



## Veiling Architecture Privacy in Loos and Le Corbusier

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**ABSTRACT:** The following attempts to discuss the different approaches to privacy adopted by Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, as two of the most influential pioneers of modern architecture. It will be argued that both architects were influenced by the developing technologies of their time, yet they reacted differently to the increasing influence of film and photography on art, architecture and everyday life. The paper structures its argument in two parts: the first part discusses Walter Benjamin's theories on the difference between traditional art and modern art and how advances in technology undermined the aura of a work of art and made it more accessible to the masses. In the second part of this paper, Loos and Le Corbusier's different architectural strategies are analysed and compared. It will be argued that Loos's approach to the distinctions between publicity and privacy and masculine and feminine aspects of architecture, differs fundamentally from those views held by Le Corbusier, who was much more in favour of the modern technological advances. It will be further elaborated that Loos's architecture displays a translucent philosophy, maintaining the interaction and seduction between the two sides of the architectural surface. Le Corbusier on the other hand, fluctuates between a reflective philosophy and transparent philosophy of the gaze, imploding the traditional distinctions between inside and outside, private and public.

**Keywords:** gaze, veil, aura, transparency, modernity.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of modernity can be analyzed through the technologies that affected it. The introduction of lithography for example enabled many copies to be printed from the same master plate, thus increasing the potential of information to reach a mass audience.<sup>1</sup> After the perfection of lithography, the illustrated newspaper was the logical next step. The development of photography by the late 1800s further accelerated the speed of production. It was only a matter of time before film evolved to its maturity. A work of art that once could only be seen by the wealthy in a museum or gallery could be reproduced at little cost and made accessible to many more people. Thus, technological advances began to affect the very process in which art was produced, reproduced and utilized in societies across the world.

### AURA, SHELL OR NATURAL DISTANCE OF A WORK OF ART

Since the advent of "mass media"<sup>2</sup> writers and critics have been analysing the effects of new technologies on notions of authenticity, creativity and society in general. One of the most influential essays on this theme is Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in which he argues new technologies have caused the "withering of the aura" of works of art by making them accessible to the masses.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin defines "aura" as the false sense of awe and reverence that one might feel in front of an original work of art, which would have more to do with the "cult value" of the work than its true artistic merit. This cult value can be added cultural value, a sense of privilege or importance generated by limited accessibility, or even association with belief (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224).

Benjamin argued that new technologies of reproduction emancipate the work of art from "its parasitical dependence on ritual" (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224). This leads to a shift of emphasis from cult value,

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generated by reverence for authenticity to “exhibition value” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224), which leads to a reversal of function: “Instead of being based on ritual, [the work of art] begins to be based on another practice - politics” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224). Thus, technological advancement creates a unique possibility to replace the false importance of a work of art with a valuable instrumentality that could be used to change people’s lives for the better:

“To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose “sense of the universal equality of things” has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 225).

Thus, the mass reproduction of art has the beneficial effect of “reactivating” the object reproduced, leading to a new and fresh approach to cultural production. For Benjamin, film, newspapers, photography and other technologies of mass reproduction are fundamental to a departure from works of art that are wrapped in a shell of aura, possessing “the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 222). If traditional art operates by maintaining a natural distance from reality, technological art “penetrates deeply into its web.”

For Benjamin the contemporary condition is characterized by “the desire of contemporary masses to bring things closer, spatially and humanly,” and their “bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 223). He attributes both of these developments to the increasing participation of the masses in contemporary life and the gradual disappearance of aura.<sup>4</sup> In this context, artistic productions based on new technologies of mass reproduction, maintain a different relationship to authenticity, one that is not based on traditional definitions: “To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the ‘authentic’ print makes no sense” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224).

Though Benjamin celebrated the effects of new technologies in providing participation and accessibility, he conceded that under capitalism, technology was not often used in a positive way and the potential of mass media to include the masses in politics might in fact never be fully utilized. The film industry he argued, was in fact “trying hard to spur the interest of the masses through illusion promoting spectacles and dubious speculations” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 233). Such concern is later theorised by Guy Debord, for whom mass media disseminate false

images that *overpower* reality.<sup>5</sup> The evolution of this distrust for images and their reproduction culminates in the theories of Jean Baudrillard for whom images become *simulations*, which eventually *destroy* reality.<sup>6</sup> Thus, if in early twentieth century technology offers the possibility of progress through accessibility and the removal of false importance, a few decades later, it catalyses theories that warn against imagery that mask or destroy reality.

