in *L'Esprit Nouveau* numbers 24–27; editorial references to the Roneo products appear in numbers 18, 19, 22–24.

31. Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, pp. 171ff.

32. Le Corbusier, *Almanach d' architecture moderne* (Paris, 1925), p. 196.

33. See my extensive comments in *Elements of a Synthesis*, especially pp. 80ff., and Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 332. For Le Corbusier's "symmetry" as a principle of composition, see *Elements of a Synthesis*, pp. 77–82.

34. Alan Colquhoun, "Le Corbusier and the Paradox of Reason," a lecture at the TH Delft, 1981 (unpublished).

35. For the significance of Loos for the architecture of Purism, see Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), pp. 95 and passim.

36. This fact is, according to Rukschcio and Schachel, *Adolf Loos*, p. 1250, responsible for an estrangement with Loos. Indeed, the magazine *Action: Cahiers de philosophie et d'art* published the original Loos texts (see n. 22 above), perhaps written for *L'Esprit Nouveau*, which was enough reason for Ozenfant to write this irritated comment to Jeanneret: "Nous sommes dans une vilaine situation avec ce Loos, car, tandis que nous reproduisons des articles déjà publiés en français et connus de tous, l'autre revue publiera de l'inédit! Puisque vous êtes en relation avec M. Loos et qu'il vous fait des promesses, je crois qu'il serait bon que vous lui demandiez de nous faire parvenir d'urgence un article inédit. Cela sauverat notre situation." Letter from Ozenfant 6 July 1920, Fondation Le Corbusier boîte A2 (15).

37. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, p. 85.

38. Ibid, p. 86.

39. Loos, *Sämtliche Schriften* 1, pp. 302–18; here p. 315.

Figure Credits

1. From *Das Andere* 1 (Vienna, 1903).

2, 12, 15, 17. L. Münz and G. Künstler, *Der Architekt Adolf Loos* (Vienna: A. Schroll, 1964).

3, 4, 7, 13, 14. From *L'Esprit Nouveau* (Paris, 1920–25).

5. Diether Schmidt, *Bauhaus* (Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1966).

6, 16, 18. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, *Oeuvre complète 1910–1929* (Zurich: Editions Girsberger, 1937).

8. *Bauhausbücher* (Munich: Albert Langen Press, n.d.).

9. Photograph by Stanislaus von Moos.

10, 11. Fondation Le Corbusier.