## MODERNITY AND GAZE IN ARCHITECTURE

Conventional criticism portrays modern architecture as a high artistic practice in opposition to mass culture and mass media. However such ideological assumptions underlying the received view of modern architecture have been subject to many revisions and the emerging systems of communication, which is seen to define twentieth-century culture, is regarded as the true site within which modern architecture was produced. In *Privacy and Publicity* Colomina argues that with modernity, the site of architectural production literally moved from the street into photographs, films, publications, and exhibitions resulting in a new sense of space defined by images rather than walls (Colomina, 1994, pp. 4-8). In Roland Barthes words, in this technological condition, modernity becomes the “publicity of the private” (Barthes, 1982, p. 98).<sup>7</sup>

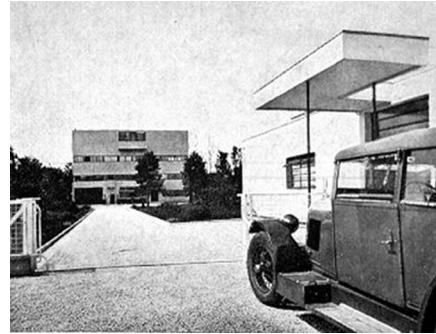
Many of Le Corbusier’s buildings possess facades that are designed to be seen from the frontal view as evidenced by the photos that remain of them. In their intriguing essay entitled “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal” Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky highlight the Villa Stein at Garche, arguing that the facade is at odds with the interior and the arrangement of opaque and transparent surfaces create “phenomenal transparency” (Rowe & Slutzky, 1976, pp. 159-185), which is a mode of transparency that only *hints* towards the depths of the interior without providing visual access. Thus, such a facade is an example of a “clearly ambiguous” arrangement where only an image of transparency and not “literal transparency” is presented. It is perhaps possible to argue that in such an arrangement depth resides on the surface.

Recognising the potential of new technologies, Le Corbusier arranges his buildings according to photogenic views and with a photographer’s eye. Moreover, in many of his publications, he doctors images of his houses in order to create the desired effect (Colomina, 1994, p.111). Le Corbusier therefore, exemplifies one of the earliest instances of an architect who designs for the camera and

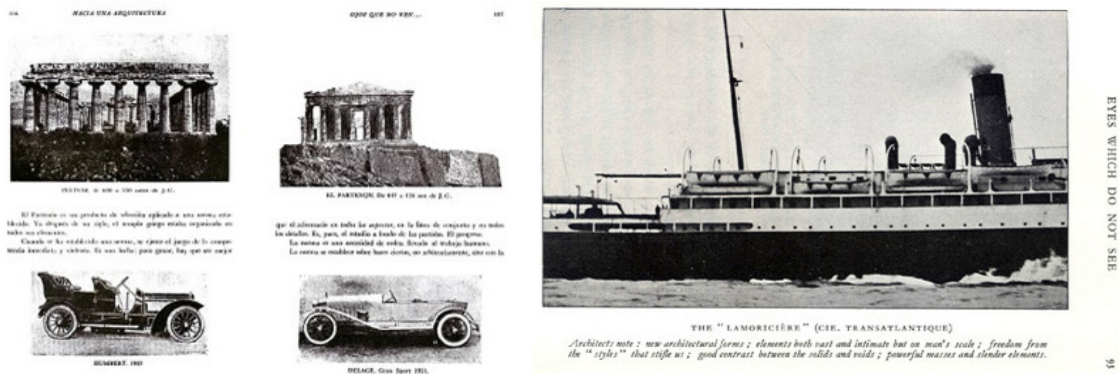


the mass media. Such architecture is carefully framed and it carefully frames its surroundings, always very much in control of what it is at display. In such an architecture

destined for mass media and mass consumption, the goal is transparency to expose the form and function of a new architectural vocabulary.



**Fig. 1. Le Corbusier, Villa Sein, Garche, France. Note how the building is to be approached from the front via a cinematic route. Also note the presence of the automobile in the photographs, deliberately positioned to symbolize modernity (source: <http://hanser.ceat.okstate.edu>).**



**Fig. 2. Le Corbusier’s use of contemporary images to illustrate his texts and his architectural strategy. These are scans of pages taken from Le Corbusier’s book entitled “Towards a New Architecture”trans. Frederick Etchells, Architectural Press, London, 1987.**

Adolf Loos on the other hand adopts a different strategy. Modifying Semper’s concept of the festive mask, Loos believed that everyone must comply on the surface but mask his interior. Loos advocated a particular *style* for architecture that was efficient, modern, civilized, and dignified. In order to illustrate this, he pushes his architectural style towards men’s attire, which he believes to be more advanced and dignified than that of a woman:

“The clothing of the woman is distinguished externally from that of the man by the preference for ornamental and colourful effects and by the long skirt that covers the legs completely. These two factors demonstrate to us that the

woman has fallen behind sharply in her development in recent centuries” (Loos, 1982, p. 102).

The prejudices set up by Loos are clear: the long skirt of women’s clothing hinders function and the colourful ornamentations are mere “effects,” both indicating primitivity and degeneration. Men’s clothing on the other hand is superior because it is modest and muted, not absent:

“Primitive men had to differentiate themselves by various colours, modern man needs his clothes as a mask. His individuality is so strong that it can no longer be expressed in terms of items of clothing. The lack of



ornament is a sign of intellectual power” (Loos, 1908, p. 36).

Loos’s position on clothing clarifies his attitude towards dignity and privacy in architecture. He saw “good” clothing as a neutral, masking layer that must not be a disguise. He prohibited confusion by banning simulation. Dressing must not simulate the materials they cover, they should only “reveal clearly their own meaning as dressing for the wall surface,” identifying their separation from structure. Thus, “wood may be painted any colour except one – the colour of wood” (Loos, 1982, p. 67). The key themes are honesty to materials, transparency of communication and a desire for authenticity, which prohibits simulation. The transparency of communication however, is not literal transparency or nakedness, it is rather truthfulness and clarity of expression. Loos believed that by dressing correctly and preserving his integrity, the modern man must adhere to the cultural essence of civilized society. His theories demonstrate an attempt to develop an architectural style that conforms to the aesthetic tastes of the dominant majority. This

majority however is not a quantitative majority of numbers, but a qualitative majority determined by power or cultural superiority.

Loos believed that everyone in a civilized society must wear a dignified mask. But as Colomina points out:

“The modern function of the mask is for Loos the reversal of the primitive one. Whereas the primitive mask expressed an identity to the outside, in fact constructed that identity, a social identity, the modern mask is a form of protection, a cancelling of differences on the outside precisely to make identity possible, an identity that is now individual” (Loos, 1982, p. 37).

By negating the common gesture of displaying or constructing an identity for the outside, Loos allows room for a more personal and protected interior. Rejecting the extravagance of colour and decoration that Semper promoted and was popular at the time, Loos seeks neutrality in order to raise questions. By guarding the depths of his architecture vigorously, Loos gives it a sense of sacredness, and by doing so, invites, or more precisely, challenges the outside to delve deeper.



**Fig. 3. The contrast between the exterior and interior of Loos’s architecture: a modern suit on the outside for the public, and a warm and intimate space for private life. Muller House (source: <http://archinect.com>).**

In this architecture the goal is to make facades opaque in order to mask and hide. But this opacity is never absolute. In fact one can argue that such architecture is in fact *translucent*. What causes Loos’s architecture to be translucent is not only the inquisitive gaze of the external world but perhaps more importantly his own writings, which provoke inquiry.

Loos expressed a disregard for new media technologies defining them as superficial effects that distract architecture into the universe of merchandise and

therefore destroys its potential for transcendence:

“It is my greatest pride that the interiors which I have created are totally ineffective in photographs. I have to forego the honour of being published in the various architectural magazines. I have been denied the satisfaction of my vanity. And thus my efforts may be ineffective. Nothing is known of my work. But this is a sign of the strength of my ideas and the correctness of my teachings. I, the unpublished, I whose efforts are unknown, I, the only one of thousands who has a real





influence... Only the power of the example has had an influence. The very power with which the old masters had been effective and faster in reaching the farthest corner of the earth although, or especially because, post, telegraph, or newspapers were not yet in existence.”

For Loos, new technologies of photography and publication distract from the real essence of architecture in three dimensions and the best way to communicate architectural ideas is to build buildings. In Colomina’s words: “Architectural magazines, with their graphic and photographic images, transform architecture into an article of consumption, making it circulate around the world as if it had suddenly lost mass and volume, and in this way they also consume it.”<sup>8</sup>

However, for Loos, writing about architecture was a different matter. He believed that words carry emotional content and give architecture meaning and sense. This is because writing is different from thinking, speaking (or even image making), precisely because it hinders the author and in so doing forces him to arrange the available words in a creative assemblage that expresses his emotions and intentions. For Loos, writing is less about the information that is transparently communicated and more about the sense that is expressed through an art form that involves words. In Benjamin’s words:

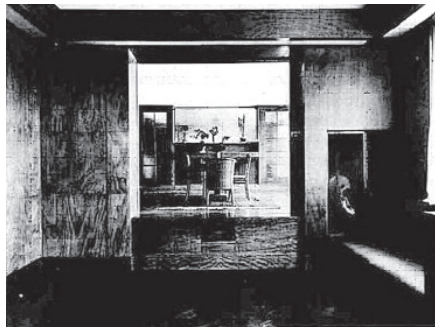
“The replacement of the older narration by information, of information by sensation, reflects the increasing atrophy of experience. In turn, there is a contrast between all these forms and the story, which is one of the oldest forms of communication. It is not the object of the story to convey a happening per se, which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds it in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the marks of the storyteller much as the earthen vessel bears the marks of the potter’s hand” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 155).

Therefore, Loos’s architectural expression involves his writing as much as his buildings. His writings are architectural narratives or stories as “the oldest form of communication,” which supplement and complement his built form. It is in this way that Loos’s architecture becomes translucent. For Le Corbusier however, it is images that illustrate his architectural strategy. It is also images that illustrate and construct his texts. These illustrative photographs can be of his own work, or taken from magazines and publications of the time. In fact, Le Corbusier’s publications are populated by images of the time, and in this way they *reflect* aspects of Modern culture (Colomina, 1994, p. 160).<sup>9</sup> This is an appropriate analogy, since *a reflective surface is also an opaque surface*. It does not speak of the inside-outside relationship; rather it

re-appropriates the outside to the outside - never entirely accurately, but always mesmerizingly so. The world of the outside becomes caught in a sort of mild narcissism, which becomes the source for the popularity of such endeavors. However, if there is any hint of someone beyond the reflective surfaces, then the voyeuristic possibility, the unseen gaze and the superficial trickery becomes uncomfortable for the public:

“I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see, not even discern. All that is necessary is for something to signify to me that there may be others there. The window if it gets a bit dark and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straightway a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen” (Lacan, 1988, p. 215).

Le Corbusier once wrote: “Loos told me one day: ‘A cultivated man does not look out of the window; his window is a ground glass; it is there only to let the light in, not to let the gaze pass through’” (Le Corbusier, 1925, p. 174). In Loos’s houses, windows are relatively small and often covered with curtains. Yet, each space of Loos’s interiors is a stage-set for the other, thus containing and orchestrating views in the privacy of an internal theatre. For example in “Moller house“ (Vienna, 1928) the dining room is set slightly higher than the music room, framed by an opening which connects the two rooms visually. Some steps can be let down when appropriate to connect the rooms physically too. In this arrangement, the occupants of each room are very much aware of each other’s activities, and they are both actors and spectators of the family scene – simultaneously performing and spectating in a private life within their own internal space. In this way, Loos offers an architecture that looks from inside towards the inside.



**Fig. 4. Adolf Loos's interior complexes: the different parts of the inside become stage sets for each other. Each activity is on display within the privacy of the interior. Moller House (source: <http://architect.com>).**

In such architecture, it is the gaze itself (not the objects of the gaze) that is exposed and carefully framed and controlled. Work and home coexist in such architecture, but in a private sphere of interiority, very much secluded from the outside and to the realm of the public. It only lets light in to illuminate the performances inside. This interpretation of modern architecture follows Semper's ideas. However, Loos erects Semper's ornamental decorations of the stage apparatus<sup>11</sup> within the privacy of the interior; within a protective shell. In this scenario, more effort goes into controlling the gaze and the privacy of the performance, rather than the ornamental play of the stage apparatus itself. Loos strives to provide a "frame" in order to hold the interactions of the inside in the correct place and provide a sense of *Raum*.<sup>12</sup>

For Le Corbusier, however, the house becomes a camera to inhabit. Much like the camera obscura in which the inside only comes alive when the outside shines through the glass lens, Le Corbusier's houses depend on the continuation of the outside into the inside. This sense of the exterior is so strong that according to Colomina there is no interiority:

"Unlike the subject of Loos's houses who is both actor and spectator, both involved and detached from the domestic stage, Le Corbusier's subject is detached from the house with the distance of a visitor, a viewer, a photographer, a tourist" (Colomina, 1994, p. 326).

In Le Corbusier's houses, the boundary between the

artist and the viewer, the performer and the spectator is broken down, and the correspondence between outside and inside is determined by rules of *exposure* or *reflection*. In this architecture, the penetrative gaze has been given total freedom and it is the subject of the gaze that is put on display. This is because such architecture follows the laws of the image and the media that disseminate it. Clues about Le Corbusier's architectural strategy can be found in his writings about fashion:

"Woman has preceded us. She has carried out the reform of her dress. She found herself at a dead end: to follow fashion and, then, give up the advantages of modern techniques, of modern life. To give up sport and, a more material problem, be unable to take on the jobs that have made woman a fertile part of contemporary production and enabled her to earn her own living. To follow fashion: she could not drive a car; she could not take the subway, or the bus, nor act quickly in her office or her shop. To carry out the daily construction of a "toilette": hairdo, shoes, buttoning her dress, she would not have had time to sleep. So, woman cut her hair and her skirts and her sleeves. She goes out bareheaded, bare-armed, with her legs free. And she can dress in five minutes. And she is beautiful; she seduces us with the charm of her graces of which the designers have admitted taking advantage. The courage, the liveliness, the spirit of invention with which woman has revolutionized her dress are a miracle of modern times. Thank you!" (Le Corbusier, 1991, pp. 106-7)



Unlike Loos, for whom, male fashion is a source of dignity in contrast to the extravagance of female fashion, for Le Corbusier, female fashion is applaudable since it has undergone change and has become both more functional and revealing. The dissolution of the barrier of clothing and the exposure of the (feminine) body is for Le Corbusier the source of seduction. The victim of this seduction is not only the privacy and intimacy of the interior but also the tension between inside and outside, appearance and essence. For Le Corbusier the dominant sign of a civilized society is not in a dignified (masculine) suit devoid of superficial ornamentation, but rather the *gaze* which surpasses all covering layers: "The English suit we wear had nevertheless succeeded in something important. It had *neutralized* us. It is useful to show a neutral appearance in the city. The dominant sign is no longer ostrich feathers in the hat, it is in the gaze. That's enough." (Le Corbusier, 1991, pp. 106-7)

## CONCLUSION

Loos and Le Corbusier offer two different approaches to modern architecture and the boundary condition between the public and the private. In Loos's architecture, the relationship between inside and outside is controlled and regulated in favor of the interior. Such architecture is not transparent because it does not offer its depths easily. Instead, it is translucent and instigates intrigue and inquiry. The interior space is given more freedom and it acts like a theatre stage in which the occupants are both actors (artists) and spectators (critics).

Le Corbusier's approach to modern architecture organizes and regulates the relationship between inside and outside in favor of the outside. It is an architecture in which the gaze is dominant. The subject of the gaze poses for the camera, for the photographic eye, which demands all the splendor of its subject in one look. In this approach, the interior becomes an extension of the exterior in that everything is put on display. The occupants become part of a photographic apparatus that can hide the spectators who may or may not be present. This architecture of the media age represents "the work of art designed for reproducibility" (Benjamin, 1969, p. 224), which extends its influence beyond the limitations of a particular site. Such architecture is designed for endless reproductions upon the glossy surfaces of magazines and digital screens. It is an architecture that mesmerizes through its transparency and reflectivity and has the power to engage the masses.

Yet, Le Corbusier does not promote nudity in architecture. The transparency he applauds is limited and

carefully orchestrated. What he proposes is a progression towards the *thinning out* of the clothing layer, which marks the beginning of seduction. Mark Wigley writes:

"While Semper locates architecture in the supplementary layer, whitewash supposedly purifies architecture by eliminating the "superfluous" in favour of the "essential." Le Corbusier's infamous *Vers une Architecture* (Towards an architecture) of 1923 had already argued that the culture it promotes is one of "rejection, pruning, cleansing; the clear and naked emergence of the Essential" (Le Corbusier, 1931, p. 138). For civilization to progress from the sensual to the visual, the sensuality of clothes has to be removed to reveal the formal outline, the visual proportion, of the functional body. ... But the body cannot be completely naked as that would be to return to the very realm of the sensual that has been abandoned. There is a need for some kind of screen that remodels the body as formal proportion rather than sensual animal, a veil with neither the sensuality of decoration nor the sensuality of the body. The whitewash is inserted between two threats in order to translate body into form" (Wigley, 2001, pp. 15-16).

Loos saw seduction as a primitive and inferior act that produces unnatural effects.<sup>13</sup> The repression of such seduction, by dressing architecture in a masculine suit, was for Loos, the task of the modern architect.<sup>14</sup> Le Corbusier maintained the same clothing metaphor, but he expressed it differently. Instead of covering the body of architecture using a formal suit, he exposed it via a *swimsuit*. Both architects theorised surface ornament as a secondary layer in relation to the primary architectural body and both followed the traditional hierarchy between the genders: Loos advocated men's clothing as superior and aimed to create a masculine outfit for architecture, while Le Corbusier exposed the feminized architectural body to the penetrative gaze of men.

Le Corbusier's "Law of Ripolin," suggested a stripping of outdated ornamentation to expose the smooth modern object.<sup>15</sup> But architecture was not left naked since the white paint remained as a thin "veil" (Wigley, 2001, p. 16). The coat of white paint was in fact a tool of control: at once banishing colour as a visible symbol of the feminine and simultaneously orchestrating the exposure of the "charms" of the feminized architectural body. Thus, the thin layer of paint shifted the attention from surface expression to the architectural body that revealed itself through the thinned-out clothing.<sup>16</sup>

The modernists decried ornamentation by associating it with uncivilized culture, femininity and degeneration.<sup>17</sup> Whether promoting dignified covering or seductive exposure, modernists like Loos or Le Corbusier,



problematized the architectural surface through the metaphor of clothing and the hierarchies associated with it. Both approaches expressed a masculine drive for dominance: one wanting to control appearances, the other exploiting the power of the penetrative gaze.<sup>18</sup>

The development of new visual technologies have had a strong impact on the traditional boundaries that defined the role and character of architecture. With modernity boundaries began to shift and change character, disrupting the older relationships between inside and outside, public and private, essence and appearance. Technological advance also resulted in a transformation of the site of architectural production: from the construction site to publications and mass media. Yet, these supposedly ephemeral media, are in many ways much more permanent, since “they secure a place for an architecture in history, a historical space designed not just by the historians and critics but also by the architects themselves who deployed these media” (Colomina, 1994, p. 15). In an age of ever more exposure through mass media, modernity has become “bound up with the question of the mask” (Colomina, 1994, p. 23). This notion of the mask as something that hides and also “produces what it hides” (ibid.) is similar to Baudrillard’s conception of simulacra, as visual phenomena that swallow up the reality of life.<sup>19</sup> Yet, perhaps the depth of reality is hidden on the surface, not masked or destroyed by it.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Lithography is a process of printing from a flat surface treated so as to repel the ink except where it is required for printing. In Electronics, a similar method is used for making printed circuits.

2. The term “Mass Media” appeared in the 1920s to denote a section of the media that was designed for large audiences. The term was coined around the same time as the advent of nationwide radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines, even though books and manuscripts were available centuries before the term came into public use.

3. Benjamin writes: “...that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art.” Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, New York, 1969, pp. 211-245 p. 221

4. Bringing things closer could be described by the example of the difference between seeing a mountain in the distance and seeing a picture of a mountain in a newspaper, or a magazine. The distance between the mountain and the viewer is reduced and the observer can “touch” the mountain, however, this image is very different to the original mountain. Increasingly however, this difference becomes less important, and the observer is content on viewing this reproduced reflection. What is at stake is the *natural distance* of the authentic mountain and its uniqueness, which gives it its aura.

5. See Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb, Rebel Press, London, 2006.

6. See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, University of Michigan Press, 1994. See also Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1990.

7. In Roland Barthes words: “The age of photography corresponds precisely to the irruption of the private into the public, or rather, to the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private: the private is consumed as such, publicly (the incessant aggressions of the press against the privacy of stars and the growing

difficulties of legislation to govern them testify to this movement).” Roland Barthes – *La Chambre Claire*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1980, English translation *Camera Lucida*, Hill and Wang, New York 1982, p. 98. Quoted in Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, p. 8

8. Adolf Loos, “Architektur” (1910). Here Colomina follows the later English translation by W. Wang in *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, p. 106, which includes this passage. Quoted in Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, pp. 42-43

9. Colomina writes: “Purist culture, by which I mean Le Corbusier and Ozenfant’s project of arriving at a theory of culture in industrialized everyday life throughout the pages of *L’Esprit nouveau*, can be read as a “reflection,” in both the specular and intellectual sense of the word, on the culture of the new means of communication, the world of advertising and mass media.” Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, p.160

10. In Laura Mulvey’s words: “The workplace is no threat to the home. The two maintain each other in safe, mutually dependent polarization. The threat comes from ... the city.” Laura Mulvey, “Melodrama Inside and Outside the Home”, 1986, in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Macmillan, London, 1989, p. 70

11. See Gottfried Semper, “Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics” in *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, pp. 255-6

12. Loos writes: “The architect’s general task is to provide a warm and livable space. Carpets are warm and livable. He decides for this reason to spread one carpet on the floor and to hand up four to form the four walls. But you cannot build a house out of carpets. Both the carpet on the floor and the tapestry on the wall require a structural frame to hold them in the correct place.” Adolf Loos, 1898, “The Principle of Cladding” in *Spoken into the Void*, p. 66

13. Loos writes: “Woman covered herself, she became a riddle to man, in order to implant in his heart the desire for the riddle’s solution....It is an unnatural love. If it were natural, the woman would be able to approach the man naked. But the naked woman is unattractive to the man. She may be able to arouse a man’s love, but not to keep it.” Adolf Loos, “Ladies’ Fashion,” *Neue Freie Presse*, Aug. 21, 1898, in *Adolf Loos: Spoken into the Void, Collected Essays. 1897-1900*, MIT Press Cambridge, Mass. 1982,



pp. 98-103, p. 99

14. Loos considered ornamentation as a sign of eroticism and degeneration: "The first ornament that came into being, the cross, had an erotic origin. The first work of art, the first artistic action of the first artist daubing on the wall, was in order to rid himself of his natural excesses. A horizontal line: the reclining woman. A vertical line: the man who penetrates her. The man who created it felt the same urge as Beethoven, he experienced the same joy that Beethoven felt when he created the Ninth Symphony. But the man of our time who daubs the walls with erotic symbols to satisfy an inner urge is a criminal or a degenerate. It is obvious that his urge overcomes man: such symptoms of degeneration most forcefully express themselves in public conveniences." Loos, "Ornament and Crime (1908)" in *Crime and Ornament, The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos*, p. 29

15. Le Corbusier writes: "Imagine the results of the Law of Ripolin. Every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wall-papers, his stencils, with a plain coat of white ripolin." Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, p. 188 quoted in Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, p. 15

16. "Flowers, sun, joy. Who is going to wear these beautiful bathing costumes created by our big stores? And how soon." Illustration from *Le Corbusier, La Ville Radieuse, 1935* included in Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, p. 279.

17. Le Corbusier wrote: "Decoration is of a sensorial and elementary order, as is colour, and is suited to simple races, peasants and savages.... The peasant loves ornament and decorates his walls. The civilized man wears a well-cut suit and is the owner of easel pictures and books." Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, p. 143

18. For Le Corbusier the penetrative gaze is to be liberated, but only for men. The argument revolves around notion of comfort, yet the agenda is one of domination: "And What about us, men? A dismal state of affairs! In our dress clothes, we look like generals of the Grand Armee and we wear starched collars! We are uncomfortable.... The English suit we wear had nevertheless succeeded in something important. It had *neutralized* us. It is useful to show a neutral appearance in the city. The dominant sign is no longer ostrich feathers in the hat, it is in the gaze. That's enough." Le Corbusier, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, p. 107

19. Baudrillard writes at length about the seduction of the simulacra: "Seduction cannot possibly be

represented, because in seduction the distance between the real and its double, and the distortion between the Same and the Other, is abolished. Bending over a pool of water, Narcissus quenches his thirst. His image is no longer "other;" it is a surface that absorbs and seduces him, which he can approach but never pass beyond. For there is no beyond, just as there is no reflexive distance between him and his image. The mirror of water is not a surface of reflection, but of absorption ... In the narcissistic *myth*, ... the mirror does not exist so that Narcissus can find within himself some living ideal. It is a matter of the mirror as an absence of depth, as a superficial abyss, which others find seductive and vertiginous only because they are each the first to be swallowed up in it." Baudrillard, *Seduction*, pp. 67-68. See also Baudrillard *Simulacra and Simulation*.